Building Capacity for Leading Learning in Low Socio-Economic Status Catholic Secondary Schools

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Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No parts of this thesis have been submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Signature

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Abstract

Reforming secondary schooling tends to be difficult and problematic. The research explored how leaders and teachers of low socio-economic status (SES) Catholic secondary schools engaged with a system-initiated reform to build capacity for leadership to improve learning in their school communities. It examined the relationship between leadership and capacity building and was informed by the school and system improvement literature that has identified the need to understand how leaders can better build capacity for improvement.

The case study focussed on the leadership of four low SES Catholic secondary schools from New South Wales (NSW), Australia who were part of the National Partnerships programme under the direction of a Diocesan school system. The research explored the experiences of system leaders, principals, curriculum coordinators, leaders of pedagogy, heads of department and teachers as they engaged with the system driven reform. The research was designed to answer the following question: "How did the experiences of teachers and leaders engaged in a system driven reform for low SES Catholic secondary schools contribute to an understanding of leading capacity building to improve student outcomes?" The investigation was positioned within an interpretivist paradigm. The epistemology underpinning the study was social constructionism which offers voice to the experiences and stories of the system consultants, school principals, teacher educators, heads of departments and subject teachers who described their perceptions of engagement in an externally funded reform initiative to build school capacity to improve student outcomes. The research used a case study methodology to record the understandings of participants about their experiences of leadership and learning during a system driven reform initiative. The perceptions of participants were recorded in a series of one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews. A document

study including school achievement data supported and enhanced the author's understanding of the participants' experiences.

The reforms were designed to build teacher and leadership capacity to improve student outcomes via initiatives to strengthen leadership for learning, quality teaching, professional learning and parental and community engagement. The research demonstrated that leadership of learning in secondary schools is best shared with leaders of learning such as heads of department who are positioned to work closely with classroom teachers**.** Furthermore this relationship is best developed through building the capacity of heads of department and school leaders valuing their contribution.

The study confirmed that leaders of learning who share whole school approaches to promote literacy, student centred pedagogy, use of data as well as extolling the moral purpose of the reform initiative appear to be able to improve student outcomes. Also, a broadly distributed model of leadership characterised by relational trust and teamwork appears to have built both a learning culture and the capacity to improve student outcomes. It also found that system reform was more likely to succeed when it was adapted by school leaders to meet their local context. The study also suggested that more research is required to understand how leaders can more effectively build engagement with parents of low SES secondary students.

This research is significant in this field because it provides a practical understanding of how leadership should be distributed to build capacity and improve student outcomes, as well as contributing towards better understanding of the importance of middle leaders such as heads of departments and instructional coaches in reforming secondary schools.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations used in this study

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
CCO	Curriculum Coordinator
CEO	Catholic Education Office
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DEAR	Drop Everything and Read (Literacy Program)
DET	Department of Education and Training (New South Wales)
EaLD	English as an Additional Language or Dialect
EMSAD	Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate
ESL	English as a Second Language
HoD	Head of Department
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEAS	Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools
IEP	Individual Education Plan
KLA	Key Learning Area
KLAC	Key Learning Area Coordinator (aka Head of Department)
LTNS	Literacy the Next Step
LoP	Leader of Pedagogy
Low SES NP	Low SES School Communities National Partnership.
LMU	Learning Matrix Unit
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Employment and Youth Affairs
MULTILIT	Making Up Lost Time In Literacy (Literacy Program)
NAPLAN	National Assessment Programme for Literacy and Numeracy
NSW	New South Wales
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).
PLC	Professional Learning Community
RAMP	Reading and Mathematics Program
RAP	Results Analysis Package (for the HSC)
SES	Socio-Economic Status

SMART	School Measurement, Assessment, and Reporting Toolkit
SSSB	Students from Statistically Similar Backgrounds
SSNP	Smarter School National Partnership
TELL	Teaching English Language Learners
TILT	Tailored Innovative Learning and Teaching
UBD	Understanding by Design

Chapter 1 Identification of the Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

The context of this research is set within a global education reform environment directed to large-scale improvement of student outcomes. Governments and educational leaders of many developed nations have been particularly concerned with the academic underachievement of children from low socio-economic status (SES) families (Earl, Fullan, Leithwood, & Watson, 2000; Fullan, 2000; Harris, 2009). Educational reformers have attempted to raise the overall standard of educational outcomes and improve equity of outcomes by reducing the achievement gap between low and high SES school communities (Earl et al., 2003). However, after decades of educational reform there have been only isolated examples of successful sustained improvements in reducing the achievement gap (Hopkins, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2011).

The school and system improvement literature has focussed on the difficulties of implementing large scale reform, with capacity building viewed as a necessary prerequisite for successful reform (Dimmock, 2011; Fullan, 2006; Fullan & Quinn, 2015). However, there remains limited understanding of how system and school leaders can work together effectively to build the necessary capacity to lead learning in schools to improve student outcomes. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge regarding how best to share or distribute leadership of learning among different staff members in the school to maximise student learning.

This study examines the relationship between the two key concepts of leadership and capacity building in the context of a reform initiative. This will be explored via the experiences of system and school leaders in the case of a government designed and system driven reform project, the *Low SES School Communities National Partnership (Low SES NP),* which is an agreement between the national and state governments and the educational systems and individual schools throughout Australia.

The context in which the research problem is conceived follows. This will include a more detailed understanding of the global, national, sectoral and personal context in which the *Low SES NP* is positioned.

1.2 Context of the Research Problem

A number of contextual issues underpin the research problem. The impulse for large-scale reform that commenced during the 1970s was driven at first by early American research identifying student achievement in low SES communities compared to more advantaged communities. The existence of this achievement gap was confirmed by research in other developed nations. More recently, large-scale reform has been directly influenced by governments responding to national and international testing data, which has provided further evidence of the continued existence of the achievement gap between low and high SES communities in countries such as Australia.

First, the background context of the achievement gap will be explained and resulting issues highlighted. Second, the role and expectations of governments supporting large-scale reforms to reduce this achievement gap will be considered. Third, the Australian context of educational reforms leading to the *Low SES NP* will be examined. Fourth, these reforms will be briefly explained and, fifth, considered in the context of Catholic education, as the study will explore the ways that Catholic school leadership have engaged with the *Low SES NP*. Lastly, the personal context and interest of the researcher in building the knowledge base to assist future leaders to engage more productively to build the capacity of individuals and organisations in low SES contexts will be explained.

1.2.1 Achievement gap between low SES schools and other schools

The achievement gap between schools that serve different communities is the stimulus of much research concerning school and system improvement. There is a considerable number of studies examining the nature of schools that have identified low SES as being associated with educational disadvantage (e.g. Ainley, Graetz, Long, & Batten, 1995; Amosa, Ladwig, Griffiths, & Gore, 2007; Coleman, Campell, Hobson, McFarlhand, & Mood, 1966; Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stoll, & Russ, 2004).

In Australia, the average achievement of students from low SES families, as a group in schools and as individual students, is significantly lower than that of other students (Erebus International, 2006; Teese & Lamb, 2009). SES indicators of parental income, parental education and parental occupation affect the achievement of students in different ways, and conglomerations of students from low SES backgrounds in neighbourhood schools appear to lower the academic culture of the school setting and make the learning deficit greater between schools serving high and low SES communities (Teese & Lamb, 2009). This achievement gap widens as children progress

through the Australian schooling system and is also evident in students' participation in further education and training (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). This disadvantage is influenced by home, school and community factors (Boethel et al., 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Educational researchers and policy makers began to investigate the effects of poverty on educational attainment after the publication of a seminal American research study led by James Coleman in 1966. It revealed that achievement was strongly associated with the educational backgrounds and aspirations of other students in the school setting and that students from low SES backgrounds achieved poorly compared to students from high SES backgrounds (Coleman et al., 1966). Sirin (2005)'s meta-analysis of more than 70 studies during the 1990s found the existence of a medium to strong relationship between SES and student achievement and this relationship strengthened when the variable was the collective SES of a school rather than the individual SES of students. According to Bourdieu (1977), schooling is a process of socialisation that ensures that class privilege is entrenched and transmitted from one generation of upper class students to the next generation, thus depriving working class children from accessing the cultural capital required for promotion in a hierarchical class- based society. In effect, poor students being schooled together magnifies disadvantages, which is particularly the case in countries such as Australia where choice between government and fee paying non-government schools concentrates low SES students into 'free' government schools (Teese & Lamb, 2011) or low fee Catholic schools (Canavan, 2009).

1.2.2 Roles and expectations of governments supporting large scale reforms

Notwithstanding the work of sociologists such as Bourdieu (1977) who maintained that schools reproduce inequality, governments of western democracies were confident that the education system was a vital medium for reducing social inequality and they sought out reform initiatives to achieve this objective.

By the mid-1980s, national policy initiatives from governments of many developed countries including the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand led to increasing expectations of change and accountability for schools (Fullan, 2000). This was the prelude to national governments, particularly the US federal government, introducing large-scale district-based reforms to increase educational standards, particularly for urban low SES schools. US reform models were heavily influenced by performance-based measures of student outcomes set by successive federal

governments concerned with the limited impact of previous reforms (Hopkins et al., 2011). During the 1980s and 1990s, western democracies such as the US, Britain and Australia were influenced by conservative ideologies of market driven reform and public managerialism of schools (Eacott, 2011), which led to outcome driven accountabilities for services such as education (Firestone, Shipps, & Riehl, 2005).

This demand for educational accountability through performance spread to other nations due to conservative economic, social and political conditions existing in many developed nations during the 1990s. There was also growing concern in the ability of schools to meet the future needs of an increasingly complex and diverse global society (Fullan, 2000). England was the first government in the world to use evidence-based large-scale change for delivering system reform when it introduced a national literacy and numeracy strategy in 1997 (Earl et al., 2000). More recently, international testing regimes such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have become essential tools for comparing national education systems and have led to governments worldwide introducing large-scale reforms in response to results of these assessments (Neumann, Fischer, & Kauertz, 2010). Increasingly, governments are establishing multi-level forms of large-scale reforms that involve government, educational sectors and schools (Fullan, Rolheiser, Mascall, & Edge, 2004b; Harris, 2010).

Thus, over a sustained period, there has been an increasing level of influence and expectation by governments for schools to meet the demands of a more competitive and complex world, with this trend being apparent in Australia.

1.2.3 Australian context of educational reforms

The understanding that SES influences the educational achievement of students has been an important foundation of educational reform and policy in contemporary Australian education.

In the wake of the Coleman report and the election of a socially progressive Australian Government in 1972, Peter Karmel was appointed by the Whitlam Labor Government to head an enquiry into the state of schooling in Australia. The Karmel Report (1973) established the basis of Commonwealth funding for school education on the principle of 'need'. The report revealed major shortcomings in the resourcing of many schools around Australia and supported the longstanding lobbying efforts of parents and education systems (Morrow, 2004).

The Karmel Report was founded on the principle of promoting equality of outcomes in schooling by making the 'overall circumstances of children's education as nearly equal as possible' (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973, p. 139). Greater resourcing was therefore needed to address 'inadequate training and development of teachers, out-dated curricula and teaching methods, a lack of shared decision-making within schools and in community involvement in school affairs needed to be addressed' (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, 1973 , p.139). The Karmel Report (1973) reinterpreted the Commonwealth's policy and funding role in school education and established a long standing system of funding (Hill, 1998).

Teese (2006) observed that the Interim Committee were cautious not to set expectations of learning gains from low SES schools and additional funding was not tied to measured gains in student learning. Programs were funded on the justification of improved quality of school experience rather than increased achievement. Therefore, a framework was established for addressing educational disadvantage for the next few decades, which provided partial compensation rather than remediation of educational disadvantage. Despite the funding and intention, Australian policy did not significantly reduce inequalities in educational outcomes among different groups (Hill, 1998).

State schooling systems have worked independently to address disadvantage and have established equity units responsible for policy and programme development. Since the 1980s, there has been greater cooperation and policy development between the Commonwealth and state governments. The Australian Education Council, comprised of the Federal and State Education Ministers, acted jointly to assist Australian schools in meeting the contemporary challenges of an increasingly complex and global society (Teese & Lamb, 2011). In a series of declarations from the Australian Education Council, the equality of education opportunities was promoted. For example, the Adelaide Declaration on the *National Goals of Schooling for the 21st Century* included the principle that schooling should be socially just, so that the learning outcomes of students from low SES schools improve and, over time, match those of other students (Australian Education Council, 1999).

The Adelaide Declaration also legitimised a general policy shift from processes to outcomes that had been underway in the years leading up to the declaration. New emphasis on literacy and numeracy was a departure from the previous accommodations to providing educational experiences for students who suffered educational disadvantage and were influenced by national English reforms. The rationale for the

literacy and numeracy focus was that poor literacy and numeracy are clear indicators of educational disadvantage and are most often, but not exclusively, found amongst low SES communities. Therefore, the literacy and numeracy focus concentrated resources and pedagogy to an area of need for underachieving students (Lamb & Teese, 2005).

Nearly a decade later, the Australian Education Council's *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* oriented Australian schooling for the next 10 years (MCEETYA, 2008b). The declaration noted that 'by comparison with the world's highest performing school systems, Australian students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are under-represented among high achievers and over-represented among low achievers' (p. 7). The declaration set as its first goal that Australian governments, working with all school sectors, commit to advancing equity and excellence in Australian schooling. In reaching that goal it declared, in more emphatic terms than in previous declarations, 'that we must ensure that socioeconomic disadvantage ceases to be a significant determinant of educational outcomes' (MCEETYA, 2008b , p.7).

Australian governments chose to participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment **(**PISA) to monitor national educational outcomes on a regular basis. The 2009 Australian results from the PISA provided significant challenges for Australian educators. Across all literacy domains of the 2009 assessment, the results revealed that the higher the level of socio-economic background, the higher the student performance (Thomson, De Bortoli, Nicholas, Hillman, & Buckley, 2010). The gap between the students in the highest and lowest socio-economic quartile was equivalent to more than two years of schooling. In mathematical literacy, students in the lowest socio-economic quartile scored on average 90 (out of a possible 600) score points lower than the students in the highest socio-economic quartile. At the higher socio-economic level, the average score for Australia in 2009 was higher than the average for Shanghai, China, a top performing entity scoring significantly above the average for Australia. At the lowest level of socio-economic background, average performance was significantly lower than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (Thomson et al., 2010).

Therefore, after more than three decades of various Australian government policies designed to make educational outcomes more equitable, disadvantage has remained an important and limiting feature of student achievement in Australia. In response to this uncontested reality, the Rudd Labor Government advocated significant

reform on the part of schools and educational systems by the formation of the *Low SES NP*.

1.2.4 The Low SES Schools National Partnership

Introduced by the Commonwealth government in cooperation with the various states and territories in 2009, the *Low SES NP* was a tri-level (government, system and school) reform programme designed to improve student learning and achievement outcomes via building capacity of leaders and teachers in participating low SES schools (Australian Government DEEWR, 2008)The reform programme included all sectors of education in Australia, including Catholic schools.

Together with the *Literacy and Numeracy* and *Teacher Quality National Partnerships,* the *Low SES NP* was one of three *Smarter Schools National Partnerships.* These three partnerships were designed to function independently; however, they 'are tightly integrated and mutually complementary processes of reform' (New South Wales Government, Association of Independent Schools NSW, & NSW Catholic Education Commission, 2010 p.1). Typically, selected schools were involved in a four-year reform programme; however, a few schools were selected midway through the reforms to be involved in a two-year programme.

The *Low SES NP* focussed on alleviating educational disadvantage to improve the opportunities of students from low SES backgrounds. There were six reform areas to: "attract high performing teachers and principals; adopt best practice performance management and staffing arrangements with a role for principals; encouragement of innovation and flexibility; provision of innovative and tailored learning opportunities; strengthened school accountability and external partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities" (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010 , p.3).

School and system leaders were supported by a document that outlined the research base for the reform areas, *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms Schools*, and were required to implement activities from all six reform areas over the duration of their four year participation in the partnership (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). This document has been utilised in this study to assist the shaping of both the review of the literature and the analysis of data.

The present study focussed on the *Low SES NP* operating in Catholic secondary schools in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The number of schools involved in this programme is set out below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 New South Wales Catholic Schools in Low SES NP (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010)

Total number of NSW schools involved	721
Number of Catholic Schools involved	76
Number of Catholic secondary schools involved in the four-year programme	11
Number of Catholic secondary schools involved in the two-year extension programme	5

The context of Catholic education in Australia will now be outlined.

1.2.5 The context of Catholic education in Australia

The present study investigated the experiences of a group of leaders from Catholic schools who serve low SES communities. Catholic schools belong to one of three main school sectors in Australia, the others being the larger government and the smaller independent sectors.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Catholic schools essentially served the poor Irish communities who made up the major ethnic group in Catholic schools. After 1945, post war immigration led to a more diversified but still largely working class Catholic school population. Economic growth from the 1960s led to the Catholic community becoming increasingly more prosperous and state aid assisted in the growth of Catholic schooling so that approximately 20% of Australian schools are now Catholic schools (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

The Catholic school sector is largely composed of Catholic systemic schools along with a much smaller number of independent Catholic schools that are operated by religious institutes. Catholic systemic schools are governed by Dioceses and Catholic Education Offices and they charge relatively low fees compared to independent private schools, and therefore are more accessible to families across the broad socio-economic spectrum of Australia. Serving the disadvantaged in the community is seen as part of the mission of the Church and school fee policy is conducted under the principle that 'first and foremost the Church offers its educational services to the poor' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, pp. 44-45). However, only one-third of Catholic students from poor families attend Catholic schools (Canavan, 2009). The challenge for Catholic educators is twofold: firstly, to live up to their mission, Catholic schools must attract and enrol more children from poorer Catholic families and

secondly, Catholic schools with existing low socio-economic enrolment patterns must be successful educational institutions that serve their communities well (Canavan, 2009).

1.2.6 The personal context

The researcher is a Senior Regional Consultant for a large metropolitan Catholic Education Office. This role involves leadership for the Catholic identity and quality of teaching and learning for 11 secondary schools. The consultant is a coach, mentor and critical friend to principals and their leadership teams as they develop and nurture a culture of continuous improvement.

Prior to this role, the researcher has been an experienced teacher, head of department and principal of systemic Catholic schools and has been involved in the implementation of numerous reforms to improve schools in the hope that student learning would also improve. Often these school improvement projects have had outcomes that were unintended, transitory or disappointing. These experiences as an educational leader have provided experiences of managing educational reform has revealed how complicated and sophisticated a task it is to build the personal and collective capacity of others to improve outcomes for students.

The overall context of the present study includes a range of issues regarding the difficulties faced by Australian and other national governments in implementing large-scale reform to build the educational capacity required to reduce disadvantage.

1.3 Research Problem Defined

Large-scale reforms addressing disadvantage have enjoyed, at best, a mixed history of results. The international literature documents a range of reforms in different countries that have attempted, yet failed, to significantly reduce the gap in educational outcomes (e.g. Bryk, Sebring, Kerbow, Rollow, & Easton, 1998; Fink & Stoll, 2005; Fullan, 2000; Hopkins, Reynolds, & Gray, 2005; McLaughlin, 1990). Reform has been difficult in secondary schools, especially for low SES ones (Earl, Torrance, & Sutherland, 2006). Reforms that were externally imposed on school communities also struggled to build the acceptance of both school leaders and teachers to allow them to build the capacity required to be sustainable (Barber, 2005, 2009; Elmore, 2002). Although there are examples of individual low SES schools excelling against the odds (e.g. Matthews, 2009; Muijs et al., 2004), Earl et al. (2006) observed that there were 'no examples anyway of successful whole district high school reform' (p. 126). A later

exception to this observation was reported by Stringfield, Reynolds, and Schaffer (2008) who conducted a longitudinal study of a Welsh secondary system undergoing a school improvement reform and found sustained increase in student outcomes over a nine year period.

The research literature discussed earlier highlighted that effective leadership focussed on learning is a precondition for successful reform in all schools; however, this is particularly the case for low SES schools (e.g. Dinham, 2005; Edmonds, 1979; Muijs et al., 2004; Mulford et al., 2008). In addition, there is increasing consensus that shared leadership models provide greater capacity to improve outcomes (e.g.Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011; Bezzina, 2007; Bush & Glover, 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 2010) and that these models can improve student outcomes in low SES schools (Earl et al., 2006; Harris, 2004; Harris & Chrispeels, 2006; Muijs et al., 2004). However, there is a lack of understanding as to what are the most effective ways for sharing leadership within school setttings (Harris & DeFlaminis, 2016). Dimmock (2011) also noted that there is limited understanding of how learning-centred leadership roles and responsibilities can be optimally distributed among different staff members in schools.

Research has noted that effective capacity building for learning is a necessary prerequisite for reform (Dimmock, 2011; Stoll, 2009); however, Chrispeels and Harris (2006) argued that the individual context, capacity and culture of a school is an important but under-explored factor limiting the successful transmission of reforms from one school to another. The literature has also identified the need for schools to work together with system support to build capacity (Harris, 2010; Knapp, Copland, Honig, Pleck, & Portin, 2010; Wells & Keane, 2008); however, there is incomplete understanding of how school leaders effectively respond to their local context under the influence of system driven reform to build teacher capacity (Hopkins et al., 2011). Therefore there is a lacuna in the literature about how leadership builds teacher capacity to improve student outcomes and this study intends to investigate this issue.

The research problem is the lack of understanding of the nature of leadership at the system and school level of reform of low SES secondary schools and its relationship to the building of teacher capacity to improve student outcomes.

1.4 Research Purpose

The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of leaders and teachers from different low SES Catholic secondary schools involved in a system driven reform to discover how their experiences inform the field's understanding of leadership for building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes.

1.5 Research Question

Given the above statement of research purpose, the main research question that guided the study was 'How did the experiences of teachers and leaders engaged in a system driven reform for low SES Catholic secondary schools contribute to an understanding of leading capacity building to improve student outcomes?'

1.6 Significance of the Research

The research is significant for a number of reasons. First, the history of large-scale reform to address disadvantage has been problematic with few successes and many failures and the present study aims to shed further light on the process of reform. In particular, it aims to address the limited understanding of the effective relationship between leadership and building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes. Second, the present study aims to provide greater understanding of how learning-centred leadership roles and responsibilities can be optimally created among different staff members in the school. Third, the study contributes to greater understanding of what is required to reduce the achievement gap between low and high SES schools. The research will add to the limited number of studies of low SES secondary schools in the Australian context.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Key definitions of terms are included in this section, which helped focus the research and provide clear and unambiguous understanding when applied throughout the thesis.

Leadership is the work of mobilising and influencing others to articulate and achieve a school's shared intentions and goals (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leadership can encompass individuals or groups identified as providing leadership that include the principal, assistant principals, instructional coaches and heads of departments in formal leadership roles as well as teachers informally recognised by peers as influential. In addition, local system consultants linked to curriculum, programme and teacher

development initiatives at the school level can be included (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

Leadership for learning is defined as the 'approaches that school leaders employ to achieve important school outcomes, with a particular focus on student learning' (Hallinger, 2011 p.126).

Capacity is 'a complex blend of motivation, skill, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support. Put together, it gives individuals, groups, whole school communities and school systems the power to engage, improve and sustain learning over time' (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006 , p.221). Capacity building, therefore, is the process of achieving that blend.

Professional learning refers to 'changes in the thinking, knowledge, skills, and approaches to instruction that form practicing teachers' or administrators' repertoire' (Knapp, 2003, pp 112-113) whilst professional development includes 'the full range of activities, formal and informal, that engage teachers or administrators in new learning about their professional practice' (Knapp, 2003 , p.112).

Quality teaching is identified as a 'set of professional attributes and practices that have an influence on student outcomes'. Teachers make decisions 'about their context and the actions they take bring improvements to student outcomes' (Zammit et al., 2007 , p.1). Quality teaching practices include focusing on effective pedagogy, student engagement, literacy and numeracy skill development and data informed learning.

System refers to an organisation of schools that are governed under a central authority. In American research, they are often referred to as districts. In Australia, there are a number of systems of schools organised under the three sectors of government, Catholic and independent schools. This study of Catholic schools will refer to the 'local system' as meaning the diocesan education office which serves the primary and secondary schools of a Catholic diocese in New South Wales.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

The purpose of a literature review is to present a critical synthesis of the significant academic literature relevant to the research problem. The review of literature for the present study also guides the development of the study's research sub-questions, which are presented in the conclusion of this chapter. The research problem centres on understanding how leadership best builds teacher capacity to improve student outcomes in low SES schools.

The study was set in the context of a reform initiative and the review first considers the nature of reform through the school effectiveness and school improvement literature. It considers the two key concepts of leadership and capacity building within that context of reform and also through the utilisation of a document prepared for school leaders to assist them to understand the nature of the reform, titled *Low SES NP* the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). This document structured the issue of leadership for capacity building under four elements: **leading learning, quality teaching, parent and community engagement and professional learning**. These four elements are agents of capacity building to improve student outcomes and they are part of the literature review of the present study.

The nature of these four elements are interrelated and there is considerable overlap in how these areas illuminate the research problem and contribute to the development of the study's conceptual framework. In spite of the broad scope and extensive nature of the literature, there are also deficiencies and limitations within the body of research that will be identified and which this present study hopes to address.

First to be presented is the context of school reform.

2.1 School Reform

The research problem is contained within school reform especially for low SES secondary schools and its leadership for the maximising of teacher capacity to improve learning. There is extensive literature and research in this context area related to school effectiveness and school improvement research, system and school leadership and teacher capacity building to improve learning. The important elements of this field of literature and research are discussed below.

2.1.1 School Effectiveness Movement

The publication of the Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966) heralded an unprecedented wave of research into reforming schools to improve educational outcomes, especially for disadvantaged socio-economic students.

Coleman's (1966) research concluded that the school influence on student achievement was inconsequential in comparison with the influence of the family, particularly family background and SES. Jencks et al. (1972) confirmed that the achievement level of a student could be more accurately predicted based upon the student's family background rather than which school the student attended. These results challenged the widely held view that schools can influence the achievement of their students, which prompted researchers to investigate the relationship between school effectiveness and student outcomes.

Ethnographic studies of inner London secondary schools found that some schools were better than others at improving the academic and social outcomes of their students. Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Outston, and Smith (1979) identified that 'children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and by the qualities of the school as a social institution' (p. 79) and that the degree of academic emphasis, teacher pedagogy, recognition and rewarding of good behaviour and diligence and the school's fostering of students to take responsibility for their learning were all key factors that distinguished between successful and unsuccessful schools. They identified that these factors created a 'school ethos' or 'culture' that influenced student achievement.

Rutter et al. (1979)'s findings were supported by other early school effectiveness studies such as those by Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis, and Ecob (1988) who studied London primary schools and Tomlinson (1991) who reported that the school had a greater impact on student outcomes than the ethnic background of students. These studies noted that successful schools demonstrated values, norms and roles existing within the instructional organisation of the school that influenced student achievement (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979). Schein (1996) explained this concept further by noting that the school's culture reflected the community's consensus about how problems were solved and guided individuals' interactions using a shared history of assumptions that provided meaning, guidelines for behavior and assisted school communities to adapt to uncertain environments.

In his seminal research of five inner city American schools, Edmonds (1979) reported that effective schools possessed traits that enabled students to achieve at high

levels. These traits became known as the Effective School Correlates and included instructional leadership from the principal, a whole school focus on learning, a safe and orderly climate for teaching and learning, high expectations for every student and measures of pupil achievement that were the basis for planning and evaluation.

The simplicity of the five traits earned it great adoption into practice, policy and research worldwide. Further research supported the work of Edmonds (1979) and found that effective low SES schools emphasised a learning culture where academic rewards and recognition were emphasised more in low SES schools (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) and there was evidence of a student centred and authentic pedagogy which engaged and challenged low SES secondary students (Newmann, 1992). A study of high performing low SES English schools by Matthews (2009) supported this by finding that the leaders of these schools set high expectations in a student-centred culture where all students were expected to excel.

Instructional leadership was also confirmed as important but researchers began to focus on how it was exercised. Principals in high performing low SES schools focused more on reform implementation to support learning (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993) whilst Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995)'s review of the literature of effective low SES schools and identified the existence of professional leadership that is firm and purposeful, with a 'hands on' participatory leadership style. Matthews (2009) also found that effective leadership was well-distributed and strategic. School leaders ensured the sharing of vision and goals to create a unity of purpose, consistent practice, collegiality and collaboration (Sammons, Hillman, & Mortimore, 1995).

Although Edmonds (1979) acknowledged the importance of high expectations and instructional leadership he did not directly identify the importance of teacher quality in his traits of highly effective low SES schools which subsequent research has identified as a key characteristic. A Canadian study of high performing low SES schools concluded that motivated and competent teachers were most important element of successful schools (Wendel, 2000) but the study cautioned that 'success is a fragile quality depending on many factors and is acquired only with good leadership, care and difficulty … It is sustained with constant vigilance but can be quickly compromised by poor decisions or by changing circumstances that are sometimes beyond the control of the school' (Wendel, 2000 p. 24).

Brookover (1981) found that teachers of effective secondary schools serving low SES communities had a clear understanding of whole school learning objectives and devoted more time to learning tasks and utilised team work more than other school

teachers did. Matthews (2009) simply claimed that effective low SES schools have outstanding teachers.

Another trait not raised by Edmonds (1979) was engagement with parents. Cotton (1995) identified 16 studies that supported the involvement of parents and community members in supporting the instructional programs of schools. However Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) found that effective low SES principals discouraged parental involvement compared to their high SES counterparts. Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995)'s review of the literature disputed this finding believing that effective low SES schools created a partnership between home and school that allowed parental involvement (Sammons et al., 1995).

Therefore, from early work during the 1970s by Rutter in the UK and Edmonds in the US to the report by Matthews (2009), a set of features of effective schools have been developed by researchers (Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979; Sammons et al., 1995; Scheerens, 1990; Wendel, 2000) and there appears to be some consensus about the characteristics that effective schools serving low socio-economic communities possess (Barber, 2005). The *Low SES NP* reforms focusing on leading learning, teacher quality, professional learning and engagement with parents and community find their basis in the learning from the school effectiveness movement. How these reforms are implemented in schools provides the impetus for another important movement in educational research, the school improvement movement.

2.1.2 School Improvement Movement

School improvement is the 'systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively' (Van Velzen, 1985, p.48) and researchers have produced a credible body of work to understand how schools can improve.

The school improvement and school effectiveness movements generally shared the same objective to improve learning and reduce the learning gap between high and low socio-economic schools; however, they approached the problem differently. Bollen (1996 p.1) summarised the difference as school effectiveness being 'like taking a picture of a school and comparing that with pictures of other schools … [whereas] school improvement practice is like telling stories about development and change in schools.'

Early school improvement projects were focused on the individual school and were dominated by small action research. By the 1980s, there was increasing attention to link school improvement to student learning outcomes (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006).

The election of the Thatcher Government in the UK during in 1979 led to reforms that resulted in schools competing with each other for enrolments and resources whilst they conformed to a new national curriculum. In 1983, the Reagan administration in the US produced a report, *A Nation at Risk*, which was highly critical of the standard of education in US public schools. These neo-conservative governments influenced other governments including those in Canada and Australia to increasingly become active and central players in school improvement. Government sponsored comprehensive models of school reform were created for individual schools and systems of schools in a number of countries leading up to the turn of the century (Fullan, 2009; Rowan et al., 2004a; Scheurich, Goddard, Skrla, Bell McKenzie, & Youngs, 2010).

2.1.3 Large-Scale Reform

The context for the research problem is the difficulty of successfully managing reform in the context of a low socio-economic secondary school setting. Although ground-breaking in Australia in terms of scale, the National Partnerships for Smarter Schools have their origins in the comprehensive reform movements which occurred in the United States during the 1990s. The design of the partnerships emanate from the findings of such large-scale reform projects. A brief overview of the learning from these large-scale reforms is important to gain an understanding of the difficulty of successfully leading such reforms.

Early American attempts at large-scale reform in the 1970s found that local district factors (rather than federal government programme guidelines or project implementation) dominated project outcomes and that the quality and quantity of change could not be controlled by policy makers (McLaughlin, 1990). Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) developed in the US during the 1990s as a solution to implementing large school reforms over multiple sites. CSR grew after the 1994 *US Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Schools with school systems that served low SES communities were financially encouraged to implement school-wide reforms. Encouragement turned into mandate in 1997 when the US Congress created the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) programme, which required schools to address prescribed elements in their school improvement plans to be eligible

for programme grants. Reform efforts under the CSRD included elements such as professional development for teachers, greater parent and community engagement, resource allocation for sustaining reforms, measurable student achievement goals and annual evaluation of progress (Comprehensive Reform Quality Center, 2006).

Schools could implement comprehensive reforms by adoption of a specific and replicable model that addressed the CSRD elements (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2004; Rowan et al., 2004a). While adoption of the reform programmes appeared quick and easy, implementation at schools was slow and difficult. Evaluations of programmes uncovered a pattern of limited improvement for student learning (Berends, 2002; Bodilly, 1996; Rowan et al., 2004a) and, consequently, support for the new reform strategy weakened and US education policy moved away from large-scale improvement strategies (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). Results for secondary schools were particularly disappointing. A review reported that none of the 18 secondary CSR improvement models had strong effects and 5 were appraised as only having moderate effects on achievement (Rowan et al., 2004a). Another review of ten American high schools undergoing a reform process found that only two schools were successful in raising student achievement (Noguera, 2004). Australian researchers made the observation that reforms in high schools 'no matter how well conceptualised, powerfully sponsored, brilliantly structured, or closely audited were likely to fail in the face of cultural based resistance from schools' (Mulford & Silins, 2003 p.1). Schmoker (1999 p.39) bleakly summarised the decade of reform of the 1990s with the conclusion that 'umpteen reforms have come and gone, using up time, money, and hope. They have left a crippling disillusionment in their wake, a cynicism about staff development and any belief that training or innovation benefits students' (p. 39).

Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) appraised the reforms of the 1990s and concluded that in spite of significant effort and reform activity in most OECD countries, the impact on student outcomes was disappointing. Lessons learnt from this era were that reform strategies failed to improve student achievement if they did not focus on classrooms, pedagogy and professional capacity building (Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001). In addition, it was revealed that large scale reforms did not sufficiently recognise the importance of local context and local leadership in managing change (Fullan, 2000). This is an important revelation for the present study as the reform designers purport to include local leadership in the change management process but a number of the reform strategies are common to all schools.

Another finding was that reforms successful in one district or state could not be successfully transplanted to another without significant planning and adaption. Researchers began to assert that school improvement must be unique to each school because each school's context is different, which was particularly amplified in the secondary sector with its broad range of school types and cultures (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Mascall, 1999). The starting levels of capacity evident in different schools and districts also required consideration, e.g. schools that began the San Francisco Bay reforms without a culture of evidence-based reflection failed to engage effectively with the reforms (Jaquith & McLaughlin, 2010). This finding is important for the present study as each school in this study has its own unique culture and it is important to understand if these cultures promoted or inhibited the building of teacher capacity to improve student outcomes.

Harris (2011b) identified the folly of government driven reform that required immediate gains in achievement with political cycles that demanded much shorter implementation programmes than those required for deep, long-term change. Hargreaves and Shirley (2011) supported this view and noted that the rapid pace of reform implementation ignored important assessments of contextual needs. This rapid implementation creates overload that enervates motivation and introduces resistance and distraction (Cheng & Walker, 2008). Many reforms failed owing to strategies being prematurely abandoned because early data did not show that they worked and so they were replaced with new ones, thus creating a perpetual cycle of shallow change (Bryk, 2014).

Educational reform efforts have been characterised by poor processes of implementation with little consideration of change strategies (Fullan, 2011; Harris, 2011b; Levin, 2010). Harris (2011a) noted that the prolific change literature ironically lacks ideas about how to enact change to make reform work. The present study hopes to contribute to greater understanding about how to enact successful change for school reform especially with regards to dealing with system driven reform strategies that require local implementation and how leaders can successfully engage others in the reform process.

The school improvement literature reinforces the importance of ensuring that the school culture is well understood and that any school improvement activity takes into account the impact upon that particular school's culture (Harris, 2011b). In addition, research findings point to the necessity of a positive and consultative collegial culture

focusing on teaching and learning to successfully manage and lead change (Fink & Stoll, 2005; Fullan, 2011).

These findings have not been immediately apparent to policymakers in government. Individual and collegial school cultures are concepts not well understood by governments who are keen on rapid and widespread improvements to school systems (Fullan, 2011; Harris & Bennett, 2005). The United States Government launched another wave of reforms following the passing of the 'No Child Left Behind' legislation in 2001 which emphasised annual testing, annual academic progress, report cards, parent choice of schooling and teacher qualifications (Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). Governments tend to prefer a 'top-down approach' based on external 'experts', which Barber (2009) characterised as 'command and control' and if executed well can be highly effective. However, he warned, 'there is nothing worse than command and control incompetently implemented' (Barber, 2009, p. 73).

When teachers perceive that their principal or leadership team is enthusiastically adopting an external top-down reform agenda that is not supported by them, the result can lead to teacher alienation and feelings of disempowerment (Barber, 2009). The consistent failure of centralised 'top-down reforms' has often been blamed on a lack of 'ownership', an over emphasis of the importance of the outside researcher and a lack of recognition of the expertise and knowledge of the practitioner (Bishop & Mulford, 1999). These findings are highly relevant the present study because the Low SES NP reforms have a number of 'top-down' features including common design for all schools, system mandated strategies and limited consultation of reform priorities and it will be important to see if these features diminish the impact of the reforms.

For reform to be successful, the improvement agenda needs to be 'owned' by both the leadership of the school and the school community itself (Rowan et al., 2004a) and the knowledge of the local practitioners needs to be valued during the planning and implementation stages (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Reynolds et al. (1993) suggested that other aspects necessary for a trusting supportive environment to be established be included, such as process goals that have been debated and developed within the school rather than provided by an external authority and orientation of the desired outcome towards the school context (Jaquith & McLaughlin, 2010). Successful reform also requires collegial leadership with a balance of responsibilities and effective accountability systems in place to allow both school leaders and teachers to be involved in professional decision making processes (Reynolds et al., 1993). Fullan (1994) noted that 'bottom-up reform' which was constructed at the class and school level using

professional and inclusive decision making has had limited impact on changing teacher practices because of existing norms of teacher autonomy.

Although the Low SES NP reforms have a number of "top-down" features they also have some "bottom-up" characteristics including the placement of instructional coaches in each school to work with teachers and school leaders in managing the implementation of the reforms and allowing principals to be responsible for the manner and method of implementation. These features allow for collegial leadership and local decision making that could promote local ownership of the reform agenda. It is important to understand how the "top-down" and "bottom-up" features interacted and what individuals perceived about them.

Studies of reform projects have also stated that being able to convey relational trust was an important character trait of successful leaders who were seen as effective in managing change. Relational trust is defined as

> the social exchanges of schooling as organized around a distinct set of role relationships: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and with their school principal … Each party in a role relationship maintains an understanding of his or her role obligations of the others. (Bryk & Schneider, 2003 p.41).

Bryk and Schneider (2003) established in their longitudinal study of large-scale reform in over 400 elementary schools in Chicago that when relational trust was strongly evident reform initiatives were more likely to be accepted by teachers and that collective decision making was a trait of schools that reported high levels of relational trust. Building relational trust is connected with other partnership building activities. Bond (2001) reported that systems of schools that consciously worked to build partnerships with their community had higher levels of social trust within and between their schools and with their community. Furthermore, teacher-parent trust levels improved as did teacher commitment to school and peer collaboration amongst teachers. Kirby and DiPaola (2011) reported that in schools where there was considerable community involvement there tended to be greater levels of student achievement.

For the present study, it is important to note what barriers school and system leaders encountered and how they managed the change required to build the capacity for leadership for learning required to implement the *Low SES NP* reforms. The main focus was on the local context of the four Catholic schools selected for the study to understand the nature of relational trust in the schools and how the different schools

balanced internal and external accountabilities and the nature of 'ownership of the reforms' for both leaders and teachers.

In summary, relational trust, adaptation to the local context, ownership of the reform process by stakeholders and a strong focus on learning were all salient lessons from previous large-scale reforms. They highlight the importance of leadership in the role of building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes.

2.2 Leading Capacity Building

Leaders build relational trust as a means to build the capacity of their organization (Harris, Caldwell, & Longmuir, 2013). Capacity building in schools has been conceived as a generative, collegial process that aims to develop a vibrant workplace culture characterised by trusting relationships and sustained improvements to school achievement (Andrews et al., 2011).

Bain, Walker, and Chan (2011) perceived capacity building in similar terms as 'a set of coherent, deliberate strategies enacted at a whole school level to positively influence the knowledge, skills, and priorities of individuals and the school as a collective as together they seek to implement change' (p. 701).

Capacity building is, therefore, 'the intentional process of mobilizing a school's resources in order to enhance priority outcomes – and sustain those improved outcomes' (Andrews et al., 2011 p.20). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) argued that capacity building required skills and knowledge to be created by, and with, teachers for use in their own schools, instead of being something delivered by system leaders or policy makers as a one-sized single solution for top-down implementation.

Hargreaves (2001) proposed that social (relationships and trust) and intellectual capital (what teachers know and do) are both important in the process of capacity building. Fullan (2000) conceptualised capacity building in similar ways but added programme coherence (i.e. integration, alignment and coordination of innovations). He later re-defined it to refer to 'building actions that lead to an increase in the collective power of a group to improve student achievement, especially by raising the bar and closing the gap for all students' (Fullan, 2005 , p.4).

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) applied the concept of capacity building when they described approaches to professional learning communities (PLCs). They proposed personal capacity (teacher knowledge and professional networks), interpersonal capacity (collegial relations and collective practice) and organisational capacity

(professional learning and change structures). For the present study, capacity is defined as:

> a complex blend of motivation, skill, positive learning, organisational conditions and culture, and infrastructure of support. Put together, it gives individuals, groups, whole school communities and school systems the power to get involved in, improve and sustain learning over time. (Stoll et al., 2006 p, 221).

Capacity building, therefore, is the process of achieving this blend.

Capacity building is seen as an important instrument of school improvement. Hopkins, Ainscow, and West (1994) saw school improvement as a, 'distinct approach to educational change that enhances student achievement as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change seriously'(p. 3). Stringer (2007)'s study of a New Zealand school found that building capacity for school improvement was highly dependent on context, and its conceptualisation is unique to each school setting. Fullan (2010c) advocated for purposeful, focused, well-planned and sustained capacity building for sustained school improvement whilst Harris (2011a) contended that implementation processes and capacity building are more important to school reform than innovation is. She stated,

> While bright, shiny policies and innovations tend to get all the attention at the outset, without attention to proper implementation and associated capacity building they are unlikely to succeed. However well intentioned or well funded the approach to system reform may be; it will be destined to fail without serious and sustained attention to building the capacity for change … capacity building with a focus on results. (p. 626)

Sharratt and Fullan (2009) believe that capacity building must be systemically employed to raise achievement levels across schools and classrooms serving disadvantaged socio-economic communities. To achieve this goal, they argued that schools needed the support that comes from being part of a system of schools.

2.2.1 System Leadership for Capacity Building

School improvement literature has largely focused on individual school leadership to enact change and build capacity despite its seemingly limited ability to reform itself (Harris, 2010). More recently, in this era of accountability and legislated education reform agendas, systems and their leaders have re-emerged as important agents to build the capacity of schools to improve (Leithwood, 2010). From the 1990s,

many governments required systems to impose accountability measures regarding the quality of student learning (Firestone, 2009).

For the past decade or so, government initiatives have influenced the role of local systems (districts) in developing practices to support student achievement that 'requires changing the culture of district work from monitoring and allocating resources to developing policies and practices to create more uniform and high functioning schools. Districts have been asked to become shapers of school culture and performance' (Lee, Louis, & Anderson, 2012 p.134).

A study on the role of district (or local system) reform noted the success of three systems: the Toronto school district that improved literacy achievement, the Edmonton school district that experienced increases in overall achievement and the English school system that increased literacy and numeracy scores (Fullan, Bertani, & Quinn, 2004a). The review cautioned systems about the plateauing of initial gains during a reform period and advised that constant evaluation was required. It was also noted that there are few examples of successful reforms in secondary schools. Stringfield et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal study of a Welsh secondary system undergoing a school improvement reform and found sustained increases in student outcomes over a nine year period, which the authors attested to be owing to (amongst other factors) building the capacity of both the middle and top tiers of school leadership as well as classroom teachers. Fullan et al. (2004a) also noted the need for system leaders to balance the impulse to centralise or decentralise decision making which is akin to 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to reform. They advocated a coherent conceptualisation to drive the reform; a shared moral purpose; alignment of the structure and roles of the organisation's change-makers; capacity building including professional development, networking and other collaborative processes; the system seeing itself as a reflective learning organisation; high expectations and accountability measures to respond to incompetency; the use of external partners to further build capacity, particularly professional capital; and effective financial stewardship (Fullan et al., 2004a). Some of these interdependent elements have been espoused in the design of the reforms being considered in this study and it would be important to know if participants perceived of them in the reform experience and what they may say about them. This is important because such information may shed some light on how leaders can successfully build capacity for improved student outcomes.

Fullan (2010a) noted the weaknesses of English reforms including the use of heavy targets, prescription from the top and punitive accountability. For future reforms,

he advocated the use of intelligent accountability and a small number of core activities rather than 'too many fragmented, piecemeal, rapidly changing priorities' (Fullan, 2010a p. 25).

The McKinsey Group commissioned two reports on the common attributes of excellent school systems entitled *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top* (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) and *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better* (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010). The first report revealed that the top performing systems have three distinguishing characteristics: they employ suitable people to be teachers, they invest in professional development to make these people teach well and lastly they ensure that the system works well to deliver the best possible instruction for each child. Surprisingly, in light of the literature's understanding of the role of context, the report advocated that these characteristics work independently of the local culture.

The second report considered the sustainability of reforms and found that a school system can improve from wherever its reform journey commenced and that these improvements can be achieved in six years or less. The report also confirmed earlier findings that there is substantial variation in how a system implements these interventions and there is little or no evidence that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to reform implementation is effective. Furthermore, this report found that systems more advanced in their reform journey sustain improvement by allowing greater local school autonomy compared to systems that were less developed in their improvement journey. This is a development in understanding from the balance of decision making between centralisation and decentralisation that Fullan et al. (2004a) advocated. There is dynamic tension between system reform goals and the need for school educators to strategically plan to meet the needs, characteristics and starting capacity of their contexts as well as ensure coherence across the overall reform (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Leithwood et al. (2004) concluded that 'more research is needed to clarify the district policy and strategy dynamics that enable this bottom-up/top-down approach to reform' (p. 44). Day et al. (2009) posited that system-imposed 'top-down' approaches or 'bottom-up' locally created reforms should not be mutually exclusive and that the creative tension created by approaches working in tandem can be very productive. Hopkins (2007) suggests that the key to effective system reform is by system leaders strategically re-balancing 'top down and bottom up' change over time. Hopkins, Harris, Stoll & Mackay (2011) acknowledged in their review of system reform that there is an

incomplete understanding of how school leaders effectively respond 'bottom-up' to their local context under the influence of 'top-down' system driven reform to build teacher capacity (Hopkins et al., 2011). As a result of this lacuna the present study intends to explore the balance and dynamics of the top-down' and 'bottom-up' design of these reforms in order to better understand how system and school leaders of the future could better design reforms to effectively build capacity for improved student outcomes.

Many of these findings regarding the characteristics of effective systems were supported by the research of Leithwood (2010) who reviewed 31 studies of mostly low SES school districts whose students demonstrated outstanding growth in their achievement. The characteristics of high performing school systems that were identified included a district-wide focus on student achievement, evidence-based planning, strong learning culture and accountability and investment in instructional leadership (Leithwood, 2010). A national US survey of educators that considered the relationship between leadership and student outcomes at the school, district and state level found that a challenging but important job of system leaders was to influence the school's culture to focus attention unreservedly on student learning (Lee et al., 2012).

Therefore, the role of systems has been identified in the literature as an important element for effective reform. It is important to gain an understanding of how a system leads a large-scale reform to focus school leadership teams on student learning. For the present study of Catholic secondary schools, it is important to understand the role of the local system in the management of the *Low SES NP* and how personnel from the local system supported the leadership teams in implementing the *Low SES NP* reform.

Schools need the support of a system to build effective leadership, quality teaching, professional learning and parent engagement (Barber & Mourshed, 2007; Mourshed et al., 2010). This important area of leadership will now be discussed in greater detail and deals with the first element of 'leading learning' from the supporting document *Low SES NP* the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). Researchers have studied the context of low SES schools and there is emerging consensus that these schools require a particular style of leadership if they are to build capacity to improve learning in their schools.

2.3 School Leadership for Capacity Building

The theme of leading learning considers the importance of leadership in low SES schools, the nature of leading learning and how that leadership can build teacher and leadership capacity as well as improve student outcomes. A report from the OECD attempted to answer the question, 'School leadership: why does it matter?' and concluded that for schools, leadership can improve the quality of instruction and learning by establishing objectives and positively influencing teacher pedagogy; for local systems, by collaborating with other schools and local communities, school leadership can strengthen the learning culture; and, at the greater system level, school leadership is vital for successful education reform (Pont, Nusche, & Hopkins, 2008). This section of the literature review will first consider the importance of leadership, particularly principals, in low SES schools before discussing how leaders improve student outcomes in these schools.

2.3.1 The importance of leadership

The developed world has been very interested in the nature and possibilities of leadership and much has been written in the educational leadership literature about the important role of leadership in achieving improved educational outcomes. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) defined school leaders as 'those persons, occupying various roles in the school who provide direction and exert influence in order to achieve the school's goals' (p. 2).

The research literature has focused in part on identifying how leaders exercise their influence to improve student outcomes. Even though the effect of leadership on student outcomes is considered to be indirect, it has been reported that 'school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student outcomes' (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. p.27). A review of leadership and school effectiveness by Hallinger and Heck (2010) suggested a link between leadership and student achievement that was mediated by leaders sharing goals and vision. This supports the earlier view of Leithwood and Riehl (2003) who also found that leadership works through the sharing of the school vision as well as managing classroom instruction and curriculum.

Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) estimated that school leadership has a substantial effect on student achievement with an average 25% correlation between principal leadership and student achievement. They identified the following leaderships

traits as being most influential: being optimistic and intellectually stimulating; being a change agent; and being able to evaluate and provide feedback, exercise flexibility and articulate clear ideals and beliefs (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Later research confirmed that 25% of a school's overall influence on student achievement was associated with the effectiveness of the principal and 33% was associated with teachers (Leaders, 2009).

In their meta analysis of studies that examined the relationship between dimensions of leadership and student outcomes, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2007) and Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) identified five types or dimensions of leadership including: "establishing goals and expectations; strategic resourcing planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment" (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008 p.635). The greatest influences on the five dimensions of leadership have been "associated with more direct leader involvement in the oversight of, and participation in, curriculum planning and coordination and teacher learning and professional development. This suggests that the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more they are likely to make a difference to students" (Robinson et al., 2007 p.21).

Leithwood (2016) found evidence of a strong association between student performance and the proximity of leadership to students' direct experiences of the work. He concluded that leaders who work closely with teachers have a greater chance of influencing classroom practice than those who supervise teaching more remotely (Leithwood, 2016). This research provides challenge for a principal of a secondary school who typically leads a large student population and a teaching staff which is structured into different subject departments. This challenge is of some interest to the present research problem regarding how best to lead learning and build capacity in secondary schools.

Effective school leaders typically employ practices from the same repertoire of skills as less effective leaders; however, it is the way they respond to the local context that positively influences staff motivation, commitment and working conditions (Hattie, 2009). Mulford and Silins (2008) shed some light on the way successful leaders respond to the context when they hypothesised that successful school principalship is an 'interactive, reciprocal and evolving process involving many players, which is influenced by, and in turn, influences the context in which it occurs' (pp. 61–62). Mulford and Silins (2011) also advocate that successful principalship is underpinned by:

the core values and beliefs of the principal. These values and beliefs inform the

principal's decisions and actions regarding the provision of individual support

and capacity building, and capacity building at the school level, including school

culture and structure. The principal's core values and beliefs, together with the

values and capacities of other members of the school community, feed directly

into the development of a shared school vision, which shapes the teaching and

learning, student and social capital outcomes of schooling. (p. 62)

Mulford and Silins (2011) purport that the interplay among context, core values and

beliefs influence what the leader does to build capacity to improve student and teacher

learning. They found that the level of capacity building evident to teachers in their

school influenced student academic achievement and that successful schools were

places with high trust between teachers and leaders with valued staff who were involved

in collaborative decision making.

A number of scholars including Chrispeels and Harris (2006); Dimmock (2011)

have noted the limited understanding in the scholarly literature of how school leaders

respond to the context of the school when they are trying to improve it in order to raise

student outcomes. Although the school effectiveness movement has identified the

essential character of successful schools; the school improvement literature has had less

success in explaining to school leaders how to adopt these essential characteristics to

become a successful school (Hallinger, 2011; Mulford, 2012). The present study hope to

address this lacuna in the literature.

In addition, the nature of low SES schools provides a particular context that

requires further exploration. Although the studies of Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe

(1998), Silins and Mulford (2010) as well as Mulford and Silins (2011) included both

disadvantaged and other schools, there is considerable agreement that low socio-

economic schools require leadership that is particularly focused on explicit teaching and

learning (Barth, 1986; Hallinger, 2011; Muijs et al., 2004). The literature on leading

learning in low SES (also referred to in the literature as disadvantaged schools) provides

important insights into the type of leadership required to improve student outcomes

which is an area of interest that will be addressed in this research.

2.3.2 How leaders improve student outcomes in low SES schools

A number of researchers believe that the impact of leadership has a greater effect on low SES schools than on other schools (Dinham, 2007a; Dinham & Scott, 2008; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Zbar, Kimber, & Marshall, 2009). Scholars have reported substantial variation in the effectiveness of principals to improve student outcomes, with low SES schools relying more on principal leadership to do this than other schools who might improve student outcomes by relying on other factors such as teacher quality (Leithwood et al., 2004; Muijs et al., 2004). In a study of different schools with outstanding academic achievement, academic focus was more prevalent in successful low SES schools than in successful high SES schools, whereas successful low SES schools had fewer and more short-term goals than their high SES counterparts (Teddlie, Stringfield, Wimpelberg, & Kirby, 1989).

A review of research evidence by Muijs et al. (2004) of effective and improved schools in low SES areas supported later findings by Robinson (2007) that leaders who focussed on teaching and learning, developed a learning community and ensured continuous professional development led improving and effective schools. The review also highlighted the need to create a positive school culture and information-rich environment, and to involve parents and gain external support to address the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged schools (Muijs et al., 2004).

As Leithwood et al. (2008) noted, leaders influence learning by responding effectively to their local context. An English study of low socio-economic but academically improving secondary schools found that an important attribute of a head teacher in such a school is the ability to analyse the context as quickly as possible and respond accordingly with a range of improvement measures (West, Ainscow, & Stanford, 2005). Similarly, Mills and Gale's (2009) research, a case study of a rural secondary Australian school, concluded that school leaders need to assess the changing school community context to lead learning effectively. A study of successful Tasmanian principals at low SES schools found them to be highly trusted by their teachers; however, they were more independent of the system, less troubled about the expectations of system employers and more adept in managing the tensions between problem solving and strategic planning than their less successful colleagues were (Mulford et al., 2008).

In summary, there is some consensus amongst researchers regarding what effective leaders do to improve student outcomes and that effective leadership is an important element of building the capacity to improve student outcomes in low SES

schools. Strong leadership that is sensitive to the distinctive culture of the school and focuses on student and teacher learning is important. This has implications for the present study as it intends to explore how leaders of different low SES Catholic secondary schools attempted to build capacity to improve leadership of learning. It is important to understand how sensitive leaders were towards the distinctive culture of their school, how focused the school was on learning and whether such attention was warranted in light of student outcomes.

2.3.3 Leadership for learning

The literature has considered the efficacy of a range of leadership approaches that have been promoted to improve student learning. Over the course of the last three decades, understanding has evolved beyond the first preconceptions of leaders being simply administrators to more sophisticated concepts that embrace instructional, managerial, transactional, transformational, shared or distributive forms of leadership under the inclusive header of 'leadership for learning' (Townsend, 2011).

The term leadership for learning is a useful one to describe how principals and other leaders lead and engage in activities that promote learning. Leadership for learning is defined as 'the approaches that school leaders employ to achieve important school outcomes, with a particular focus on student learning' (Hallinger, 2011, p. 126). While the term 'instructional leadership' has typically focused on the role of the principal, leadership for learning suggests 'a wider range of leadership agents' (Hallinger, 2011, p. 126). The term leadership for learning includes elements of instructional leadership, transformational leadership and shared leadership (Dimmock, 2011; Hallinger, 2011) and has become increasingly accepted in the literature (for example Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Mulford et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008; Townsend, 2011).

Leadership for learning involves moral purpose or values to guide action (Swaffield & MacBeath, 2008). Hopkins (2013) defined moral purpose in education as:

> a resolute failure to accept context as a determinant of academic and social success. Acting on context and not accepting poverty and social background as necessary determinants of success in schooling is at the heart of the systemic approach to school transformation. (p. 314)

There is moral purpose in improving the opportunities for students, with values giving meaning to capacity building. Leadership involves eliciting, forming, sustaining

and disseminating core values across the school community. Fullan (2003) described this as the 'moral imperative' which is a more profound conception than 'vision'. Moral purpose must be shared if it is to build collective capacity (Bezzina (2007). Burford and Bezzina (2014) acknowledged that building shared moral purpose is a "sophisticated enterprise that requires leaders to navigate the complexities of modern schools in times that are ethically ambiguous…to discern the moral purpose of a community and nurture it in a way that will allow it to shape educational experience" (p.406). For disadvantaged socio-economic schools, the moral imperative is largely focussed on improving life opportunities for students via increasing student outcomes.

Hallinger and Heck (2011b) and Mulford and Silins (2011) found that leadership and capacity building operate as a mutual influencing process where each builds upon the other. Furthermore, leadership, while a potentially important driver for change, was found to be by itself insufficient to result in improvement in learning outcomes. Hallinger and Heck (2011a) concluded that the school's capacity for educational improvement should work in tandem with efforts to strengthen leadership and that 'leadership and school improvement capacity operate as part of a set of systemic relationships. Focusing on one without attending to the others is unlikely to bring about sustained improvement' (pp 482-483).

Robinson (2010) proposed a number of leadership capabilities that are required to engage in effective leadership for learning. She advocated that leaders need to use 'deep leadership content knowledge to solve complex school-based problems, while building relational trust with staff, parents, and students' (p. 1). Her model refers to the importance of building leadership capacity for complex problem solving and to develop deep leadership knowledge and relational trust. As a concept, leadership for learning focuses on the need to build the capacity of leaders to create learning communities in their schools.

Robinson's (2010) conclusions are supported by the findings of Mulford and Silins (2011) whereby successful schools were characterised by 'a school climate of trust, valued and empowered staff and structures that promote collaborative decision making' (p. 68). They also resonate with the findings of a large English study of successful school leadership by Day et al. (2009), which concluded that the quality and breadth of leadership at the school level is more important than the direct influence of any mandated policy.

Therefore, the concept of leadership for learning gives clarity to the present study in terms of how education leaders engage with large-scale reform to build

capacity to improve leading and learning. One assumption of leadership of learning is that it is shared. This particular study will explore the building of leadership capacity and examine how leadership for learning is shared or distributed among staff members of each school.

2.3.4 Distributed leadership for learning

There is interest in the way leadership is shared in schools, 'which goes beyond the individual in a formal role or with a strong personality' (Bezzina, 2007 ,p.62). For reasons ranging from the sustainability and overall effectiveness of leadership through to the principle of sharing the wisdom of the collective, the practice of investing leadership solely in individuals is no longer advisable (Day et al., 2009). A number of researchers have advocated forms of shared leadership for disadvantaged socio-economic schools to 'turn around' poor performance to the next stage of building capacity and achieving further improvement (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Harris, 2002; Muijs et al., 2004; Wendel, 2000).

There is a number of terms regarding the notion of shared leadership and it is important to distinguish them. 'Shared leadership' is similar in meaning to the terms 'distributed leadership' and 'parallel leadership'. The concept of parallel leadership describes a relationship between teacher leaders and principals that values mutual trust and shared goals (Duignan & Bezzina, 2006).

The distributed leadership model differs from shared leadership as it specifies 'distribution of tasks and responsibilities … dispersed amongst different hierarchical levels…[however]…it does not imply people necessarily work together to share the knowledge, power and authority of executive leadership' (Jameson, 2007 , p.13).

Harris (2013) defined leadership distribution as 'leadership that is shared within, between and across organizations' (p.12). Gronn (2002) referred to a holistic model of leadership distribution in which members of an organisation provided leadership for varying tasks or goals. Harris (2009) argued that it allows for the sharing of expertise in a school whilst both Gurr (2008) and Robinson (2008) note that it mirrors the reality of how schools structure their leadership.

Silins and Mulford (2002) concluded that student learning can be improved if leadership is distributed and when teachers are empowered in areas that are important to them. However, they also indicated that relational trust and the existence of characteristics akin to a PLC are influential and that the principal and leadership team need to make the decision-making processes of the school transparent and inclusive. A

study of teachers in Flemish secondary schools by Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009) indicated that the perceived cohesion and cooperation within the leadership team and the quality of their support was associated with greater staff commitment and was more important than whether leadership was distributed.

Collaborative leadership involves groups working actively together on leadership tasks so that leadership has a greater combined effect (Hulpia, Devos, Rosseel, & Vlerick, 2012). Harris (2003) proposed that well distributed leadership can motivate and engage teachers towards school improvement and change as 'organizational change and improvement are a collective rather than an individual concern' (p. 5) and that 'collaboration is at the heart of distributive leadership' (p. 3). However, the emphasis of collaborative leadership on working together can lead to slow decisions and organisational inertia with insufficient focus or authority (Dimmock, 2011). Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that collaborative school leadership, which was described in their study as expanded leadership beyond the principal, was associated with improvements in reading and mathematics, with the relationship being influenced by leaders building the school's capacity for academic improvement in a reciprocal relationship with school capacity shaping leadership capacity and vice versa.

This suggests that a collaborative or distributed style of leadership, which is focused on learning, should assist in improving student outcomes for students in low SES schools. However, Dimmock (2011) posited that scholars needed to 'unravel how learning-centred leadership roles and responsibilities can be optimally distributed across different staff members in the school' (p. 94). Johnson, Dempster, and Wheeley (2016) went further by concluding that, "if distributed leadership is a *preferred leadership theory*, then how it is implemented and practised effectively, in different contexts with different people for different purposes, becomes an important goal for research" (p26).

This present study provides an opportunity to examine how school leaders distributed responsibilities for leading learning in their secondary schools and how successful that distribution was in building capacity to lead learning. This is in response to the call of Harris (2005) that the literature 'urgently need(s) contemporary, fine-grained studies of distributed leadership practice' (p.170) and this present study should shed some light on how leaders can distribute leadership of learning to better build teacher capacity for improved student outcomes.

The literature has begun to identify and examine the role of other potential leaders of learning in secondary schools. One of particular importance is the role of the head of department in secondary schools.

2.3.4.1 Heads of Departments

Heads of departments (HoDs) in secondary schools form part of the middle leadership team and have the potential to make a difference to faculty performance in much the same way as principals make a difference to whole school performance (Dinham, 2007b; Harris, 2004; Sammons, Thomas, & Mortimore, 1997). Busher and Harris (1999) drew upon the work of Glover, Gleeson, Gough, and Johnson (1998) to identify four dimensions of the heads of department work. The first dimension is how heads of department administer school-wide perspectives and policies into the practices of individual classrooms. The second dimension is how heads of department motivate faculty members to be part of a team, while the third dimension is related to improving staff and student performance. The final dimension of a head of department's work is mediating the views of departmental colleagues to the leadership team and other middle managers within the school. Thus, the role of the middle leader in a school is demanding, different to that of the classroom teacher and requiring a different set of skills. A study of heads of department in the independent sector revealed that their previous experience as classroom teachers did not prepare them adequately for leading their peers (Irvine & Brundrett, 2016).

In his review of the research conducted on the leadership of heads of department, Leithwood (2016) concluded that there is compelling evidence that because heads of department work with teachers and have proximity to students' direct experiences in the classroom, they have greater potential to influence student outcomes than the school principal. Leask and Terrell (2014) also argued that heads of department have a pivotal role in school improvement because they are positioned to work closely with teachers and can ensure that whole school policies are applied in the classroom.

Several studies have examined the influence of heads of department on student outcomes. Highfield (2012) estimated that heads of department leadership contributed 16–22% of the variance for English, Mathematics and Science achievement across 41 New Zealand secondary schools over a three year period. Leithwood (2016) also noted that there was significant within school variation depending on departments. Dinham (2007b) reported from a study of highly effective schools that the leadership of heads of department was a prominent factor explaining the success of these schools.

Heads of department also have great potential to build the capacity of teachers, and have been found to be crucial for teachers' participation in professional communities of practice (Printy, 2008). In fact, the small and cohesive nature of a faculty group means that teachers often identify more with their faculty than with their

school (Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993). However, Leithwood (2016) reported that the potential for heads of department to lead learning in secondary schools is restricted by a number of issues including teacher resistance to heads of department observing and supervising their teaching, teacher unions in many countries opposing attempts by heads of department to focus on improving classroom instruction, heads of department resisting involvement in instructional leadership and school improvement, and leadership teams having a varied understanding of the role of heads of department with some principals concentrating leadership of learning to leadership teams of which heads of department are not members. These issues largely centre on the role of heads of department to engage with teachers about their pedagogical practices. Teachers would often prefer their head of department to administer their team managing paperwork and programming rather than supervise them in the classroom (Jarvis, 2008). Leithwood (2016) concluded that heads of department were often aware of their role to monitor instruction; however, they were unwilling or unable to do that directly as they did not want to 'risk' collegial relationships with teachers who felt that their autonomy was threatened.

That being said, Leithwood's (2016) review suggests that secondary school principals and heads of department, working together via a form of distributed leadership, may provide leadership for learning to influence student achievement in secondary schools. However, this distribution of leadership for learning to heads of department has shown more potential than expression in secondary schools. Leithwood (2016) recommended further research on the pattern and contributions of leadership distribution that may occur among principals and heads of department in secondary schools. The present study intends to examine such variations in leadership distribution with a view to identify whether they influence school improvement and student outcomes or not.

System and school leaders have tried to create new leadership positions to distribute leadership and in the past few decades instructional coaches have increasingly been introduced in schools to share in the leadership of learning (Galey, 2016).

2.3.4.2 Instructional Coaches

The concept of instructional coaching developed during the early 1980s in recognition that 'some teachers needed to learn how to meet the mandated, more stringent standards for student learning' (Neumerski, 2013 , p.322). Early coaching models, which had envisioned teachers as co-constructors of knowledge, evolved into

peer coaching where teachers led other teachers to practice new teaching skills (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Instructional coaching has been broadly but loosely defined in the literature (Neumerski, 2013). For the sake of the present study, instructional coaches are defined as school-based leaders who provide class-based support modelling 'research-based strategies and exploring with teachers how to increase these practices in the classroom' (Sailors & Shanklin, 2010 p. 1). Their role is greater than a specialised literacy or numeracy coach as they support whole school reform and build school capacity (Coggins, Stoddard, & Cutler, 2003; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Walpole & Blamey, 2008). Saphier and West (2009) viewed instructional coaches working in skilful and negotiated relationship with principals as the fulcrum for building capacity for school improvement.

Learning theory contends that learners need to discuss, reflect, observe and practice the implementation of new ideas and receive expert feedback (Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010). Researchers have therefore encouraged models of professional development that include reflection, collaboration and active learning in classroom settings (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Elmore, 2002). Coaching models involve a pedagogical expert who interacts with teachers in their own workplace, promoting deep reflection about teaching practice, acting also as a school-wide facilitator, promoting collaboration and the development of learning communities (Coggins et al., 2003; Lockwood et al., 2010). Cornett and Knight (2009) reviewed the coaching literature and noted the lack of studies which clearly demonstrated that coaching improved student achievement. However, several studies have indicated that school-based coaching programmes that are collaborative, focused on pedagogy, ongoing and context specific are linked to improved instructional quality (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Nevertheless the review by Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) of professional development concluded that although instructional coaching could be justified on common-sense grounds, its impact on learning has not yet been confirmed by a solid body of evidence.

Galey (2016) proposed that instructional coaches are a promising antidote to the failure of school reform to have impact on classroom teaching because of the 'decoupled' or 'loosely coupled' nature of schools. Researchers have noted that top-down reforms can lose traction in the many layers of authority between the system policy makers and the classroom practitioners or when bottom-up reforms fail to gain

momentum and sustainability because of teacher or leadership changes (Coggins et al., 2003; Elmore, 2002; Fullan, 1994; Galey, 2016). Galey (2016) contends that instructional coaches can positively impact on school culture by utilising more tightly coupled practices that ensure that whole school policies are employed in the classroom. Furthermore, system leaders have also realised the potential of instructional coaches to improve the level of teacher collaboration and teacher reflection as coaches often work alongside individuals and groups of teachers to help them to reflect on practice (Coggins et al., 2003; Galey, 2016).

Instructional coaching also has the potential to distribute leadership for learning and build collective capacity for a school community. Coggins et al. (2003 p. 15) noted the important potential for leadership to be distributed and recounted that in the San Francisco Bay Area School Reform Collaborative instructional coaches worked with leadership teams and groups of teachers were 'active players in building the capacity of the school to act as a collective'.

Several studies have demonstrated principal support as crucial for coaching effectiveness i.e. the coach and principal must be in true partnership (Fullan & Knight, 2011; Saphier & West, 2009). It is important that the principal publicly recognises and endorses the coaching programme as this can lead to better practice (Matsumura, Garnier, & Resnick, 2010). Instructional coaches experience the tension between meeting the requests of policy makers and principals to reform teachers' practices while also supporting and collaborating with teachers to improve instruction (Atteberry, Bryk, Walker, & Biancarosa, 2008). They also play an important reform role in district policy implementation as mediators, brokers and interpreters of district policy and, in doing so, coaches adapt, modify and dilute policies and programmes to meet the realities of the local school context and classroom teaching. Instructional coaches manage the knowledge of system reform and their networking with system leaders and coaches from other schools allows them to be conduits of important reform knowledge while their work with multiple classroom teachers allows practices to be shared. Their position allows them to be bridges between a reform's visionary initiative and the harder reality of classroom implementation (Galey, 2016).

In the San Francisco Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, the coaches who enjoyed the most credibility were those who had access and support from the principal and who were well known and respected for their teaching (Coggins et al., 2003). However, principals are not always supportive of instructional coaches and may block their leadership (Mangin, 2007). Principals sometimes redirect their work from

coaching in the classroom by assigning them administrative tasks (Camburn, Kimball, & Lowenhaupt, 2008). In one study, instructional coaches faced resistance from teachers who valued privacy of practice and this, combined with a lack of middle or principal leadership, meant that coaches failed to provide truthful feedback necessary to facilitate changes in instruction (Lord, Cress, & Miller, 2008).

Recent studies of instructional coaches in action reveal that coaches rarely engage in observing and modelling teaching. Instead, coaches take on many administrative or support tasks, such as helping teachers program units of work, providing professional development and organising materials (Atteberry et al., 2008; Fullan & Knight, 2011; Neumerski, 2013). This lack of classroom engagement contrasts with the insight of early researchers who saw direct coaching of teachers as an essential ingredient for instructional capacity building (Coggins et al., 2003; Guiney, 2001). Aguilar (2013) posited that there is a number of preconditions necessary for instructional coaching to be successful in a school setting: the existence of a school culture open to growth and improvement, a principal willing to work in partnership with an instructional coach, adequate resourcing of time and place for collaboration and a staff that is willing to work together and that sees itself as a learning community.

In summary, the literature for instructional coaching suggests a promising new position for leadership of learning to be distributed and strengthened towards collective capacity building. Because instructional coaches 'interact with multiple levels of the school system, they are uniquely positioned to bring focus and coherence to improvement processes that are often vulnerable to fragmentation' (Coggins et al., 2003, p.37). As part of the low SES NP reforms, senior teachers in NSW were employed to mentor other teachers and support the implementation of the reforms at the local level. These teacher educators were given different titles in each of the different systems of schools including *highly accomplished teachers*, *leaders of pedagogy* and *teacher educators*. Such teachers were classroom-based but also undertook mentoring and played a lead role in school-based professional learning. The present study will refer to these instructional coaches as leaders of pedagogy.

The present study will explore both the experiences of teachers and leaders who worked with these leaders of pedagogy and the experiences of these instructional coaches themselves to obtain an understanding of how this role built teacher capacity for improved student outcomes and to discover what institutional and social conditions might be optimal for effective coaching practices.

For practical reasons distributive leadership is seen as being desirable in a secondary school context which typically has larger enrolments than primary schools and where leaders are trying to influence middle managers, subject teachers and students (Hulpia et al., 2009). Competent and capable leadership of learning must be maximised by ensuring that the collective talents and experience of all senior leadership team members are deployed effectively (Harris & Hopkins, 1999; Sammons et al., 1997; Silins & Mulford, 2002).

Therefore, no matter the term, be it shared, parallel or distributed, there is increasing evidence that school leadership needs to be a collective rather than an individual construct if it is to maximise student outcomes (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003). Shared values, beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning have a positive impact on student attainment (Gu, Sammons, & Mehta, 2008) and leadership needs to share a whole school vision and goals to bring the changes and improvements necessary to deliver improved student learning in schools (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011; Bush & Glover, 2012; Printy & Marks, 2006). In the present study of low SES Catholic secondary schools, it will be of interest to see how distributed leadership will feature in the reform programme designed to strengthen the school leadership's capacity to lead learning.

Therefore, it is important that the present study considers how leadership is expressed and shared at each secondary school setting. As the effective distribution of leadership assists in the building of the internal capacity required to manage change and sustain reform improvements (Bezzina, 2007; Muijs & Reynolds, 2011) it is vital to understand if and how leadership is distributed at each school and whether such distribution built teacher capacity to improve student outcomes. Noting the literature concerning heads of department and instructional coaches and their roles in secondary schools, it is particularly important to understand how their leadership was experienced personally and also by those who worked with them.

Another important concept that has emerged in the literature is the importance of leaders developing a learning culture in schools. This concept will now be discussed.

2.3.5 Developing a Learning Culture

Peterson and Deal (1998) identified that schools that had strong, positive cultures are the ones where teachers shared a common purpose, where collegiality and hard work were valued, student rituals celebrated student accomplishments, and where

school leaders recognised informal networks of mythmakers and celebrated student success.

Tichnor-Wagner, Harrison, and Cohen-Vogel (2016) contended that developing a culture of learning is a key factor for leaders in building capacity to improve student outcomes and that secondary schools with strong learning cultures have particular structures including formal collaboration, shared goals, high expectations, participatory leadership, and strategic planning to engage students in their learning.

A study of high value added (HVA) NSW government schools conducted by the Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation (2015) supported a number of the findings of a later study by Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016). This study found that in HVA schools the leadership model was often described by teachers and leaders as strategic, consultative, supportive and transparent. Teachers from HVA schools were more likely to report that there was a positive learning culture in their school than teachers in control schools, while teachers collaboratively marked and shared student work samples to ensure that teacher judgments were consistent and they more frequently reported that their leadership teams were consultative, approachable and that teachers felt included in planning and decision making. Students in HVA schools were also committed to succeeding academically, valued their school academic outcomes and a culture of high expectations was cultivated for all students. In HVA schools, leaders encouraged a whole of school focus and supported teachers' professional learning in the effective use of data and evidence-based teacher practices (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015). Such practices have been known to strengthen the learning culture to be one of continuous improvement (Smeed, Ehrich, & Perry, 2011).

Hunt and King (2015) suggested that a whole of school focus requires incorporating activities for the initiative across multiple departments of the school including involving stakeholders in the initiative, connecting departmental work to the wider vision or ethos of the school, having strong leadership of what is being promoted and integrating interventions into existing school practices.

Resourcing of additional time for collaboration and professional learning is also important in building a positive culture (Jensen, Hunter, Sonnemann, & Cooper, 2014). Stoll et al. (2006 p.222) believed that capacity building should act in concert with the building of the learning culture because together they give 'individuals, groups, whole school and school systems the power to engage, improve and sustain learning over time'.

These findings regarding learning culture are of important to this research because they support the notion that leaders need to build learning culture in order to build the capacity of teachers to improve student outcomes. The Low SES NP reforms included a range of objectives that were aimed to strengthen learning culture and it necessary for this research to understand the impact of the strategies that were devised to meet those objectives and to determine what role learning culture has in building teacher capacity and what should leaders do to build that culture with teachers, parents and students.

The second element of the support document *Low SES NP* the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010) was 'quality teaching' which is another tool for leaders to build capacity and it is the next domain of this literature review.

2.4 Quality Teaching

There is mounting evidence that high quality teaching is vital for improving student learning in low SES school communities (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). Research has consistently shown that the classroom level has greater influence than the school level for student outcomes and that this is largely related to what teachers do in the classroom (Hayes, Johnston, & King, 2009; Muijs et al., 2014; Muijs & Reynolds, 2011; Zammit et al., 2007; Zbar et al., 2009). Teacher effects are much larger in low SES schools, possibly because the distribution of teacher effectiveness is more uneven in low SES than in high SES schools due to difficulties in recruiting experienced teachers to low SES schools (Hattie, 2009; Muijs & Reynolds, 2011). Nye, Konstantonopoulis, and Hedges (2004) noted that 'in low-SES schools, it matters more *which* teacher a child receives than it does in high-SES schools' (p. 254).

Quality teaching practices include such things as focusing on effective pedagogy, literacy and numeracy skill development and data informed learning.

2.4.1 Effective Pedagogy

A meta-analysis by Hattie (2009) concluded that leaders can build the capacity of teachers to improve student outcomes by advocating the use of effective pedagogy in the classroom. There is considerable evidence that effective pedagogy is crucial for improving student achievement in low SES school communities (Newmann, Marks, & Gamoran, 1996). There is also considerable evidence that effective leadership for

learning requires significant instructional leadership with leaders requiring deep knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy (Groundwater-Smith & Kemmis, 2004; Zammit et al., 2007; Zbar et al., 2009).

School systems often expect teachers and schools leaders to use a framework that specifies effective teaching practices. Pedagogical frameworks such as the Quality Teaching Model (Griffiths, Gore, & Ladwig, 2006) and the Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools process (Andrews et al., 2004) have been adopted by many schools in NSW.

The Quality Teaching Model (Gore, Ladwig, Griffiths, & Amosa, 2007) provides a conceptual framework for teaching and student assessment focussing on the intellectual quality of classroom experiences, the nature of the learning environment and the significance of the learning for students. Amosa et al. (2007) found that,

> increasing the rigour of intellectual demands of assignments significantly enhances student authentic performance and has the capacity to close the achievement gap between poor and wealthy students. Similarly, making more explicit high expectations about the quality of student work has a positive and significant effect on student authentic achievement (pp. 11–12).

These findings were supported by a study of schools from Victoria, Australia, which demonstrated that when teachers set learning intentions and higher order questioning, student achievement increased; when learning tasks were designed to be differentiated and challenging, student understanding improved; when peer assessment and assessment for learning strategies were implemented, student engagement improved; increased feedback led to accelerated progress; and when teachers used co-operative group structures/techniques the academic performance of the whole class increased (Hopkins, 2011, 2013). Fullan, Hill, and Crévola (2006) also identified that more effective use of formative assessment to guide and personalise future learning led to measurable and sustained improvements in student learning.

Student engagement is a focal area for researchers investigating ways to bridge the achievement gap between poor and wealthy schools. Hayes, Johnston, and King (2009) utilised teachers' diary entries to gain an understanding of the nature of teaching in four different low SES in NSW and they revealed a rigid, monotonous class regime. In an earlier report, Johnston and Hayes (2008) noted that there was little variation in teaching practices with minimal literacy and intellectual demands being required of students.

Furthermore Munns (2007) discovered that the range of teacher practices was derived from local knowledge about what works with little guidance from leadership teams. The strong influence of the local context is evident in these findings, with an absence of effective leadership for learning apparent. Hayes et al. (2009) concluded that,

> Improvement is not simply a matter of changing the attitudes of teachers and developing their skills – it also requires improving local conditions so that they are more conducive to change, and the production of new possibilities and expressions of hope (p. 261) .

A large-scale meta-analysis of teacher effectiveness research conducted by Hattie (2009) found that classroom practice was a strong determinant of student outcomes. He identified the following practices to improve student learning: quality feedback, classroom management, teacher clarity, positive teacher–student relationships, cooperative learning, direct instruction, mastery learning, peer tutoring, use of worked examples, concept mapping and problem solving.

Improving pedagogy has the potential to foster both greater teacher capacity and high levels of student engagement that will in turn improve student achievement. Leadership teams should be focusing on school wide and classroom specific improvements in pedagogy to improve student outcomes (Johnston & Hayes, 2008). The contribution effective pedagogy makes to improving student outcomes in low SES schools is a factor worthy of exploration in the present study as is the role that leadership of the school and the local system play in improving the pedagogy of teachers.

2.4.2 Literacy and numeracy

A key priority for the Australian government has been improvements in the literacy and numeracy skills of Australian children (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016b) however, as several researchers have noted this priority has been in the face of declining standards in PISA's literacy and numeracy assessments compared to other countries (Thomson, De Bortoli, & Buckley, 2013; Thomson et al., 2010). From 2000 to 2012 Australia's performance in these international tests have shown a gradual decline in achievement. Students from the lowest SES quartile have done poorly in these tests in comparison to wealthier students from the highest SES quartile (Thomson et al., 2013). Therefore, a focus on improving student literacy and numeracy

in low SES schools is seen as an important element to build the capacity of teachers and leaders.

Literacy pedagogy in Australia developed via a series of large-scale action research projects, which began with writing genres during the 1980s. A significant programme for secondary schools was the NSW Government's *Write it Right* programme that advocated genre-based writing pedagogy. This was followed by *Reading to Learn* that began in the late 1990s and considered how secondary teachers could embed the teaching of reading and writing skills into the curriculum (Rose, 2015).

A large-scale *Reading to Learn* programme facilitated by the Catholic Education Office of Melbourne improved the literacy performance of over 95% of targeted students that were underachieving in literacy to approximately double the expected rate of their literacy development with the greatest gains being made in secondary schools (Culican, 2006; Rose, 2015). Another effective literacy programme used in NSW was *Multilit* (Making Up for Lost Time in Literacy), which was designed by researchers from Macquarie University to teach older low-progress students experiencing difficulties in learning reading skills and has been found to be effective in increasing reading outcomes and related skills (Rose, 2015).

Numeracy focuses on the practical applications of mathematics in particular contexts. A study exploring educational practices that 'make a difference' in numeracy outcomes across 45 NSW primary schools found that effective schools had leaders who made a commitment to numeracy and implemented policies and programmes to support it in the classroom (Busatto 2004). Effective whole school approaches to literacy and numeracy are particularly important at high school level, where the focus can often move away from literacy and numeracy as a core goal (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016b).

Therefore, the literacy and numeracy needs of students were consequential in developing a range of programmes to build the capacity of teachers to give direct literacy and numeracy instruction. A recent study by the NSW Centre for Statistics and Evaluation (2016) established that literacy and numeracy needs can be best catered by schools if teachers and leaders do the following: intervene early and maintain the focus on literacy and numeracy; identify what students know and target teaching accordingly, have clear and transparent learning goals, and focus on teacher professional learning that improves the teaching of literacy and numeracy. It is therefore important to understand how school leaders in this study attempted to build the capacity of teachers

to improve literacy and numeracy skills in order to get an understanding of what approaches were beneficial in improving student outcomes.

The use of data to inform teaching becomes an important tool to identify what students know and professional learning regarding the application of data builds the capacity of teachers to improve student outcomes. This is explained in greater detail below.

2.4.3 Data informed learning

In order for teachers to respond to student learning needs detailed information about "what students know and what they can do" (Timperley, 2009 , p.21) is required. Effective teachers regularly used data to improve teaching and to evaluate the learning needs of their students to personalise their learning (Hopkins, 2011).

Timperley (2009) reported that a professional development programme for teachers that focused on the interpretation and use of assessment information and built relevant pedagogical content knowledge in literacy resulted in student achievement gains in reading and writing at a growth rate double that expected, with even greater gains for the lowest performing students. Teachers in NSW public schools who had succeeded in adding significant value to students literacy and numeracy scores distinguished themselves from others by their use of data to identify and respond to students' needs by regularly monitoring and examining student assessment data to identify the learning needs of individual students (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015).

The use of educational data for accountability purposes does not appear to have led to significant improvements in student outcomes. Large-scale government mandated reforms instituted in the 1990s in Ontario, England and Manitoba used large-scale assessment and testing to make schools accountable for results in an effort to drive improvement. However, evaluations of these reforms concluded that the use of data to improve learning needed greater emphasis in schools and systems rather than the use of data for accountability purposes (Earl et al., 2000; Earl, Levin, Fullan, Leithwood, & Watson, 2001; Earl et al., 2003).

Lee et al. (2012) found that teachers were reluctant to use student achievement and attendance data for target setting and accountability. They also found that this reluctance turned to resentment towards the local system for expecting school leaders to use data in such ways. They concluded that using data for high-stakes accountability where teachers and leaders may be blamed for poor results may not have the desired

effect of motivating change unless sufficient relational trust exists between and within systems and the schools they serve.

When school leaders become knowledgeable about data use, they become more adept at identifying areas for improvement and developing strategies that can respond accordingly. Zbar et al. (2009) demonstrated that school leaders needed to have a strong commitment to use and share data for it to improve learning. In a case study of a high performing high school that served a socio-economic community, Levin and Datnow (2012) found that the principal and other leaders used data to formulate learning goals, provided time for teachers to discuss data, built the knowledge and skills of teachers and created a climate of trust and collaboration in the use of data so that teachers saw data informed discussions as beneficial.

Researchers such as Timperley (2009) and Lee et al. (2012) believe that in order to build capacity to use data effectively teachers and leaders need support. Timperley's (2009) investigation of the use of data found that teachers require support in analysing and using data effectively to become more responsive to their students' learning needs. van Geel, Visscher, and Teunis (2017) found that if schools had an instructional coach to guide teachers to use data for decision making they were more successful in implementing data based decision making than other schools and Van Gasse, Vanlommel, Vanhoof, and Van Petegem (2017) found that teachers best learn to use data through collaboration with other teachers.

 Lee et al. (2012) recommended that American local systems 'spend less time ensuring that schools have large amounts of annual standardized test data and more time helping school leaders and teachers figure out such data might help them make a difference in the classroom experiences of their students' (p. 20). Anderson, Leithwood, and Strauss (2010) found that local system leaders play a,

> key role in guiding how data for decision making about school improvement and student learning are used by principals and teachers within their districts. They do this through (a) expectations they set and monitor for data use … (b) modeling data use in district decision making, (c) the supplementary tools and resources they mobilize to facilitate data use … and (d) the expertise that they develop locally or access externally to meaningfully incorporate data use into principal and teacher decisions (p. 308).

Therefore, the use of data to inform teaching and learning appears to be an important technique to build teacher capacity to drive student achievement and it will be

of interest to this study. Another technique identified in the literature to improve quality
teaching is to enhance curriculum planning and programming.

2.4.4 Curriculum planning and programming

The purpose of curriculum planning and programming is to 'improve student
engagement for learning and outcomes by facilitating quality teaching, assessing and
reporting practices' (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012 p.2).
Highly effective schools are more likely than their counterparts in lower performing
schools to use student data and teacher evaluations to improve teaching programmes
(Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).

Effective curriculum planning and programming assists teachers to differentiate
their practice in response to the needs of students and allows teachers to focus teaching
and assessment on the key concepts and skills identified in syllabuses. In addition, the
process of curriculum planning and programming provides opportunity for collaborative
professional learning (NSW Department of Education and Communities, 2012).

A new form of curriculum design that gained acceptance in NSW at the time of
the *Low SES NP* reforms was backward design. Known also as *Understanding by
Design*, this provides a planning approach to guide curriculum, instruction and
assessment. Its two key ideas were to focus on teaching and assessing from the
endpoints and to design 'backwards' to achieve those ends (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011).
The use of backward design for planning curriculum units was believed to create more
clearly defined goals, appropriate assessments and aligned lessons resulting in more
effective teaching (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 2011).

School leaders in the present study adopted backward design for the planning
and programming of curriculum. There have been no formal studies of its benefits;
however, it is based on the findings from previous studies into restructured schools
(Newmann et al., 1996) and Chicago elementary schools (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka,
2001 p.2) that recommended the programming of more 'higher-order thinking, deep-
knowledge approaches, and connections to the world beyond the classroom' (p. 2) to
improve student outcomes. This study aims to explore the perceptions of leaders and
teachers who engaged in backward design in order to understand if it was a useful
approach to build quality teaching.

Quality teaching was recognised by Australian governments as an important
national objective in the creation of the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008a)
and this led to the formation of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School

Leadership, which published the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* in 2011 . These standards form the core framework against which all Australian teachers now gain accreditation and maintain ongoing accreditation throughout their careers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). The *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* have set an agenda requiring changes to the way teachers and leaders perceive and undertake professional learning. These changes and other important elements of professional learning will be the next area to be discussed.

2.5 Professional Learning

Professional learning for teachers and leaders is essential for the building of teacher and leader capacity to improve student outcomes and this was acknowledged as the third domain of the document, *Low SES NP* the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). The literature tends to interchange frequently the terms *professional development* and *professional learning*. The OECD's large-scale Teaching and Learning International Survey defined *professional development* as 'activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher' (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009 p.49). *Professional learning* refers to 'changes in the thinking, knowledge, skills, and approaches to instruction that form practicing teachers' or administrators' repertoire' (Mayer & Lloyd, 2011 pp.112-113). Thus, *professional learning* could involve changes in a teacher's or leader's capacity to improve student outcomes through changes of attitude or practice (Knapp, 2003).

Professional development is seen by many scholars as a key ingredient to build teachers' knowledge and skills, professional community, teachers' leadership and principals' leadership that are all necessary elements to nurture improved student achievement (e.g. Dinham, 2007a; Dinham, Crowther, & Harris, 2011; Mayer & Lloyd, 2011).

Professional development needs to include pedagogical content knowledge and sustained learning experiences that include follow up and feedback loops along with collaborative practices (Timperley, Parr, & Bertanees, 2009). Opportunities for teachers to engage in professional learning and development might have an impact on student learning if teachers learn to analyse their students' learning needs to identify what they themselves need to learn (Mayer & Lloyd, 2011; Timperley et al., 2009).

Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, and Fung (2007) also identified that providing sufficient time, using external expertise, engaging teachers rather than calling for volunteers and coherence with wider policy and research and school-based initiatives being led by school leaders were important elements that improved the impact of professional learning on student outcomes.

Stosich (2016) found in her study of low SES schools 'deeply rooted challenges posed by weak instructional knowledge among teachers, strongly held norms of autonomy and egalitarianism that cause some teachers to repel efforts to build professional community, and ineffective instructional leadership from principals'. (p. 52) She concluded that professional development alone is insufficient for addressing these factors and called for job-embedded supports such as instructional coaches and greater accountability for teachers to engage in instructional and collaborative professional learning.

Furthermore, Hopkins (2013) demonstrated that providing individual teachers with time and resources for professional learning is insufficient in itself to lead to improved student outcomes. This view was supported by the findings of a study of NSW HVA schools that confirmed that professional learning needed to be collective, strategically planned, relevant and sustainable (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015). Both Hopkins (2013) and the NSW study reported that the use of outside experts who developed evidence-based recipes for teaching were ineffective with limited or short-term impacts on student outcomes once the providers withdraw. Respondents of the NSW study reported that 'utilising internal expertise to promote professional learning and opening classrooms to other staff were key to the longevity of any particular strategy' (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015 p.12).

In summary, the design demands of effective professional development are sophisticated and numerous. The literature suggests that professional development programmes have often failed to meet demands and there has been limited impact on student outcomes. In addition, programmes that have emphasised individual rather than collective practices have had little traction in changing teacher practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). There is a growing realisation that teaching practices will improve through teachers working as members of a highly reflective team charged with improving themselves as professionals. The notions of building 'professional capital' and 'professional community' have emerged as important elements of professional learning.

2.5.1 Building Professional Capital

Professional capital is the development and integration of three kinds of capital, i.e. human (the talent, competencies and qualifications of individuals), social (the collaborative power of the group) and decisional (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgments about learning) (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Teachers make a greater difference to students' learning, achievements and development from the impact they exert by working professionally together, not just from the impact each may have on their own (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Combining teachers' individual and collective professional learning with teacher leadership is central to the concept of professional capital. As Hopkins (2013) and Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) posit, collective capacity building is more powerful than isolated individual capacity building. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) argue that opportunities to develop collective talent and collaborative professional work are imperative because,

> you cannot increase human capital just by focusing on it in isolation. Some of the most powerful, underutilized strategies in all of education involve the deliberate use of teamwork – enabling teachers to learn from each other within and across schools – and building cultures and networks of communication, learning, trust, and collaboration around the team as well. If you want to accelerate learning in any endeavor, you concentrate on the group. This is *social capital* (p. 89).

Traditional school cultures, especially secondary school cultures, are characterised by cloistered work practices where teachers rarely share their practices or view their colleagues at work in the classroom. This is possibly why Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) concluded that 'unfortunately, the development of social capital as a strategy has not yet caught on in the teaching profession' (p. 91) and argued its place in transforming teacher practice.

The third kind of capital, decisional capital, is concerned with nurturing and valuing opportunities for informed professional judgment, decisions and actions for the highly sophisticated act of teaching. Campbell, Lieberman, and Yashkina (2016) argued that the capability for educators to be professionals with responsibility and trust for their own informed judgments is the least developed or valued element in current policies regarding teacher quality and effectiveness.

Therefore the literature presents that building social and decisional capital relies upon collaborative structures such as PLCs, networking, reflective practices, coaching

and mentoring that together with action research all have a role in building a culture of collaborative inquiry.

2.5.2 Fostering a culture of collaborative inquiry

Research would suggest that a focus on collaborative ways of working that are inquiry centred strengthens the collective capacity of those working together to improve student outcomes (Stosich, 2016) and that collaborative inquiry can be fostered by implementing such things as action research, PLCs and networking (Stoll et al., 2006).

2.5.2.1 Action Research

Action research is 'a type of applied research', a form of deliberate inquiry 'that is conducted by practitioners to improve practices in educational settings' (Glanz, 2016 p.20) and builds a culture of collaborative inquiry. According to (Hallinger & Heck, 2010) action research can have benefits such as creating a system-wide mindset for school improvement and promoting reflection and self-improvement, among others

A review of the literature reports interest in, amongst others, the development of PLCs and the networking of schools that 'appears to hold considerable promise for capacity building for sustainable improvement' (Stoll et al., 2006 , p. 221). A PLC is an organisation where teachers and leaders regularly seek and share learning to enhance their effectiveness (Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

2.5.2.2 Professional Learning Community

PLCs (also known as communities of practice) refer to 'groups being formed among teachers as professional colleagues, usually with the implication that these relationships are oriented toward teacher learning and professional development' (Little, 2012 p.6).

The scholarly literature highlights the following applications of teachers effectively engaging in PLCs: receiving meaningful feedback on performance from a colleague (reflective dialogue), visiting other teachers classrooms to observe instruction (deprivatised practice) and having conversations with colleagues about what helps students learn best (shared responsibility) (Louis & Lee, 2016).

A PLC has the potential to generate shared values and vision, to instil collective responsibility for student learning, to foster collaboration and reflection on professional enquiry, as well as create greater openness and trust amongst staff and foster networks and partnerships (Bolam et al., 2005). Hord and Sommers (2008) characterised PLCs by

the degree to which they shared beliefs, values and visions as well as shared leadership and personal practice with the focus on collective learning. Bolam et al. (2005) described PLCs as possessing the following elements: relationships committed to and having collective responsibility for a common educational purpose, collective commitment to improving student learning with a process driven by evidence-based professional inquiry into effective principles of teaching and learning. Teachers sharing in the decision making and having open classrooms was also seen as important elements (Hord & Sommers, 2008; Little, 2012). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) stated that the collective responsibility of the PLC helped to sustain commitment via collective norms to ensure that work is shared. The reflective professional inquiry is supported by the peer examination of teachers' practice, mutual observation, joint planning and curriculum development (Stoll et al., 2006). Instructional rounds have become a common feature of peer observation (City, 2011).

PLCs assist in the building of capacity by promoting professional collaboration between teachers and principals (Stoll et al., 2006). The sharing of decision-making, encouragement of teacher participation, and focus on capacity building has the potential to build further leadership and teacher capacity. Through PLCs, principals can develop teacher leaders and promote teachers as change agents (Louis, Kruse, & Raywid, 1996).

Principals are the key to ensuring schools continually improve upon the collective capacity to ensure all students experience the teaching and learning essential to school success through their support of PLCs (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004; Wells & Keane, 2008). Leaders play a key role in building and sustaining PLCs and in convincing teachers that PLCs are not just another addition to their workload (DuFour & DuFour, 2012). PLCs also have a reciprocal relationship with distributed leadership as they both empower middle level and teacher leaders across schools (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010a).

As previously mentioned, heads of department are crucial for teachers' participation in professional communities of practice (Printy, 2008). System authorities may also have considerable influence over whether teachers are able to develop PLCs (Little, 2012) and for the majority of schools, systems control most resources that teachers need for their professional development (Dimmock, 2011). As this study examines how a system driven reform impacts upon a school's capacity to improve student outcomes an understanding of how the system supports professional development and the role of heads of department in supporting such activity would be important.

The effects of PLCs on student outcomes are indirect as they focus on building teacher rather than student capacity. Blase and Blase (1999) reported that PLCs foster reflective behaviour, motivation, self esteem and efficacy among teachers as well as increased teachers' sense of security. PLCs can create a supportive school climate that encourages a strong learning culture (Louis & Marks, 1998). Mulford and Silins' (2003) study of Australian secondary schools stated that the more the school had a trusting and collaborative climate, and the more teachers shared and monitored the mission of their school, took initiatives and risks and emphasised professional development and shared their learning, the better was their school's performance in student outcomes. Furthermore, they concluded that such a bottom-up approach as a PLC could be mutually beneficial to large-scale top-down reforms.

Context remains a salient issue in discussions of capacity building ventures such as the formation of PLCs. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) noted the difficulty of balancing pressure and support, pulling teachers into something that they might find energising and pushing them to review possible shortcomings in their colleague's performance, ensuring that teachers feel that the PLC model is not imposed on them for the pursuit of individual accountability and leaders being patient with the data to allow PLCs to develop over time.

Lee et al. (2012) demonstrated that secondary schools were less successful in developing school PLCs than elementary schools, even though they had similar opportunities for networking and similar pressures for data use. This suggested that the different context of secondary schools with their faculty disciplines inhibited whole school PLC structures.

In summary the literature has stated that well developed PLCs have the potential to build the capacity of schools to improve student outcomes. Leaders of schools and systems play a key role in building and sustaining PLCs and in doing so they build the capacity of their organisation to focus on learning to improve student outcomes. As the present study intends to explore how school leaders build school capacity for leadership of learning, it would be important to understand if and how these leaders created and supported PLCs in their schools.

Another initiative that can build a culture of collaborative inquiry amongst teachers and leaders is networking.

2.5.2.3 Networking

School-to-school learning networks can improve individual school's capacity, improvement strategies and practice (Muijs, 2010). This 'sideways capacity building' connects schools within a system so that they learn from one another and build a shared sense of purpose (Dimmock, 2011). These networks have the potential to build the professional knowledge and expertise of teachers and leaders via collaboration (Muijs, 2010).

A study of English low socio-economic schools found successful networking required a clear focus on teaching and learning, distribution of leadership to expand the influence of the members of the network, a commitment to professional learning and the capacity to identify and capture opportunities for external support (West, 2010). In Singapore, PLCs are networked to increase the body of knowledge and share successful reform strategies. Therefore, as a form of collaborative inquiry, networking has the ability to build leadership capacity and distribute leadership beyond the school (Lieberman & Grolnick, 2005).

Collaborative ways of working such as networking have the potential to strengthen the capacity of disadvantaged socio-economic schools. Ainscow, Muijs, and West (2006) investigated six networks of schools in low SES communities and discovered that collaboration widened student learning opportunities. However, reservation exits about their suitability for low socio-economic schools that do not possess suitable internal capacity, internal structures and practices (Ainscow et al., 2006). Networking can build capacity of schools; however, they must be supported by effective leadership that exists within and beyond the school (Mulford, 2012). The role of the system in establishing these networks is important to develop networking between schools and among teachers and school leaders to shape teachers' professional learning (West, 2010).

Therefore, this review of the literature suggests that networking that is well supported by system and school leadership and is focused on learning can strengthen the nature of collaboration in low SES schools and in doing so helps build the capacity of schools to improve student outcomes.

2.5.2.4 Instructional Coaching and Mentoring

Scholars have suggested that Instructional coaches present themselves as a promising tool to build capacity of teachers and their leadership role has been

mentioned previously in the leading learning section of this review. School-based coaches have been increasingly used to support principals and teachers as they learn and adopt new and effective instructional practices (Matsumura et al., 2010). The impact of coaching is affected by staff attitudes towards professional learning, coaching practices involved, the capacity of the coach and the external assistance provided to coaches (Mayer, Woulfin, & Warhol, 2015). The study of Tung and Feldman (2001) of 18 coaches leading instructional change highlighted their ability to build capacity:

> Through modeling and creating a collaborative school culture with faculties, coaches built capacity for schools to work on reform in a sustainable way. By gaining partial insider status, balancing sensitivity to school context and faculty readiness with moving the reform agenda forward, and working collaboratively on decision making, coaches helped to ensure that changes would be sustainable (p. 33).

It has been suggested that instructional coaches can improve student learning in similar ways to principals by instilling a shared vision and group goals and building their capacity through support and intellectual stimulation (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Biancarosa, Bryk, and Dexter (2010) found positive effects of a coaching programme over four years, with achievement increasing with each year of implementation. Improvements in school culture and teacher collegiality and collaboration have also been associated with coaching programmes (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). However, Lockwood et al. (2010) reported that there is a paucity of research focused on coaching and achievement in secondary schools. Their own study of Florida middle schools found mixed results of impacts that coaching had on reading achievement (Lockwood et al., 2010).

Mentoring is another tool to build collaborative practice. Mentoring is a personal long-term professional relationship and has the potential to foster critically supportive nurturing relationships that actively promote learning, socialisation within their work environment and profession(Fletcher, 2000). Mentoring can positively influence student learning, support the function of PLCs and improve the retention rate of young teachers (Mullen, 2011). Mentoring is often used in the context of education to characterise a combination of coaching, counselling and assessment where a senior principal or classroom teacher is appointed to guide a novice principal or a pre-service teacher (Fletcher, 2000). A study of inexperienced Californian teachers being mentored

indicated that the mentor-based support had a positive impact on student achievement (Fletcher, Strong, & Villar, 2008).

The *Low SES NP* aims to build capacity by using elements of collaborative enquiry and some schools have utilised networking and PLCs in their school cultures. The literature regarding collaborative inquiry highlights the promising elements that leaders can use to build the leadership capacity of their schools to produce better outcomes for their students. It is important to compare how each of the leadership teams in the present study attempted to build school capacity by means of collaborative inquiry in order to identify approaches that may have been more successful than others.

The fourth domain that was identified in the *Low SES NP* the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010) as a tool for leaders to build a school's capacity in improving student outcomes was is engagement with parents and the broader community. The scholarly literature regarding this element will be now discussed.

2.6 Engaging with parents and the broader community

Harris and Goodall (2007, p.5) claimed that parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of children when they are engaged 'through supporting their learning in the home' rather than involved 'supporting activities in the school'. However, many school leaders involve parents in 'school-based or school related activities which constitute parental involvement rather than parental engagement' (p.5). Parental involvement could 'encompass a whole range of activities with or within the school, only some of which are learning related'. Where these activities are not directly connected to student learning 'they have little impact on academic outcomes' (p.39).

Involvement with the broader community can provide some socio-economically disadvantaged schools and families with social and material support needed to promote student achievement (Mulford & Silins, 2011).

2.6.1 Parent Engagement with Student Learning

Studies have indicated that parental involvement positively influenced academic achievement; however, substantial proof of this influence is lacking (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012). However, there is evidence that collaboration between school leaders and parents, parent participation in activities, and decision-making opportunities with children can

lead children to higher achievement (Harris & Goodall, 2007; US Department of Education (USDOE), 2004).

Hill and Tyson (2009) found that parental engagement with their children's learning improves adolescent behavioural engagement with their schoolwork and they concluded that parents' expectations for achievement and value for education were strongly associated with achievement during middle school. This was supported by meta-analyses by Jeynes (2007); (2012)who studied the influence of parental involvement on the educational outcomes of urban low socio-economic schools found that parental expectations regarding their child's education have a significant impact on student outcomes. In the later meta-analysis Jeynes found that the relationship between parent engagement and academic outcomes was stronger in secondary schools than in primary schools. This larger effect size for secondary compared to primary students was confirmed by Castro et al. (2015) who noted that it was strongest when parents have high academic expectations for their children.

A New Zealand study revealed that low SES parents begin their child's education with high expectations; however, these are gradually lowered as the child gets older and is challenged by more difficult work (Clinton, Hattie, & Dixon, 2007). Benner, Boyle, and Sadler (2016) studied the nature of parent involvement and found that low SES schools should focus on encouraging parents to be involved in school based activities rather than promoting parental expectations regarding their child's expectation. They argued that this was more beneficial because of the limited social capital low SES parents typically possess. Hattie (2009) acknowledged the difficulty many low income parents have in comprehending the language of learning and this may support Benner, Boyle and Sadler (2016)'s argument. It would be important for the present study to examine how school leaders approached parent engagement to note whether they promoted parental involvement or parent engagement with their child's learning. Furthermore it would be important to understand if they attempted to raise parents' expectations about their child's learning.

Therefore the research evidence is concordant that student outcomes such as attendance and academic achievement advance when parents engage in student learning and schools (Castro et al., 2015; Povey et al., 2016). However the literature also notes that there are barriers to gaining greater engagement by low SES parents. Boethel et al. (2003) identified barriers to low SES parent involvement in their children's schooling including 'contextual factors (particularly time constraints, child care needs and transportation problems), language differences, cultural beliefs about the role of families

in their children's schooling, families' lack of knowledge and understanding of educational processes, and exclusion and discrimination issues' (p.*v*). These barriers may be magnified by the effects of poverty and adolescence for leaders attempting to engage parents of secondary students (Harris, 2002) .

However Harris and Goodall (2007) claimed that school leaders who claimed that parents were 'hard to reach' were often deemed by parents as being 'hard to reach' and that when school leaders make concerted efforts to engage the 'hard to reach' parents' the effect on pupil learning and behaviour is positive. Povey et al. (2016) found that principals in low SES schools were significantly less likely than their high SES counterparts to find that their parent engagement strategies effective in involving parents in their school. They concluded that, 'those schools in which the children stand to gain the most from increasing levels of parent engagement, are the same schools finding their efforts to engage parents the least effective' (p. 131) and they cited low SES parent factors named by principals such as 'a lack of interest and a lack of confidence, along with transportation problems' (p.132). Therefore although the research promotes parent engagement as a useful tool to build a school's capacity to improve student outcomes there are major impediments to its implementation.

2.6.2 Building Parent Engagement

The research identifies a number of ways to overcome these impediments to build parent engagement. School leaders can build relationships between schools and families by adopting formal school and system policies that promote parent involvement (Belchetz & Leithwood, 2007) along with explicit communication to parents about the value of their involvement and training for both teachers and parents in supporting a partnership about student learning (Boethel et al., 2003).

Henderson and Mapp (2002) suggested that schools can sustain parental engagement by personalising the support to parents and responding to their stated needs through a model of partnership (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

The literature on how low SES secondary schools can effectively engage with parent and community is somewhat limited (Kirby & DiPaola, 2011). The growing independence of adolescent students and the larger and more departmentalised nature of secondary schooling make parental involvement in their children's schooling more difficult than primary schooling (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Importantly Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) found that 'parents considered the attitudes, communication and leadership practices of school principals to play a crucial role in fostering and maintaining

relationships between parents and schools' (p. 1) and the diminished access and involvement of parents in the everyday life of secondary schools was an issue for parents who find secondary school leaders more remote and inaccessible than their primary school counterparts.

An Australian study by Povey et al. (2016) found that although principals self reported that they endorsed all of the benefits of parent engagement nearly one in five Principals were perceived by the leaders of their parents organisation not to collaborate with parents in furthering engagement with the school. The study also found that parents cited a lack of communication between parents and teachers and a lack of trust in the responsiveness of the school to parent concerns in one in four schools. They recommended that further studies 'identify what *does* work in disadvantaged schools and to ensure that interventions are tailored to the specific needs of these schools' (p. 131). The study also noted concern that,

> secondary principals have significantly lower expectations for parent involvement in many aspects of school life, communicate less frequently with the parent body, and are less likely to identify parent self-development as a benefit of parent engagement. A range of engagement strategies were significantly less likely to be effective in secondary schools (p.132).

Povey et al. (2016)'s work is important for this study as it provides a grounded understanding that although the literature and school leaders may espouse the benefit of parent engagement implementation of parent engagement strategies is problematic and this is particularly the case for secondary schools low SES schools. Therefore, the present study aims to contribute to the literature by examining how school leaders attempted to engage low SES parents. It is hoped that this will assist in determining what does work in engaging parents in low SES schools.

2.6.3 School–Community Partnerships

Effective school-community partnerships are 'those that have been developed with businesses or community groups to address a specific student need or develop an educational opportunity' (Lonsdale, 2008 p.4) and to be effective they must be characterised by trust, good planning, mutuality and reciprocity (Kruger, Davies, Eckersley, Newell, & Cherednichenko, 2009).

Although there is not a great amount of research in this area some secondary schools have explored partnerships with the community in an effort to build social connections and resources. Hands (2010) examined two Ontario secondary schools that

had developed partnerships with community and business organisations and found that they provided material, financial and social support, which led to enhancement of the schools' reputations within the communities. Cotton (1995) found evidence of some successful systems closing the achievement gap between low and high SES schools by building close associations with external community groups.

Another form of community partnership is the school-university partnership. Butcher, Bezzina, and Moran (2011) concluded from a case study of an Australian Catholic University in partnership with a diocese of Catholic schools that the guiding principles for a transformational and sustainable partnership are 'that partners work out of a shared purpose, lead collaboratively, relate on a basis of trust, ensure appropriate and adequate resources, and remain open to learning and change' (p. 36). Another Australian study critiqued the lack of progress in forming such partnerships, attributing it to the lack of investment by school systems in partnership-based reform in teacher education (Kruger et al., 2009).

For the purposes of the present study, it will be valuable to explore how leadership teams have promoted partnerships with parents and the communities of the Catholic secondary schools in this study and to build on the limited literature that exists for secondary schools.

2.7 Conclusion

This review of the scholarly literature has found that there is evidence that a form of shared leadership for learning is important in building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes. However the review has also shown that there is some uncertainty as to the best way that leadership of learning should be shared in secondary schools to bring about changes required to improve quality teaching, professional learning and parent and community engagement. It has also highlighted the role systems can play in supporting such changes but has also identified the obstacles that system leaders face in enacting reform of secondary schools.

The review has also established that there is general agreement amongst scholars that the quality of teaching can be raised through improvements to pedagogy, focussing on literacy and numeracy, collaborative programming and using data to inform learning. It has also confirmed the value of strengthening professional learning and parent and community engagement but it has identified the numerous barriers to implementing such practices and underlined the difficulty inherent in implementing system reform in secondary schools.

In the present study, a multiple case analysis of four different schools operating under the direction of one local system is utilised in order to ascertain how leaders in each school attempted to build the capacity of teachers to improve student outcomes and whether there are any learnings through the different approaches they took and the outcomes they achieved.

2.8 Overview and Statement of Sub-questions

The literature identified that although there is a lack of understanding about how leadership should be shared there is an understanding that shared leadership is more beneficial than individual leadership and that distributed leadership could be effective for secondary schools so that leadership and learning capacity to improve outcomes can be developed. The literature suggested that in a secondary setting, heads of department and instructional coaches could be potential leaders for principals to share the leadership of learning. The possibilities of such leadership roles and how leadership is shared in the schools will be addressed through RSQ1: How was the leadership of learning experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and in accordance with each of the various leadership roles?

The context of the research problem is the difficult nature of reform for low SES schools and the review of the literature identifies relational trust between teachers and leaders and as an important precondition of successful reform that needs to be adapted and divested to the local context so that it can be 'owned' by those implementing the reforms. This understanding will be explored via RSQ 2: What barriers to the reforms did leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required to implement the *Low SES NP* reforms?

Elements of quality teaching such as student centred pedagogy, curriculum programming, literacy and numeracy training and effective use of data emerged in this review of the literature as potential capacity building blocks. How leaders engaged with these elements will be explored through RSQ 3: How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school?

The review of the literature regarding collaborative inquiry highlighted the promising elements that leaders can utilise to build the capacity of their schools to produce better outcomes for their students. The way leaders engaged with these elements will be explored through RSQ4: How was 'professional learning' built in each secondary school?

The notion that parental involvement has the potential to positively influence academic achievement was reported in the literature but some barriers to building this involvement were also identified. The way leaders engaged with these elements will be explored through RSQ5: How was 'parent and community engagement' built in each secondary school?

The final RSQ attempts to gauge the perceptions of participants as to the success of the reform process in building capacity for leadership and learning, RSQ 6: To what extent do participants identify improved student and teacher capacity for learning as a result of the initiative?

These six RSQs that have merged from the literature all support the overarching research question regarding how the experiences of teachers and leaders engaged in a system driven reform for low SES Catholic secondary schools contributed to an understanding of leading capacity building to improve student outcomes?'

The study next addresses turns to the design of the research project which will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Research Design

In the previous chapter, a review of literature was undertaken to explore the main issues related to the research problem and, in doing so, established the sub-questions for the research. The purpose of this chapter is to justify and describe the research design adopted to explore the experiences of educators in different low SES secondary schools who were involved in a system driven reform agenda attempting to build their school's capacity to lead learning and improve student outcomes. This study focused on the leadership of learning in four low SES Catholic secondary schools within one diocese of NSW who were part of the *Low SES NP* reform programme.

The study was designed to answer the following question: How did the experiences of teachers and leaders engaged in a system driven reform for low SES Catholic secondary schools contribute to an understanding of the important elements of capacity building for improved student outcomes?

This chapter will explain the study's placement within an appropriate theoretical framework that forms the basis for the research methodology and design. The phases of data generation are then explained in detail and the procedures for the analysis of these data outlined. Issues pertaining to the legitimation of the study, particularly in relation to the data collection instruments, will be explained. Finally, ethical issues involving the conduct of the research will be examined.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework positions the research and becomes the 'lens through which you view the world' (Merriam, 1998, p. 45). It offers a philosophical foundation that justifies and directs the structure of the research design, is a set of interrelated concepts and guides what things will be measured and explored (O'Donoghue, 2007). The research paradigm, theoretical perspectives, methodologies and methods are described here, providing a rationale for the research design.

The researcher brings to the study an orientation that views the world in a particular way. Every researcher brings certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to their research (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1990) and the theoretical framework is an articulation of the conscious assumptions and values influencing the research guiding the research process by framing and asking questions according to the researcher's particular worldview (Merriam, 1998).

The purpose of the present study was to explore the experiences of teachers and leaders in different low SES Catholic secondary schools who were involved in a system

driven common reform agenda; therefore, the study was designed to gain an understanding of the varied perspectives and experiences of the leaders and teachers involved in the reform initiative.

Because of the purpose of the research, the project was positioned within the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, which has the epistemology of constructionism embedded within it. The rationale for positioning the research in symbolic interactionism will be explained in detail in the following sections; however, briefly, it was necessary because there was a need to explore the experiences and perspectives of teachers, school and system leaders dealing with a difficult reform to implement and symbolic interactionism is very suitable for this. This is because theoretical perspective has as its central principle that we can only understand what is going on by understanding what the actors (i.e the teachers, school and system leaders) themselves believe about their world (Charon, 2010). The epistemology found embedded in symbolic interactionism is constructionist in its nature as it accepts 'that all knowledge and all meaningful reality is contingent upon human beings and their worlds, and developed and transmitted within their social context' (Crotty, 1998 , p.42).

Symbolic interactionism is an interpretivist theoretical perspective helping us to 'make sense of the world' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 27) and identify 'culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world' (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). This aligns with the epistemological branch of constructionism called social constructionism, which emphasises the influence culture has on the making of meaning. This is important as the present study engaged with a range of individuals with their own culturally and historically influenced perspectives situated in different school cultures, yet all sharing the difficult experience of implementing a system driven reform.

Accordant with this interpretivist theoretical perspective, the research utilised a case study methodology with focus groups, semi-structured interviews and a document study to collect data.

An overview of the research framework underpinning the study is set out in Table 3.1. This framework will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

*Table 3.**1** Research Framework of the Study*

EPISTEMOLOGY	Social constructionism
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE	Interpretive symbolic interactionism
METHODOLOGY	Multiple Case Study
METHODS	Focus groups, semi-structured interviews and document studies

3.1.1 Epistemology

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated; put more simply, 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). There are various ways that individuals come to conclusions as to how they know what they know; however, the present study adopted the epistemological approach of social constructionism that is a branch of the main epistemology of constructionism. This epistemology believes that people act according to the way they understand the world. Moreover, they make sense of their world through interacting with it and each other. Meaning is made through action with others and is negotiated socially through interaction and historically through cultural norms (Creswell, 2013).

Constructionism was defined by Crotty (1998) as the view that, 'all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent on human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (p. 42).

An epistemological approach maintains there is not one, objective reality that can be measured or studied, rather constructionists stress the multiple nature of reality with varied and multiple meanings (Creswell, 2013). Since individuals seek to understand the world in which they live, they have subjective, personal and contextual meanings of their experiences and so multiple social realities exist. Different meanings are created by different individuals as they interact with one another. Often these meanings are socially and historically constructed (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). Thus, in the context of the present study, each leader was seen to have their own perceptions of the nature of the reform and how they and their school engaged in the reform process. These perceptions were possibly socially and historically created from factors including the local context of their school.

Social constructionism emphasises the influence of shared culture on human perceptions that make meaning of reality (Crotty, 1998). This is relevant to the present study as it involves knowledge being constructed by participants engaging with the school reform process and sharing these experiences with each other. Their perceptions have been guided by interaction in a social context. This implies that point-of-view will be determined according to an individual's circumstances, experience and context. Therefore, individuals may perceive events or circumstances differently due to a range of factors and will behave differently partly because of these perceptions. Thus, there is not one, objective reality that can be measured or studied and multiple realities are the norm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This is important as the present study intends to explore the experiences of school and system leaders with a range of circumstances, experiences and contexts all sharing the imposition of an externally funded reform initiative to build school capacity in leading learning in a low SES school.

3.1.2 The Theoretical Perspective

Within the theoretical framework is also the theoretical perspective that guides the methodology and must be closely related to the chosen methodology (Creswell, 2013; O'Donoghue, 2007).

Educational research is underpinned by four major theoretical perspectives: positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and postmodernism (O'Donoghue, 2007). In positivist forms of research, education is considered an object to be studied and that answers to problems 'are provided by empirical analytic knowledge' delivered by a 'dispassionate' and 'independent' observer, whereas in interpretive research, education is considered a process and school a lived experience, where 'social interaction [is recognised] as the basis for knowledge' (O'Donoghue, 2007 p.9) and the researcher's values are acknowledged as part of the process (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Critical research assumes that "knowledge is problematic and capable of systemic distortion [from] the interests of some groups in society" (O'Donoghue, 2007 p.10) and critical theorists aim to uncover the relationship between power and culture (Crotty, 1998). While interpretive research focuses the meanings actors assign to their own actions, critical researchers analytically seek to place such actions in a wider context of economic, political and ideological forces (Clark, 2016ß). The fourth perspective, postmodernism, argues that knowledge is governed by elite cultural rules that need deconstruction in order to be challenged (O'Donoghue, 2007).

Although the importance of all four theoretical perspectives are evident in the scholarly literature concerning low SES schools, the purpose of the present study is to obtain an understanding of how leaders engaged with the reform and this will be understood through their perceptions and actions rather than through clinical experimentation, deconstructing their meaning or placing these actions in a wider economic, political or ideological context. By adopting an interpretive theoretical position such as symbolic interactionism, I hoped to understand what the actors knew, see what they saw and understand what they understood. This is achieved by understanding their vocabulary, their ways of looking and their sense of what is important (Charon, 2010).

Therefore, for the present research an interpretive lens is appropriate given the fit between the purpose of the study and the social constructionist epistemology discussed in the previous section. Interpretivism provides a conceptual scaffold within which multiple, socially constructed sets of perceptions can be understood and will be suited to capturing the perceptions of participants regarding their experiences of reform implementation.

The present research is concerned with how individuals in a school setting construct the world around them in response to the reform initiative and what meaning they make of their shared experiences. Interpretive research considers how meaning is acquired by individuals who share a meaning system and how they make meaning by interacting with others (Creswell, 2013). Social constructionists see culture as both a source and the result of human thought and behaviour, 'a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instructions for the governing of behaviour' (Geertz, 1973, p. 44) that often exist before the arrival of an actor to a setting. To explore the experiences of teachers and leaders effectively, it was necessary to interpret their social reality via their interactions in the context of their schools, and a lens that focuses on the meaning and systems of meaning of individuals is important. As such, the researcher needed to be aware of the meaning system used by leaders as they interacted and communicated in a reform initiative to build learning capacity in their schools. For this reason, symbolic interactionism has been adopted as the interpretivist theoretical perspective for this research. A more detailed explanation of symbolic interactionism and the rationale for selecting it is explained below.

3.1.3 Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism is traced back to the work of George Herbert Mead. The philosophical school of American pragmatism also influenced the development of symbolic interaction. Pragmatists believed that 'the potential of human nature could only be actualized in interaction with others; therefore, they were concerned with identifying the conditions that would most effectively develop that potential' (Pascale, 2011 , p.80). In the course of interaction, individuals act and respond to their interpretation of gestures or symbols. Significant gestures use symbols for specific meaning and become 'language' (Mead, 1962).

In symbolic interactionism, human beings must be understood as active social, thinking and interactive beings who are influenced in their behaviour through their interaction with others and their environment (Charon, 2010). The theoretical perspective of symbolic interaction is well suited to the present study of teachers and leaders in four different schools because it is focussed on their social interaction (Charon, 2010), it is situated in their natural setting (Carter & Fuller, 2015) and the researcher undertook to interact with them in their own language and on agreed terms (Charon, 2010) in an attempt to understand and record the standpoint of those who are studied (Crotty, 1998).

Within a social constructionist framework individuals define their environment and act because of what they perceive is happening in the present. Adapting the explanation of symbolic interactionism from Denzin and Lincoln (2005), it is assumed that these educational leaders acted towards the reform process through the meaning things like this had for them derived somewhat from the social interaction that these leaders have with others.

Symbolic interactionism is a suitable approach for this research because leadership is an interactive process and teachers, coordinators, teacher educators, principals and system leaders all have leadership of learning. Each participant brought their own unique perspective to the study and through their shared reflections in interviews and focus groups an understanding was gained about their perceptions and experiences with the reform agenda. Consequently, symbolic interactionism is an appropriate theoretical perspective for this research because it is well suited to create meaning from the responses that these teachers and leaders made during the reform implementation period.

The methodology needed to be designed in such a way to explore perceptions in a trustworthy and detailed manner. The case study approach within the interpretivist

framework was selected as it allows the researcher to view four similar cases but in different contexts.

3.2 Research Methodology

Research methodology has been defined as 'the strategy, plan of action, process, or design… underpinning …the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes' (Crotty, 1998 , p.3). The research methodology defines what and how research activity will proceed and how it will be measured and reported. In line with the theoretical lens of symbolic interactionism, the researcher chose to interview participants in a case study that was 'designed to see things from the perspective of the participants' (Crotty, 1998, p. 76). In the following section, the methodology of the case study is defined and defended as a suitable strategy for the present study.

3.3 Case Study

Case study research is a detailed examination of a case in one or more real life settings (Yin, 2009). Qualitative case study research is well suited for understanding and interpreting educational experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Merriam, 1998). Case studies are particularly suited to interpretive research attempting to describe and explain what is happening and when the focus is within real-life settings (Merriam, 1998). Case study research enables the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the case to shed light on a particular experience (Yin, 2009). Case studies also allow for the use of thick description using detailed accounts of participants' experiences where the researcher makes explicit the context and patterns of cultural and social relationships (Geertz, 1973).

As a form of interpretive research, case study research aims to understand and interpret human interactions through the perceptions of the actors (Punch, 2009). A multiple case study is when 'several cases are selected to develop a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena than a single case can provide' (Chmiliar, 2010, p.583).

Because this research seeks to gather different experiences of a similar initiative, it is appropriate to use a multiple case study approach. The present study generated data from four schools and the system office to create a detailed picture of the research problem related to understanding the relationship between leadership and building teacher capacity to improve student outcomes. This research used a multiple

case study technique that 'makes the results more powerful than those from a single case and demonstrates the issues across a more varied range of circumstances than a single case can provide' (Chmiliar, 2010 , p.584). This approach builds up a composite picture of the research problem while enhancing the inferential quality and generalisability of findings. As each case study experienced a common reform agenda the study used this replication to illustrate differences and similarities (Yin, 2009) in order to gain a more profound understanding of the different perspectives of those engaged in the reform process.

Case studies allow the researcher to use multiple methods of data generation and multiple data sources to create what has been termed 'thick description', a complete and literal description of the event or circumstance being examined. Thick description aims to provide as full an understanding as possible of the experience being studied (Geertz, 1973). First named by the English philosopher Gilbert Ryle and then appropriated by Geertz (1973), thick description in a case study allows the reader to,

> visualize the sample including their relevant demographic and psychological characteristics …. A thickly described interview report successfully merges the participants' lived experiences with the researcher's interpretations of these experiences, thus creating thick meaning for the reader as well as for the participants and researcher (Ponterotto, 2006 , pp.546-547).

A notable characteristic of case study research lies in its bounded nature (Merriam, 1998) with its central focus, the heart of the case study, which has boundaries that define the case (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). Hence, for the purpose of this research each secondary school is a case in itself and, therefore, this multiple case study has four cases.

A case study approach enables the researcher to investigate the complex and multifaceted interactions of educational settings. In the present study, knowledge will be generated through the researcher's engagement in discussions of the experiences of leadership for learning with school and system leaders within the context of each school engaged in the reform initiative.

As case studies have the potential to provide an illuminating and insightful description of real people in real situations (Stake, 1995) they are well suited to real life rather than the experimental nature of the present study. The other advantage of these descriptions is that using the words of the participants make them more accessible to an audience beyond academic readers.

A common criticism of case study methodology is that it cannot be used to generalise findings (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Morrison, 2007; Wellington, 2000); however, multiple case studies can allow limited generalisations to be made (Cohen et al., 2007; Wellington, 2000; Yin, 2011). The aim of the present study was to develop propositions that linked concepts or factors within the multiple case studies. These could then be assessed for their applicability and transferability to other situations. This type of case study where propositions are made can create propositions for testing in further research that can then be generalised (Punch, 2009). An intention of the present study was also to identify propositions for further study by other researchers that will also be of use to practitioners implementing future reform initiatives.

Thus, the methodology of the case study guided by the symbolic interactionist approach within the interpretivist paradigm and underpinned by the epistemology of social constructionism is well suited to the exploration of experiences of building capacity for leadership of learning in Catholic secondary schools that are part of the *Low SES NP* reforms.

3.3.1 Participants

Given the purpose of the present study, the participants were those in, or connected to, four low SES secondary schools in one Catholic diocese of NSW involved in the *Low SES NP* reforms that had some insight and possible involvement in the exercise of leadership of these reforms.

3.3.1.1 Selection of school sites

Eleven Catholic secondary schools from eleven dioceses of NSW were participating in the four-year *Low SES NP* reform initiative, with a further six schools participating in a condensed two year programme. As the present study was interested not only in the influence of local school leadership but also in leadership of the local system, purposive sampling was used to select the schools. Purposive sampling was utilised to purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem.

Of the eleven Catholic secondary schools in NSW undergoing the four year programme, one NSW diocese had four schools that were governed by the same local system. The other seven were governed by separate systems or were independent Catholic schools with limited system support. The four secondary schools under the guidance of the same local system were selected as this removed the variances that would result from different system administrations. These four secondary schools had

students aged 12–18 years and included two coeducational schools (i.e. one boys school and one girls school). A more detailed profile of each school will be presented in the following chapter.

3.3.1.2 Selection of the participants within each school site

Participants were chosen because of their abilities to provide insights into the research problem. Table 3.2 sets out the categories of participants and their typical role in the leadership of learning.

Table 3.2 Participants in the Selected Schools

Position and number of individuals per school	Role in the leadership of learning
Personnel from the local diocesan Catholic system office (seven system leaders)	Working with the principal and the school's leadership team to foster and promote excellence in teaching/learning strategies and programmes. The personnel selected had some responsibility for leading and supporting schools to respond to the *Low SES NP* agenda.
Principals (one per school)	Overall responsibility for effective pedagogy, curriculum and student learning.
Leaders of pedagogy (two per school)	Teacher educators both model and promote contemporary learning principles. In particular, they implement and account for initiatives relating to teaching and learning that derive from *Low SES NP*.
Curriculum coordinators (one per school)	The curriculum coordinator has been delegated responsibility by the principal for the coordination and supervision of the school's overall curriculum. The curriculum coordinator works with the heads of department to ensure quality pedagogy and the development of the school as a PLC to enhance outcomes for students
Head of department (typically four per school)	Responsible for subjects or groups of subjects in schools that deliver courses based on the syllabuses provided by the NSW Board of Studies. The principal nominated heads of department that have been particularly involved in the *Low SES NP* reforms (Role Description: Appendix H).
Subject teachers (typically four per school)	Teachers of a subject in a secondary school. The principal nominated subject teachers that had been particularly involved in the *Low SES NP* reforms.

3.4 Data Generating Strategies

Data generation is made up of interrelated procedures aimed at collecting relevant information to answer emerging research questions (Creswell, 2013). The data generating strategies need to be consistent with the theoretical framework and so semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document reviews that are all appropriate for use with a case study approach were adopted for the present study (Creswell, 2013).

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the principal form of data generation in the present study. The interviews investigated the themes and issues emerging from the review of the literature and the composition of the research questions.

Interviews were designed with open-ended questions so that participants could articulate their experiences freely (Creswell, 2008). The semi-structured interview was planned to be flexible and included a protocol of questions that also permitted new questions to be introduced during the interview as a response to what the interviewee said. The questions were based on a framework of themes from the research questions and included probes to obtain additional information (Wellington, 2000; Yin, 2009). Interviews were chosen as the main form of data gathering because they would closely target information through the questions asked and the answer could provide insightful information that could effectively highlight a participant's perceptions in a detailed way (Tellis, 1997). As a research tool, interviews enabled a number of key issues to be explored in detail allowing a rich source of data about the experiences of leadership in the four schools selected for study. During the interviews, the researcher directed the order of the questions while still allowing for spontaneity and probing of responses.

There are some potential weaknesses in the use of interviews. They may be limited by the bias of poorly worded questions, they provide challenges for less articulate participants and they can be affected by reflexivity where the interviewee expresses what they think the interviewer wants to hear (Cohen et al., 2007). To limit the risk of this occurring, a pilot study using the interview protocol was conducted and questions were evaluated and revised. The pilot study also assisted in assessing and improving the researcher's questioning and listening skills. The possibility of reflexivity might have been heightened by the fact that the researcher was known to a number of the participants through his former role as principal of the same system of schools.

During the study, principals, teacher educators and curriculum coordinators from each school were asked to participate in a semi-structured one-on-one interview. They

were all asked to be involved as they all shared the responsibility to support the enabling of the reforms in their schools and it was thought they should be able to respond knowingly to the interview questions. Leaders from the local system were also invited to participate in semi-structured one-on-one interviews as they also shared the responsibility of enabling the reforms. The protocol for these system leaders differed slightly from the protocol for school-based leaders as they included questions about the role of the local system office. The interview schedule for school leaders appears in Appendix A and the interview schedule for system leaders appears in Appendix B.

The researcher led all the interviews in this study. Although the one-on-one interviews were time consuming they were ideal, as participants were not hesitant to speak and share their perceptions. General protocols of asking interview questions were followed, including obtaining consent from the interviewee to participate, using an interview guide, taking brief notes during the interview, using probes to gain additional information yet still being consistent with the theme, and asking all respondents questions in the same order while allowing new questions to be generated (Cohen et al., 2007). A former principal and two former leaders of pedagogy who all began the reforms but because of retirement or promotion were replaced during the reform period were also contacted and interviewed. A copy of a consent letter can be found in Appendix D. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to ensure an accurate re-creation of what was said. This measure increases the validity and credibility of the interview as a data gathering tool (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2008).

3.4.2 Focus groups

The study also used focus groups to obtain data from groups of head of departments and subject teachers. A focus group interview collects data through group interaction whereby individuals are selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on the chosen research topic (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985; Creswell, 2013).

Focus groups were in addition to interviews because it was hoped that they could produce data that are seldom generated through traditional interviews (Morgan, 1998). Blumer (1969) as cited in King and Horrocks (2010) explained that,

"A small number of individuals, brought together as a discussion or resource group, is more valuable many times over than any other representative sample. Such a group, discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing into it as they meet one another's disagreements, will do more to lift the veils covering the

sphere of life than any other device that I know of. (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp. 61-62).

These focus groups interviews were also audio recorded and transcribed and notes of non-verbal interactions were recorded.

The advantages of using focus group interviews are that the interaction between participants provide insights into group norms and, at times, inform about the operation of group processes. This was useful in understanding the nature of leadership in a school organisation and the level of consensus or conflict amongst participants provided insight beyond the data obtained from one-on-one interviews.

This study's focus groups allowed for the capture of the participants' attitudes, feelings and beliefs to the reform initiative. There was also an important practical purpose of forming focus groups as they had the advantage of gaining a range of perspectives in a time effective manner.

The researcher led all focus groups in this study and they were conducted at each school: one for heads of departments and one for subject teachers. It was intended that these heads of departments and subject teachers be selected from a random sample of those nominated by the principal based on the criterion that these individuals had involvement in the professional learning opportunities arising from the *Low SES NP* reforms and were therefore able to give an informed opinion of the implementation of these reforms. The principal was given eight spaces for nominations; however, the reality was that at each school there was never more than six participants listed by the principal and in some cases absenteeism by a teacher of the head of department led to fewer than six participants. The smallest group had four and the largest group had six participants. In one case, a pastoral coordinator was nominated instead of a head of department and in a different school a head of department incorrectly attended a subject teachers' forum. In both of these cases, the data needed to be carefully coded to ensure that they were tabulated correctly.

Each focus group discussed their school's engagement with the *Low SES NP* reforms and their experiences of how the school managed change. The protocol used for the focus groups is set out in Appendix C.

The purpose of the study was briefly introduced and the topic outlined and described. The focus group discussion had features similar to those outlined by King and Horrocks (2010): the subject of *Low SES NP* reforms was known and of interest to the group, the group was composed of people who were well known to each other and

who were used to interacting with each other, and it was conducted onsite at a place where the participants felt most comfortable.

The focus groups concluded with a member check of salient issues regarding the reforms. From their different experiences, focus groups of heads of department responsible for subject faculties provided a different set of perceptions to enrich the understanding of the problem. This is similar for focus groups of teachers who were involved in enabling the reforms of the partnerships in each of the schools. The interaction of these individuals to the questions set in each of the groups was also noteworthy. The number of participants in interviews and focus groups is set out in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Interview and Focus Group Participants

	Individual Semi-structured Interview	**Focus Group: No of Groups**	**Focus Group: No of Participants**
System Leaders	7		
Principals	5 (including one ex-principal)		
Curriculum coordinators	4		
Leaders of pedagogy	10 (including two ex-leaders of pedagogy)		
Heads of departments		4 (each with 4–6 participants)	18
Subject teachers		4 (each with 4–6 participants)	17
TOTAL	26 participants	8 groups	35 participants

The focus groups were designed to explore perceptions of the school's engagement with the *Low SES NP* reforms and their experiences of how the school managed change. Similar to the individual structured interviews, focus groups were administered at each school or system office at a time agreeable to both the researcher and the participant. The focus groups were recorded using a digital voice recorder, which was then transcribed. Memos to note any non-verbal communication that occurred during the focus group.

3.4.3 Document Study

The third form of data generating strategy employed was a study of relevant documents. Document study includes public and private records that researchers obtain about participants or a site (Mackay, 1997). As a research method, 'document analysis is particularly applicable to qualitative case studies' and can assist the researcher to 'uncover meaning, develop understanding, and to discover insights relevant to the research' (Bowen, 2009 , p.29).

This study adopted a relatively novel application of document study in order to assist the researcher in gaining a longer term understanding of the experiences of reform in the four schools. In this study documents were used to both provide contextual background to school settings to assist in general understanding as well as provide information that would support the making of meaning of the participant interview data. Documentary data were collected that spanned the period before, during and immediately after the four year period of the reforms and this gave the study a longitudinal lens which was beyond what the participant data presented because that data were collected over a short time frame of a few days. This allowed the researcher to compare the achievements of schools before, during and immediately after the reforms and this allowed the researcher to make inferences about the success or otherwise of reform implementation strategies. The documents also provided some secondary data that was coded and assisted in the verification of findings from the interviews and focus groups (Merriam, 1998, 2002). Document studies are an efficient method that is less time consuming and less expensive than other methods and documents in the public domain are freely available. Their stability and extensive nature are also noted. However, they can also be of limited value because they were not written to answer specific research questions and they often suffer bias because they were written for other audiences and for different purposes including corporate images and policies (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2008; King & Horrocks, 2010; Morgan, 1998).

The limitations of document studies were minimised by the use of a pilot study that examined a selection of documents to ascertain their worthiness. Adjustments were made to requests for documents from the four schools. As each school in the *Low SES NP* has a common set of prescribed and accessible documents produced for a range of purposes this ensured that documents that were relevant to the research questions were selected for study.

A preliminary document study was undertaken to gather descriptive data to profile the educational attainment and social background of students from each school.

A summary of this profile will be presented in the following chapter and the complete profile appears in Appendix L. At first, the study focussed on publicly available documentation such as annual school reports to the community(Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2012) and information from the national *My Schools* website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012) including literacy and numeracy national assessment results (NAPLAN). The data were collected to support the portraying of each school's context. This was further supported via the use of student achievement data from the final year of secondary schooling, which culminates in the Higher School Certificate (HSC). The HSC data were analysed by an external consultant to the local system. Attendance data from annual school and system reports were also presented. These data assisted the researcher to make meaning of the participants' data and allowed for comparisons to be made from school to school.

Results of a 2011 survey that was administered in the four case study schools and was designed to reflect the dimensions of the Family School Partnership Framework (DEEWR (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations), 2008) with an additional 'dimension' around connecting home, school and parish were also considered. The 'parish' dimension was included to gauge the level of parent connection with the life of their local catholic parish. The survey instrument appears in Appendix J. This survey data as well as the HSC data were made available to the researcher from leaders of the local Catholic schools system.

As part of the requirements of the *Low SES NP* reforms, schools provide their governing system with a number of documents that provided data relevant to the research questions. They included Annual Improvement Plans (AIPs), School self-evaluation reports, case study reports on individual projects and project briefings.

These particular documents provided useful data to assist in answering the research questions, as they detailed each school's strategies to respond to the various reform initiatives and therefore they were included in the coding process in a similar way to data from participants. Therefore, these document studies provided useful data and were a useful means of understanding how policy is put into practice in each school. A table detailing the documentation, its possible linkage to the research question and whether it was coded for data analysis is set out below in Table 3.4

Table 3.4 Document Study and Links to Research Questions

Document	Possible information	Link to research questions	Coded for data analysis
My School website information	• Literacy and numeracy test data including mapping of learning growth from Year 7 to 9 in literacy and numeracy from the National Assessment Plan for Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) • School profile	RSQs 1–6	No
HSC analysis reports 2011–2015 (DeCourcy, 2005)	• HSC learning gain from Year 10 to Year 12 • HSC competitiveness from university entrance scores	RSQs 1–6	No
Parent school partnership survey results	• Measured parent and community engagement		No
Annual Report to the School Community	• School background • Professional learning • Major initiatives • External testing results	RSQs 3–5	Yes
Annual improvement plan	• Strategic plan of setting out school goals each year	RSQs 3–5	Yes
School Self-Evaluation report	• Report by leadership team describing progress in implementation of the reforms • Project briefings • School project case studies	RSQs 3–6	Yes

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysing qualitative data in this thesis required the researcher to establish meaning from an enormous amount of raw data that was produced from sixty-one participants being involved in substantial interviews and focus groups along with data from a document study using at least six different sources spanning four or more years.

Data analysis followed data collection with self-reflection and drafting the interpretative accounts occurring simultaneously. The process was largely linear with a planned step-by-step approach; however, there were also inductive and iterative elements to the process. The constant comparative method of data analysis where elements are constantly compared with previous elements to discover new relationships was employed in the present study (Lichtman, 2006).

The multitude of data required a frame of analysis to bring structure and purpose to the analysis. Rather than use the traditional method of allowing the main themes to emerge from the data it was decided to use broad themes from an overarching template and align the emerging categories from the data analysis to the template's broad themes. The present study employed the document produced by the NSW Department of Education and Training (2010), *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms*, as the template to provide four over-arching themes to structure the multitude of data collected. These themes of **leading learning, quality teaching, parent and community engagement and professional learning** also provided structure for the review of literature. The study then followed the theoretical propositions outlined in the review of the literature and used the six research sub-questions to guide the process of selection (Yin, 2009). Organising and managing data were accomplished via a coding system that led to the emergence of recurring patterns for each of these four over arching themes, which were labelled as subcategories. Using the constant comparative method, these subcategories were used to identify larger categories within each overarching theme for further data analysis (Creswell, 2008).

For case study research such as the present study, analysis of the data required the development of a detailed description of each case setting (Creswell, 2013). It was important to gain an understanding of each individual school's experience in implementing these reforms as well as a collective view of all the schools. Therefore, the foci of the analysis included looking for patterns across the four case sites in an attempt to create a case site synthesis (Yin, 2009) for each research question as well as looking within each case site to build a detailed response for each of the research

questions. This search for patterns included looking at what differences of perception existed between the different role groups over a range of issues. For example, it was of interest to note the differences in perception between principals and heads of departments on the category of leadership development.

3.5.1 Stages for the Data to be Collected and Analysed

The study progressed in different stages with the first stage being an 'Exploratory Phase' that utilised a pilot school. A secondary school was invited to be involved in the pilot study and it was selected because it was included in the network of National Partnership schools by the local system as it met a number of criteria to be selected as a low SES school; however, it was not chosen to be part of the fully funded programme. It received limited funding to employ a leader of pedagogy to educate other teachers and lead the partnership reforms at that school. The pilot study involved using the protocols to conduct semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a document study. The pilot study gauged the efficacy of the draft interview and focus group protocols and gave a sense of the usefulness of some of the documents listed for study. The wording of several of the questions in the protocol was redrafted to better elicit answers. For example, the pilot study led to changes in the wording of questions about the role of the local system as the original question caused confusion for participants. The pilot data were transcribed and segments were manually highlighted and initially coded to assist the researcher to understand the practice of open coding.

During this exploratory stage, some publically available data concerning the four schools set for study was gathered from school and government websites, which assisted in gaining a better understanding of the educational and social context of each of the school communities.

The second stage involved the researcher visiting each of the four schools and the local system office to conduct the semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These interviews and focus groups were held during December 2013 and were facilitated by the researcher using the redrafted protocols. Transcripts of each of the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were created from the audio recordings. Comments about non-verbal elements of the interview drawn from the written notes from each interview and space were left in the margin for hand coding.

The third stage was to analyse the data from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This involved the coding of data that is described in the following subsection. The fourth stage was to analyse the data from the more substantial phase of

the document study that now included school documentation released to the researcher after seeking the relevant permission for access. This also involved coding that was compared with the data from the interviews and focus groups. The final step was to write a draft of the analysis. These stages of data generation and analysis have been summarised in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Stages of Data Generation and Analysis

Stages	Data Generation and Analysis	
Stage 1: Exploratory Phase	Step 1	Document analysis of publicly available material and school documentation once it became available (dependent on Step 2).
	Step 2	Gained consent from the governing bodies of the schools selected and from the individual participants.
	Step 3	Piloted the interview and focus group protocols using a low SES school NOT selected for the study.
	Step 4	Finalised the semi-structured interview protocol and drafted the focus group protocol. Scrutinised school documents to determine their usefulness for the study.
Stage 2: Individual Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups	Step 5	Visited each of the case sites and the local system office to conduct semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
	Step 6	Transcribed data from Step 5.
Stage 3	Step 7	Analysed data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups – at first manually and then digitally using NVivo for Macintosh (version 10).
Stage 4	Step 8	Concurrently with Steps 5 and 6, collected and analysed documentary evidence from each of the schools.
Stage 5	Step 9	Drafted analysis.

3.5.2 Coding

As mentioned previously, the study was guided by constant, comparative data analysis and central to this technique is the use of codes. Coding is defined as 'the process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data' (Creswell, 2008, p. 251) and allows the researcher to distil and sort data allowing for the making of comparisons with other segments of data (Charmaz, 2005). As this interpretive study used multiple types of data (interview, focus groups and document study) the initial method of coding chosen was descriptive coding. Coding took a number of cycles of coding practice to move from identifying ideas to mapping these ideas under the overarching themes by creating a range of categories. Adopting axial coding, these categories were in themselves a set of subcategories grouped under each of the four overarching themes (leading learning, quality teaching, parent and community engagement and professional learning) provided by the review of literature that informed the reform implementation (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). A fifth theme regarding perceptions as to whether the reform was building capacity was also added. These coding methods aligned with the epistemological preliminaries of the work, which allowed the researcher to interpret meaning through the words and perceptions of the participants the researcher interviewed.

Before coding took place there were a few important preliminary steps undertaken that are described next.

3.5.2.1 Pre Coding Activities

Initially for this first stage of data analysis the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups were read at least twice. The mapping tool of text segmentation was applied and meaningful segments of text were selected and manually highlighted with a colour highlighter according to a colour code related to the four overarching themes.

3.5.2.2 First Cycle – Descriptive Coding

In the paper margin, a few words were written as codes to describe what was read. As the semi-structured and focus group questions were structured to respond somewhat sequentially to the research questions there is a level of consistency in this mapping; however, frequently a participant referred simultaneously to multiple questions and so multiple colour coding was used to illustrate this multiplicity.

The next step was to import the transcripts into NVivo for Macintosh (version 10). After importing the transcripts, the researcher reread and recoded the transcripts creating codes (known as nodes in NVivo). After coding each transcript I referred back to the manual highlighting and compared the coding exercises. When coding did not match from the manual to the digital version a decision was made as to what code was more appropriate.

At this stage of initial coding, material that was not obviously linked to the research questions was still coded to remain open to exploring whatever theoretical possibilities could be discerned from the data.

For the first cycle, the study used descriptive coding, which 'summarises in a word or short phrase … the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data' (Saldaña, 2013) p. 88). Descriptive coding was a crucial first stage of data analysis to identify subcategories of data and their related properties, and thus all focus group and individual semi-structured interviews along with the collected documents were descriptive coded as a first step in data analysis. The total number of segments coded for each set of interviews and focus group was 18,642 and a summary of the sub-totals for each role group is summarised in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Total Number of Segments coded according to source

Role Groups of Interviews	Number of interviews	Total segments initially coded	Focus groups	Number of focus groups/ documents	Total segments initially coded
System leaders	7	3372	Coordinators	4	2788
Principals	5	2065	Teachers	4	2181
Curriculum coordinators	4	1123	Documents: Annual improvement plans	16	2331
Leaders of pedagogy	10	4465	Annual school reports to the community	14	209
			Other reports	11	118
Total	26	11025	Total Segments		7617

After initial coding, the researcher emerging insights and hunches drove the next phase (Merriam, 1998). Analytic memo writing was adopted using the NVivo memo

writing feature to record analytical memos when the reading of a segment triggered the researcher to make connections to the literature or comparisons with other data.

Operational model diagramming assisted the concurrent coding, categorising and analytical writing attempts (Saldaña, 2013). Microsoft Word and NVivo were the main software packages that assisted the researcher to visualise and summarise the data analysis. These diagrams assisted in the drafting and conceptualisation and the relationships between ideas. They acted as a bridge between the first and later phases of the coding process.

After the initial reading, highlighting and descriptive coding a codebook was developed via the NVivo computer program and these codes (called nodes in NVivo) were progressively modified as text was systematically sorted using constant comparison into different subcategories (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Descriptive codes were grouped together when they appeared to share some common meaning and an interpretive code was created to capture that meaning. This exercise was the forerunner to the sorting into larger categories that was part of the second cycle of coding.

3.5.2.3 Second Cycle– Interpretive Coding

After descriptive coding of the entire data set, first cycle codes were listed in the NVivo codebook, amalgamated, restructured and redundant codes were eliminated. Redundancy was based on the researcher's judgement of the codes' relevancy to the research project.

The second cycle of coding identified categories under each of the five main themes and this investigation looked for those recurrent and distinctive characteristics of the data that featured particular perceptions and experiences that were relevant to the research questions (King & Horrocks, 2010).

The relationships between codes was also examined and illustrated in preliminary diagrams where possible. It was important to repeatedly return to earlier data and use constant comparisons to clarify thinking about interpretive coding (King & Horrocks, 2010) before moving to the next stage, which was to place each category under the overarching theme.

3.5.2.4 Third Cycle Coding

The final cycle was to locate each category under one of the five overarching themes, four of which guided the review of the literature and provided a framework for the analysis of the data. This categorisation led to further changes as it was found that some categories were suitable to more than one theme. For example the category of 'Leadership development' was first placed under the theme of 'Leading learning'; however, on further reflection it was deemed to be more suitable placed under 'Professional learning'. The relationships between categories were recorded through analytical memos, which assisted the researcher during this final stage of coding. The coding process of the study is summarised and illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Intially read through semi structured interview data - many pages of text.

Divide the text into segments of information - many segments of text.

Label the segments of information with codes (descriptive coding). Reduce overlap and make redundant some codes .

Segmentation and coding of focus group and document study data using previous codes and adding new codes.

Use operational diagrams and collapse codes into categories (interpretive coding)

Codes are located under an overaching theme.

Figure 3.1 Coding process of the study

Summary tables of the frequency of coding for categories appear as summary tables periodically through the presentation chapters. A complete set of summary tables for each theme setting out the coding frequencies for subcategories and categories appear in Appendix E. These categories were also visually represented for each theme using hierarchy charts produced by NVivo. The hierarchy charts illustrate the various frequencies of coded categories by the relative size of rectangles for each category, i.e. the larger the rectangle the higher the frequency. NVivo uses 'nodes' as places to store

coding, which can be aggregated to become parent nodes (categories) that are then aggregated to become themes (see Appendix E).

An overview tabulating the links between the research questions and specific questions set in the structured interviews and focus groups as well as relevant document studies is set out in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Overview of the links between the research questions and the sources of data

Research Sub-questions	Data generation from sources
RSQ1: How was the leadership of learning experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and in accordance with the various leadership roles?	***Interviews with school leaders*** Q2: Who exercised leadership in its implementation? Q3: How did they do this? Q15: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss? ***Interviews with system leaders*** Q2: Who exercised leadership in its implementation? ***Focus group*** Q3: Reflecting on the last few years with the National Partnership, what have you or your subject team learnt about improving the school? Q4: If you had your time again, how would you do it differently? Q7: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss? ***Document study*** Annual Improvement Plans and Annual School Reports to the community
RSQ2: What barriers to the reforms did leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required	***Interviews with school leaders*** Q3: How did they do this? (exercising leadership) Prompt: *How did school leaders manage the change required? Did they experience resistance from individuals and how did they manage this resistance?* Q15: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss? ***Interviews with system leaders***

Research Sub-questions	Data generation from sources
to implement the *Low SES NP* reforms?	Q2: Who exercised responsibility in the implementation? Q3: How did system leaders manage the change required to implement these reforms? Did they experience resistance from individuals and how did they manage this resistance? ***Focus group*** Q2: How has the school managed the implementation of these reforms? Q3: Reflecting on the last few years with the National Partnership, what have you or your subject team learnt about improving the school? Q7: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss? ***Document study*** Annual School Report to the Community
RSQ 3: How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school? RSQ4: How was 'professional learning' built in each secondary school? RSQ5: How was 'parent and community engagement'	***Interview with school leaders*** Q4: Have you seen any change in the school's capacity to improve learning which you believe are due to the initiative? Q5: What was the change? Q6: Why did the change occur? Q7: Do you believe that the school's leadership capacity to improve learning has changed as a consequence of the initiative? Q8: What was the change? Q9: Why did it occur? Q10: What role did the local system office play in the initiative? Q11: Did the local system office contribute in any way to the building of capacity for learning and leading for learning in the school? Q12: In what way? Q13: All in all, what would you consider to have been the

Research Sub-questions	Data generation from sources
built in each secondary school?	most successful aspect of the initiative in terms of building capacity for leading learning in the school?
	Q15: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss*?*
	Interview with system leaders
	Q5: Have you seen any change in the secondary schools' capacity to improve learning?
	Q6: Do you believe that the school's leadership capacity to improve learning has changed as a consequence of the initiative?
	Q10: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss
	Focus group
	Q3: Reflecting on the last few years with the National Partnership, what have you or your subject team learnt about improving the school?
	Q4: If you had your time again what would you repeat and what would you do differently?
	Q6: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss
	Document study
	Annual Improvement Plans
	Annual School Reports to the Community
	School Self-evaluation Report
	Parent engagement data collected by schools
RSQ6: To what extent do participants identify improved capacity for leadership and learning in the	***Interview with school leaders***
	Q13: All in all, what would you consider to have been the most successful aspect of the initiative in terms of building capacity for learning in the school?
	Q14: The least successful*?*
	Q15: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss*?*

Research Sub-questions	Data generation from sources
school as a result of the initiative?	**Interview with system leaders** Q6: Do you believe that schools' leadership capacity to improve learning has changed as a consequence of the initiatives? Q7: Could you describe the successful aspects of how the local system worked with secondary schools building capacity for leading learning in Catholic secondary schools in the system? Q8: Could you describe to me less successful aspects of how schools were building capacity for leading learning in Catholic secondary schools in the system? Q9: What factors either promoted or inhibited this building of capacity for leading learning in different schools? Q10: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss? **Focus group** Q2: Reflecting on the last few years with the National Partnership, what have you or your subject team learnt about improving the school? Q3: To what extent do you think the reforms are making a difference to improve student learning at this school? Q6: Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss?

3.6 Trustworthiness

To establish the trustworthiness of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that it should be credible, authentic, transferable and dependable through the use of a range of techniques to build knowledge from a variety of sources and perspectives.

Creswell (2013) outlined validation strategies used by researchers to improve the trustworthiness of their studies and recommended that at least two of them be used in a study. For the purposes of the present study, a number of these strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the research:

- member checks occurred in focus groups with participants restating key points;
- triangulation of data were achieved through document analysis, individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups. This triangulation provided corroborating evidence;
- rich and thick descriptions were employed, which allows readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the description shares characteristics with their own context. (Creswell, 2013, pp. 251–252) Extracts of interview data were represented in the research report and
- the research was supported by a number of external checks. The doctoral supervisor often acted as a 'devil's advocate' (Silverman, 2006) challenging and critiquing the researcher's practices, and asking difficult questions about methods, meanings and interpretations.

The study aimed to accurately record perspectives and views of the participants. There was a prescribed and formal procedure for eliciting responses as well as for data collection and data analysis. Principals were important contributors in this multiple case study as were subject teachers; however, principals received one-on-one interviews whereas subject teachers and heads of departments only participated in focus groups. In these groups, questioning was employed in such a way that allowed all participants the opportunity to share their perspectives.

Time limitations prevented the interviewing of subject teachers and heads of departments via one-on-one interviews. Focus groups allowed for the interplay between participants that was not evident in one-on-one interviews and were successful in promoting a professional discourse as all participants actively engaged in contributing to the conversation.

Therefore, the research design included a number of elements to maintain its integrity, which is also the case for its dealings with ethical issues, as discussed below.

3.7 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations, underpinned by the principle of respect, should always be at the forefront of a researcher's decision making (Creswell, 2008). This study involved the gathering of extensive data from subjects and attempted to interpret meaning into a cogent form that respected the persons who were questioned about their perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

There was a conscious attempt to follow key ethical guidelines throughout the study (Creswell, 2008). Ethical interview practices were followed and the research was reported fully and honestly whilst maintaining the confidentiality of participants. Participants gained some value from the research and will receive a copy of the final report's summary.

Prior to the commencement of the investigation, steps were taken to ensure that the ethical considerations of the Australian Catholic University and, in particular the specific requirements of the Human Research Ethics Committee, were met. The online 'Application for Ethics Approval – Research Projects with Human Participants' was approved following confirmation of candidature and from the principal of each school. These documents are presented in Appendix F and G respectively. Formal approval was also gained from the executive director of the diocesan system leading the four schools.

Prior to the commencement of the research project participants were given, in writing, information explaining the purpose of the research, the types of data that would be collected and how the data were to be used and reported. The research agenda was disclosed to the participants as this is particularly important to subject teachers who might have felt intimidated by the nature of the research (Bassey, 1999). Each participant was issued with an invitation and consent form to participate in the research project. The consent form appears in Appendix H. Each participant was made aware of the purpose and design of the study, along with confidentiality protocols and details of ethics clearance. Participants were given the opportunity not to participate or to withdraw from the research process at any stage with no adverse consequences. These details were necessary to minimise the fears of those invited to be involved in the project by giving them a sense of the project's purpose and how their contribution would remain confidential.

It is also important to acknowledge that during the data collection phase of the research the researcher was a principal of a secondary Catholic school in the same system of schools that was involved in the present study. Although the researcher has had more than twenty-five years experience teaching in Catholic secondary schools, he

had not worked in any of the schools eligible for inclusion in the study. However, as an experienced principal he was familiar with a number of colleagues who had leadership positions in the secondary low SES Catholic schools selected for the present study.

3.8 Data Storage

The research data were secured safely in accordance with Australian Catholic University guidelines. The participants' discussions were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed by a trained professional transcriber. All electronic research data from all research phases is stored in password-protected storage media. Similarly, all printed data, including copies of consent forms as well as focus group and interview transcriptions are held in a secure, locked storage facility. At the end of five years after the research was completed, all stored electronic data will be erased and all printed materials containing research data will be shredded in compliance with the regulations of the Australian Catholic University's Human Research Ethics Committee.

3.9 Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality are essential elements in research with humans. To maintain the confidentiality of individual participants each participant's identity was removed from the research transcripts and reports. The name of each school was also kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used for the local district, each school and each individual. These steps were considered important so that participants, who were all employees of various Catholic organisations, could express opinions and beliefs in an open and honest way without fear of coercion or consequences.

3.10 Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations to the research have been discussed earlier in this chapter with the possible weaknesses of case study, interviews, focus groups and document studies being identified along with the reliability of the data collection and the possibilities of researcher bias. These issues have been dealt with openly and transparently to maintain integrity and authenticity and the use of multiple data gathering techniques ensured a wide range of responses by participants.

Also, it is recognised that the multiple case study was set in a specific context, namely four Catholic secondary schools in a diocese of NSW who have been engaged in the *Low SES NP* reforms. Any conclusions drawn or suggestions arrived at may be

specific to these 4 schools or this system of schools and may not be transferrable to other schools or systems of schools.

Another important limitation of the study could involve the perception by some participants of an unequal power relationship between the researcher (as a secondary school principal) and the interviewee (subject teachers, coordinators and leaders of pedagogy), which may represent the potential to influence participants' responses during interviews. However, in the present study the researcher was well known to a number of participants, having worked in the same system of schools with principals, coordinators and teachers for a number of years. To those participants who did not know of the researcher previously to them he was a student researcher and/or a principal of a school in a different part of the system of schools. All interviewees appeared to speak frankly and freely, with only limited prompting from questions required.

3.11 Conclusion

The present study explored the engagement of leaders in responding to a reform agenda aimed at building the capacity for leadership of learning. It achieved this via an interpretivist paradigm incorporating social constructionism and symbolic interactionism, which informed the research design, data collection and data analysis. A multiple case study of four secondary schools was chosen as the methodology, which facilitated the collection of rich data by the strategies of document analysis, focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

The research's methodology is logically consistent with the purpose of the study. Constructionism was adopted because it offers voice to the experiences and stories of the system leaders, principals, teacher educators, heads of departments and subject teachers of the present study. The case study approach aimed to apprehend the different understandings of these participants about their experiences of leadership and learning in the context of an externally imposed reform initiative.

Chapter 4 Presentation of the school profiles and data for RSQs 1 & 2

4.1 Introduction

This purpose of this chapter is to summarise the contextual and academic profiles for each school as well as present the data for the first two research sub questions which emerged from the exploration of the documents provided by the schools and the experiences of educators in these different secondary schools.

4.2 School Profiles

The following information summarises the academic and community profile of each low socio-economic Catholic secondary schools being studied. A more detailed profile including information on the main features of each school, the academic achievements of students, their attendance rates and the perceptions of parents to the nature of the family-school partnership that existed at the beginning of the reforms can be found in Appendix L. This information is presented to give context and assist in understanding the perceptions recorded and presented in this and the following chapter.

Included in the main features will be the school's position on the index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) which is set to the national average of 1000. This index is used by the study as a measure of the socio economic status. It was created by The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and is based on,

> key factors in students' family backgrounds (parents' occupation, school education and non-school education) [which] have an influence on students' educational outcomes at school. In addition to these student-level factors school-level factors such as a school's geographical location and the proportion of Indigenous students a school caters for are included (Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016).

The summary of each school's profile is presented in Table 5.1 It includes each school's ICSEA, school type, enrolment, number of students with a language other than English (LBOTE), the retention rate of the percentage of students who completed Year 10 then went on to complete Year 12 two years later, the matriculation rate of the percentage of students being offered university courses on their completion of Year 12 and the student attendance rate calculated from the percentage of days attended.

Table 4.1 Summary of each school's profile

	School A	School B	School C	School D
Index of community socio-educational advantage[1] (ICSEA)	983	986	976	965
School Type	Boys 7-12	Coed 7-12	Girls 7-12	Coed 7-12
Enrolment[2]	1171	1250	920	1061
Language Background other than English (LBOTE)[3]	1079	1160	820	977
Retention % Rate[4]	97	89	92	85
Matriculation % Rate[5] (NSW state average in parentheses)	79 (52.5)	73 (52.5)	83 (52.5)	63 (52.5)
Student Attendance % rate (NSW state schools average % in parentheses)[6]	93.6 (90.0)	95.2 (90.0)	94.8 (90.0)	92.1 (90.0)

Academic Profile during and immediately after the reform period

A summary of the academic profile of each school will also be presented using results from external assessments that are common to all schools in NSW. The full detail of the academic profile is presented in Appendix L. Achievement data for reading, writing and numeracy has been summarised and has been derived from NAPLAN – the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy. NAPLAN is

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[1] ICSEA measured in 2009 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012)

[2] 2014 Enrolment (ASRC 2014)

[3] 2014 Enrolment (ASRC 2014)

[4] Percentage of students who completed Year 10 in 2012 graduating from Year 12 in 2014 (ASRC 2014)

[5] Percentage of the Year 12, 2014 offered university placement (ASRC 2014)

[6] The attendance rate is defined as the number of actual full time equivalent 'student days attended' over the time period as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over the time period (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016a). The attendance data for each of the four case sites were obtained from their 2014 ASRC. Attendance data for all NSW government secondary schools was included for comparison(Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016a)

a series of annual literacy and numeracy tests for all Australian school students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The purpose of presenting literacy and numeracy achievement data from NAPLAN for each school is to assist in presenting the different academic profiles of each school and show, relative to other similar schools, and assists in determining how effective the school was in raising the literacy and numeracy skills of its students. A summary of the results from the Higher School Certificate (HSC), the exit credential for students attending secondary schools in NSW, will be presented. This analysis includes measures of learning gain and overall competitiveness with students from other schools (DeCourcy, 2005) and is given greater explanation in Appendix L.

4.2.1 School A

School A did not improve its NAPLAN or HSC results during or immediately after the reform period. NAPLAN learning gains from Years 7 to 9 outpaced the average national gain for the first few years of the reform but this slowed to such a state that School A's numeracy gain dipped below the average national gain from 2013-2015. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools and learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12, declined during and immediately after the reform period.

4.2.2 School B

School B improved its NAPLAN and HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN learning gains from Years 7 to 9 numeracy outpaced the average national gain before, during and after the reform period. Learning gains in reading accelerated in the first years of the reform period and remained above the national average. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools and learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12, improved during the reform period.

4.2.3 School C

The data demonstrated that School C improved its NAPLAN but not its HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN reading gains from Years 7 to 9 reading lagged behind the average national gain before the reforms but during and after the reform period it has outpaced the average national gain. Learning gains in numeracy lagged behind the national average before during and after the reform period. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools remained relatively stable whilst learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12 declined slightly during the reform period.

4.2.4 School D

School D improved its NAPLAN and HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN Writing achievement has been above average during and after the reform period. NAPLAN reading gains from Years 7 to 9 reading and numeracy gains has outpaced the average national gain. HSC results, measured by competitiveness with other schools, experienced a slight decline but learning gain from years 9 to 12 has improved in the latter years of the reform program.

This remainder of this chapter presents the data for the first two research sub questions. These data emerged from the exploration of the documents provided by the schools and from the experiences of educators in these different secondary schools who were all involved in a system driven common reform agenda. The first two research sub-questions explored the experiences of leadership engaged in the reform initiative to build capacity to improve student outcomes:

RSQ1: How was the leadership of learning experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and in accordance with each of the various leadership roles?

RSQ 2: What barriers to the reforms did leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required to implement the *Low SES NP* reforms?

4.3 Research Themes

The data will be reported for each research question using categories that emerged from the analysis. These categories are set out for the first two research sub-questions in Table 4.2. Some minor categories were collapsed into larger categories as part of the data reduction process. A table setting out the frequencies for each sub-question and category is set out in Appendix 1.

Table 4.2 Categories that emerged for each research sub-question

RQ1: Experiences of Leadership
1.   Roles and Modes of Leadership
2.   Learning Culture
3.   Strategic Approach
RQ2 Barriers to reforms and Managing Change
1.   Barriers to Reforms – barriers   - demands of the reforms

2.   Managing Change – moral imperative
          -    planned approach to change
          -    role of leaders in managing change
          -    local context

The data showed differentiation between each case site across the four case sites. The data also showed differentiation for the "Roles and Modes of Leadership" category for RSQ1 between the various role groups of participants who were interviewed or who were participants in the focus groups. Therefore data in this chapter will be presented in two ways:

(i)   data from each of the case sites (School A, School B, School C and School D) along with the perspectives of system leaders will be presented for each category;

(ii)   For RSQ1 additional data from the different roles of participants who participated in the study (Principals, Leaders of Pedagogy, Curriculum Coordinators, Heads of Department and Teachers) will be presented for the "Roles and Modes of Leadership" category.

Data were collected from three sources: semi-structured interviews, focus groups and school and system documents. Interview and focus group data is referenced back to the participant e.g. School A, Teacher 4 meaning it refers to the fourth listed teacher in the Teacher Focus Group that was conducted at School A.

The document study included Annual Improvement Plans and Reports of Reform Progress from each school. Documents are referenced back to sections of the original e.g. School A, 2011 AIP, 2.1 meaning Section 2, part 1 of School A's Annual Improvement Plan.

4.4 RSQ1 How was leadership of learning experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and according to the various leadership roles?

A theme that was generated from the literature that underpinned the Low SES National Partnerships was that of 'Leading Learning' (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). Three categories emerged from a total of more than 840 coded segments that were relevant to 'Leading Learning'. This was more than 30% of the total number of coded segments in this study. The frequency of segments and the criteria for each of the categories were:

i.   **Roles and Modes of Leadership** (506 segments) – including such sub-categories as the roles of Leaders of Pedagogy (LoPs), Principals, System Leaders, Middle Managers including Heads of Department (HoDs), Curriculum Coordinators and the Leadership Teams of Schools. Modes of leadership included sub-categories of distributive, shared and consultative leadership along with demarcation issues, teamwork, performance management and processes of decision-making.

ii. **Learning Culture** (178 segments) – including such sub-categories as raising expectations of students and staff about learning, student attendance, improving the profile of learning in the school, whole school approach to teaching and learning and using data to lead teaching and learning.

iii. **Strategic Approach** (165 segments) - including such sub-categories as planning, resourcing, planned modifications of the reforms to suit the local context, strategic leadership of Leaders of Pedagogy, Principals, System Leaders and the Leadership Teams of Schools.

In this chapter data will be presented for each category by school. Leadership roles and modes of leadership experienced in each school will also be presented by role. It is the first category to be presented.

4.4.1 Leadership Roles and Modes experienced in each school

Even though the schools all had a common goal of improving teacher and leadership capacity to improve student outcomes the role of who actually led the reforms and the way schools were led through the reform initiative varied from school to school. The different roles of the leaders were important, as was the manner or mode

in which they led the reforms. The Annual Improvement Plans set out who was responsible for what initiatives and this varied from school to school.

4.4.1.1 School A

The documentary and participatory evidence suggest School A began the reforms with an extensive list of projects led by the Leaders of Pedagogy. What is distinctive about the experiences of participants is that they had significant turnover with both Leaders of Pedagogy leaving in the first years of the reforms.

Documentary Evidence

The reform initiatives were recorded in School A's Annual Improvement Plans and who was responsible for their carriage was also identified. A table identifying who was responsible for the major initiatives of the reform process appears in Appendix K.

The Leaders of Pedagogy from School A were responsible for a wide range of initiatives particularly in the 2011 Annual Improvement Plan including initiatives for literacy, numeracy, assessment, professional development, learning culture, individual education plans, data training, programming, student engagement.

The Curriculum Coordinator was responsible for curriculum initiatives such as the streaming of classes in subjects other than English and Mathematics to provide for the diversity of the needs of the learner and raising the profile of the academic life of the school with including the encouragement of the merit system and public recognition of academic achievements (School A 2011 AIP 2.5).

The Principal was responsible for the formulation of a vision for a model of leadership which would further develop and implement the initiatives of a 'Leading Learning Committee' and a leadership forum especially for Assistant Coordinators and the Pedagogy Professional Learning Community (School A 2011 AIP 4.2).).

Ensuring best practice with performance management also featured as a responsibility of the Principal as was promotion of the school and developing external partnerships with parents and the community (School A 2011 AIP 7.2).

The Leadership Team did not share leadership or oversight of any particular reform initiative. In summary, the Leaders of Pedagogy of School A were invested with an extensive range of reform initiatives to lead.

Participants' Evidence

Participants from School A gave a broad spectrum of views about the nature of leadership roles and the way that leadership was expressed and some of these views are conflicting.

The Curriculum Coordinator explained how the Principal restructured the leadership of curriculum to focus away from a sole curriculum coordinator to a team approach, "…So it's really a team approach … planning in terms of curriculum takes place with myself and the two Leaders of Pedagogy" (School A, CCO) and how this team led and engaged with the heads of department by mapping out the teaching and learning strategies at the start of the year and briefing the Heads of Department Meetings where "we will always listen to feedback and those things are very flexible" (School A, CCO).

A head of department from School A described the decision making differently disputing that there was a chance to give feedback over reform initiatives. Coord 2 felt that, "many coordinators felt alienated in a sense, by the manner in which it was carried out. … in the sense that our feedback wasn't requested." (School A, Coord 2). Coord 2 felt he had no leadership role in the reforms as he stated, "We haven't been given specific roles, whether we're a coordinator or not. I think we've basically had much the same role as a teacher. I don't think we've been treated any differently." (School A, Coord 2).

The school had its leaders of pedagogy replaced during the reforms because they were promoted to other positions. A system leader working with the school recounted that a head of department said to LoP1,"look you're the fourth LoP. I've seen off two already, I'll see you off too without having to make a lot of changes so I'm not particularly worried" (System Leader 4).

The role of School A's Leadership Team appears to be contested by participants. School A Ex-LoP1 believed that although the whole school leadership team was responsible for the implementation of the reforms, "it did really rest with the Leaders of Pedagogy and the Principal" as "nobody else really had the inclination or the time I guess to engage with the reform agenda." and the leaders of pedagogy, "did all of the professional learning, we designed it all and implemented it all for the staff at the school" (School A, Ex-Lop1). Ex-LoP2 differed in his view when he said, "most on the executive were certainly involved in some way or another … trying to transform learning" (School A, Ex-LoP2). This perspective was supported by LoP1 who said, "there was an absolutely overwhelming uncompromising approach uniform with the

leadership team for improving learning" (School A, LoP1). LoP1 particularly believed that the strategic intent had been driven by the leadership team (School A, LoP1).

The role of leadership from the system also appeared to be an issue. School Ex-LoP1 thought that, "there was a sense at times that the office was imposing too much in terms of their own agenda of learning initiatives" (School A, Ex-LoP1). He explained how there was a difference between the rhetoric and the reality of who made the decisions, "the idea initially was that the school would devise the projects that best suited them … but then after 12 months the system started to impose certain projects that needed to be done and sometimes they didn't suit the local context (School A, Ex-LoP1).

The Principal was seen as a central unifying force leading the staff to work on a learning belief statement and what it requires teachers to do (School A, Ex-LoP2). LoP2 thought "the only reason that we have been successful… is that we have a principal who is very supportive of what we do and is grounded in improving learning outcomes for students" (School A, LoP2).

Ex-LoP2 described his belief that although the school's culture was traditional it was high performing and the Principal's brief was that the leaders of pedagogy "transform the learning that was taking place in the school" and the Principal "very much created, along with his leadership team, a culture of learning and incorporation" (School A, Ex-LoP2).

Conclusion

The fact that School A had four Leaders of Pedagogy over the four reform years was perceived by some leaders to have affected their progress. The issue of a lack of leadership distribution raised by the heads of department was not mentioned by other School A leaders but the nature of leadership distribution is uncertain as the documentary evidence suggests that it was highly centralised whilst some members of the leadership suggest it was shared and distributed at least across the leadership team. The evidence from the heads of department and the documentary evidence would suggest that leadership was not distributed from the leadership team to the middle managers.

4.4.1.2 School B

The documentary and participatory evidence suggest that School B began the reforms more slowly than School A and the school differed because the leaders of

pedagogy were not given leadership of these original projects. The roles and mode of leadership changed with s new Principal at the end of the first year of the reforms.

Documentary Evidence

The reform initiatives were recorded in School B's Annual Improvement Plans and who was responsible for their carriage was also identified and is presented in Appendix K.

The distribution of duties seems to be more widely shared beyond the Leaders of Pedagogy than in School A. The early appointment of literacy and numeracy coordinators in 2011 meant that they gave leadership to literacy and numeracy initiatives and supported the Leaders of Pedagogy and the Curriculum Coordinator in the extensive task of creating Individual Education Plans for all students at or below the minimum Australian benchmark. The Assistant Principal was responsible for attendance matters, middle management development and student engagement initiatives. The Curriculum Coordinator was responsible for Low SES NP projects in 2011 and the Leaders of Pedagogy were only allocated a few areas to work on during the first year of the reforms. In 2012 the Leaders of Pedagogy began to take responsibility for the leadership of projects.

In 2013 the Leadership Team was made responsible for many of the projects that the Leaders of Pedagogy initiated in 2012 (School B 2013 AIP, 2.1) and a Tailored Innovative Learning and Teaching (TILT) initiative became a major responsibility for the Leaders of Pedagogy from 2013 onwards. In the latter years of the reform program the Leaders of Pedagogy were often acting as facilitators to support heads of department working with their staff on data (School B 2013 AIP, 3.4). The Curriculum Coordinator was responsible for data analysis and the training of heads of department with the RAP Analysis. In the final year of the reform program the Curriculum Coordinator had oversight of the Individual Education Plans.

Participants' Evidence

School B differed from the other schools in that its leaders of pedagogy were not placed on the leadership team in the first year of the reforms. The Curriculum Coordinator was made the leader of the reform project and worked exclusively with the Principal to, "put the projects together and cost them …he did largely the monitoring of it" (School B Ex-Principal).

The former Principal appointed two Leaders of Pedagogy but would not appoint them to the leadership team as, "that wasn't something that would have been well

accepted at our school because both of them were very young and had never established the credibility that you needed to be part of the executive (School B Ex-Principal).

A second issue arose because of the direction by system leaders that the leaders of pedagogy were not to have any classes but Ex-Principal B stated that, " it wasn't going to help them establish credibility in the school [but] we were told categorically that they were to be taken off that class." (School B Ex-Principal).

The leaders of pedagogy were not given extensive duties in their first year and the Principal was reluctant to have them involved in the projects that the Leadership Team developed because, "they would have struggled a bit to find areas they could target and make a difference….So what they tended to do was support teachers in the classroom (School B, Ex-Principal). The Ex-Principal was equivocal about their impact using new pedagogical ideas, "sometimes …they were trying to help people who struggled in the classroom a fair bit with new ideas or concepts or classroom management and so on... It didn't always go well" (School B, Ex-Principal).

The principal and the leadership team held determination of what projects would operate. The former Principal of School B limited the involvement of the middle management and teaching staff in this process and justified this by stating,

> It basically largely came out of the executive... if we'd have spent a staff day we
> might have come up with some pretty wild and woolly ideas that… give teachers
> or support staff an easier ride (School B Ex-Principal).

The principal retired at the end of the first year of the reforms. The new principal restructured the leadership of the reforms so that by the end of his second year of leadership he was able to state that,

> The reforms are implemented really by the Leaders of Pedagogy… a lot of the
> work from my understanding prior to that was the work of the Director of
> Studies... when I arrived I made the decision that the Leaders of Pedagogy
> would move on to the Leadership Team" (School B Principal).

He afforded the leaders of pedagogy his trust and made them responsible for the carriage of the reform agenda,

> I see my role as to trust them and empower them to use the data, use the
> directions of the Leadership Team to implement the opportunities that the
> reform agenda affords us… I wanted to give them their freedom and their scope
> to be able to lead (School B Principal).

There was a change in direction and the projects began to be developed by the leaders of pedagogy rather than the leadership team using the school based data as their

rationale (School B Principal). After two years working with them the Principal of
School B regarded the leaders of pedagogy highly as they "have been exceptional and
they've added great value to teachers (and) the College Leadership team… I look to
maintain them beyond Low SES –NP" (School B Principal). A system leader working
with School B described the change in leadership,

> the first principal at School B … it was very ordered, told people what to do and
> it was very structured. There was a lot of control in the hands of the Curriculum
> Coordinator. He didn't want the leaders of pedagogy on the executive so they
> weren't - they answered to the Curriculum Coordinator. …. When a new
> Principal came in there…he's a different style of leader - probably more
> collaborative and wants people to take ownership of what's happening with the
> learning in the school, and he's working around getting staff buy in to all of
> that…. He changed the structure and put …the Leaders of Pedagogy onto the
> leadership team, made them answerable to him and not to the curriculum
> coordinator. I think that's had a real impact on how much, how quicker things
> are moving and change has been seen a bit more (System Leader 5).

The principal of School B saw his role as primarily one of strategic leadership
aligning the goals of the reform agenda with the priorities and needs of the school,
"looking at the bigger picture in the school and getting a sense of where it is after two
years" (School B, Principal).

He also saw the leadership role of heads of department as "pretty critical
…They have carriage of the learning in each KLA obviously (and) …the key project,
we call it the TILT project, Tailored and Innovative Learning Teams, have been led by
the Heads of Department" (School B Principal).

Coordinators and teachers have affirmed the organisation skills of the leaders of
pedagogy and the teams of teachers that supported projects such as TILT. Coord 4
stated that how well structured and well guided the TILT process has been. Teacher 1
stated that, "We are very lucky that we have the two leaders of pedagogy, and they've
been I guess the overseers." (School B, Teacher 1).

Conclusion

The leaders of pedagogy in School B underwent a major change in their roles
during the course of the reforms due to the changeover of principals. The new principal
appeared to change the mode of leadership by making it much more distributive and
there is evidence that this went beyond the leadership team to the heads of department.

4.4.1.3 School C

The documentary and participatory evidence recounts that the School C began the reforms by conducting a situational analysis led by the leaders of pedagogy which then informed later reform initiatives.

Documentary Evidence

The reform initiatives were recorded in School C's Annual Improvement Plans and who had responsibility for their carriage was also identified and is summarised in a table illustrated in Appendix K.

The distribution of duties in School C seems to be more widely shared beyond the leaders of pedagogy than in School A and to a lesser extent School B. The appointment of the Diverse Learning Coordinator (DLC) in 2011 meant that the creation of the IEPs was shared between the LOPs and the DLC (School C, AIP 2011 2.1). The Principal of School C led a few initiatives in the first year of the reforms such as parent engagement (School C, 2011 AIP, 6.1) and facilitating the Leadership Team's engagement in data and data informed learning (School C, 2011,AIP, 7.1) before divesting or sharing this to other leadership team members.

Participants' Evidence

The key leadership role of the leaders of pedagogy was recognised by a number of participants (School C, Coord 1; Coord 2; CCO; Principal). The curriculum coordinator was appreciative of them working together to build the partnership between pastoral and heads of department (School C, CCO). The diverse learning coordinator appreciated their advice on Low SES NP reform initiatives (School C, Coord 4).

The principal saw their role as instrumental at the beginning of the reform period to forensically uncover practices that were unethical or poorly designed. The principal stated that the LoPs assisted "because what I had known and suspected was being hidden from me no matter how hard I tried to dig" and this allowed the principal to "start focusing on performance managing key people out of executive roles to actually get some learning done" (School C, Principal). This led to some resignations and departures from various leadership positions and so for the principal the leaders of pedagogy were "just a gift from heaven" (School C, Principal). The Principal described the crucial leadership role the Leaders of Pedagogy had in working with teachers about classroom practice and immersing themselves in the life of the school which built trust with staff (Principal, School C). A teacher new to the school was able to give a

newcomer's perspective of the work of the leaders of pedagogy, "as an outsider I can see that the LOPS have put in place with the help, obviously, of the curriculum, with the ideas of backward design, with the ideas of better assessment" (School C, Teacher).

Principal C was also affirmed for her approachability working "with everyone at all levels…to really sell the (reform) agenda to the staff" (School C, CCO). The curriculum coordinator praised the principal for her positive attitude and ability to motivate the staff, "if the person leading from the front isn't coming to the party then no one else will and I think that that's been really vital in the process" (School C, CCO).

During the first years of the reforms the leadership team was not altogether behind the reform process. One of the leaders of pedagogy explained the leadership issue of 'dark knights' that she believed existed within the leadership team at School C and resisted the implementation of the reforms.

> the agenda in itself was very meritorious…. You will have dark knights. … I didn't expect perhaps to see them in leadership teams…. Dark knights really - they can impede the process a lot …somebody who would block an agenda … we're not doing that, no, no, we already do that already…The challenge was the leadership team as well as the agenda.

After changes were made to the leadership team during the second year of the reforms the team appeared to be somewhat strengthened in the eyes of the principal, "I've got mostly a good, strong executive team around me, very, very loyal, for the most part, and essentially what they're doing is they're working as a close-knit team with the learning agenda" (Principal, School C).

One leader of pedagogy described the new form of leadership as "a very distributed model in the school " (School C, LoP1). A system leader who worked with School C concluded that,

> The LoPs keep saying we're making a very slow, methodical change but I think they've made a huge change to assessment in the school, to the level of accountability Heads of Department to the quality of … ESL and diverse learning … in the school to how it is now, the relationships that they've built up with the parent community, so that to me has been massive changes (System Leader 4).

The leaders of pedagogy saw the need to develop the capacity of their heads of department, "in being instructional leaders …So they've become far more aware perhaps of where they need to develop themselves as leaders (School C, LoP1).

Conclusion

Therefore, the leaders of pedagogy in School C worked closely with the principal. The documentary and participatory evidence suggest that leadership was shared and distributed to the middle managers but issues within the leadership team meant that leadership might not have been shared well during at least the first two years of the reforms.

4.4.1.4 School D

The documentary evidence suggested that at School D leadership was distributed amongst and beyond the leadership team. However, participatory evidence suggests that heads of department did not feel that were given sufficient leadership opportunities with the various reform initiatives and there was concern that they needed further development as leaders of learning.

Documentary Evidence

The reform initiatives were recorded in School D's Annual Improvement Plans and who was responsible for their carriage was also identified. This information is summarised in a table in Appendix K.

The leaders of pedagogy in School D were delegated responsibility primarily for literacy, ESL and to a lesser extent numeracy initiatives (School D, AIPs 2011-2014, 2.1 & 3.3). They supported staff to analyse NAPLAN as part of their literacy focus and they were responsible for identifying students who were at or below the minimum national standard for reading, writing and numeracy. Other reform initiatives were delegated out to other leadership team members and coordinators, some of whom were appointed using reform funding. Like most of the other Principals, the Principal of School D's main responsibilities were strategic planning, recruitment and staff goal setting, teacher standards and performance review.

Therefore, the Annual Improvement Plans demonstrate that roles and responsibilities were distributed across the leadership group and the leaders of pedagogy with their emphasis on literacy and ESL had a narrower focus than in other schools.

Participants' Evidence

Participants spoke largely about either the strong relationship between the principal and the two leaders of pedagogy or they spoke about the leadership role of the heads of department.

The leaders of pedagogy both referred to the support of the leadership team and in particular the principal. LoP2 thought that the support of School D's leadership team was "fully on board" but from "speaking to other LoPs" this was not always apparent in the other NPSS schools (School D, LoP2). Both Leaders of Pedagogy felt that their Principal trusted them and allowed them to operate semi-autonomously, "because I think he knew us as well …and we trusted him" (School D, LoP2).

Heads of department were critical of their limited role in the reform process. One head of department described the leadership structure as a "hierarchical structure… that impedes that sharing and dissemination of knowledge out of the studies coordinating pool" (School D Coord 4). Another head of department was adverse to the lack of ownership and involvement of heads of department in the reform process claiming, "there's been a real shifting of the responsibility to the LoPs" (School D Coord 4). Another head of department agreed that the imposition of the leaders of pedagogy had created demarcation disputes and conflict over leadership,

> When positions like LoPs are made, there is no clear job description and demarcation line between who's in charge of what issue, and that is an instant recipe for conflict. Because I've been in heated meetings where the leader of pedagogy thought they had the right to lecture me and I thought I was in the position not to justify myself to them (School D Coord 2).

There was also some discussion about the engagement of heads of department in the reform process. This was acknowledged by one fellow head of department who stated that, "we've seen a couple of heads of department really take on board what was going on and be very proactive, and we've had a couple of others who have not been" (School D Coord 4).

The leaders of pedagogy were critical that they had asked heads of department to join them on various professional development sessions run by the system to support the reforms but "a lot of them weren't particularly that supportive of those sorts of things" (School D LoP2). This leader of pedagogy came to the view that for some heads of department,

> (they) don't see themselves (as leaders of learning), … the whole job description of a head of department is to run your department, make sure that your teachers have their reports done, have their assessment tasks done, but they have never had that particular role of developing them as teachers (School D LoP2).

The principal agreed that the managerial role of the heads of department dominated their thinking,

The role of the heads of department in this process has been probably the biggest struggle because … we've always considered people in that role to be the coordinator or the manager of the subject and also the leader of the learning. I think the lived experience for a lot of them has been that they've been sort of a manager of the subject, have had great enthusiasm for the learning but they wouldn't necessarily see a lot of what their teachers are doing in the classroom. They might see the assessment tasks that are set. They might see the quality of responses. But for a lot of them, given that they are teaching the majority of each day too, they get little opportunity to actually see what's going on in the classroom (School D Principal).

A system leader was quite concerned that although the leaders of pedagogy from School D were leading literacy and numeracy by working with the teachers, the leadership capacity of heads of department was not being developed. She stated the need to "make sure the LOPs are working with the heads of department to build their capacity because if they don't do that, then where's the sustainability?" (System Leader 2).

A dissenting view to this is from one of the heads of department who believed that the group did not lack capacity but were disempowered leaders of learning, "there is quite a pool of expertise here amongst the studies coordinators, I'm not always sure that that pool is tapped into as effectively as it could be" (School D Coord 3).

Conclusion

Therefore two opposing views emerged regarding the role of heads of department. Some School D coordinators expressed dissatisfaction about their leadership role and it appears for them that leadership of learning for the reforms was not distributed to them. On the other hand, members of the leadership team expressed criticism of the lack of interest that some heads of department demonstrated for leadership of learning.

4.4.1.5 Summary

This presentation of the data on leadership roles and modes has raised a number of differences in the participants' perceptions about the approaches taken in each of the schools. Although the positive impact of the leaders of pedagogy was acknowledged by participants in each school it appears that this impact was mitigated by staff changes, relationships with the principal, fellow leadership team members and heads of

department in particular. The level and nature of shared leadership that was distributed within and beyond each school's leadership team varied from school to school.

There was also variance between different role groups across the schools and system leadership regarding the roles and modes of leadership and these differences were worth presenting for the differences in perspectives according to the role each person performed.

4.4.2 Leadership Roles and Modes experienced by various leadership roles

4.4.2.1 Principals

Most principals discussed the decision-making process involved in implementing reforms at the school level and it differed from school to school.

The role of the leadership team varied in each school. In School A there was differing views on the role of the leadership team with the reform agenda (School A, Ex-Lop1; Lop1; Ex-LoP2; LoP2). School B's processes changed with the retirement of one principal and the arrival of his successor to become more inclusive of the leaders of pedagogy whom he believed have "added great value to the college leadership team" (School B, Principal). The principal of School D used an inner cabinet of his leadership team to determine projects consisting of the principal, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator and the two leaders of pedagogy.

School C spoke of the leader of pedagogy's assistance in uncovering poor practices within her school. This situational analysis led to changes in the composition of the school's leadership team which the principal believed strengthened the leadership team so it began working "as a close-knit team with the learning agenda" (School C, Principal).

Some principals spoke of the leadership of heads of department. The Principal of School B saw their role as critical but the Principal of School D believed that his "biggest struggle because … we've always considered people in that role to be the coordinator or the manager of the subject and also the leader of the learning. I think the lived experience for a lot of them has been that they've been sort of a manager of the subject …(and) they get little opportunity to actually see what's going on in the classroom."

Typically, the leaders of pedagogy were highly regarded by their principals (Principals School A; School B and School C) who trusted them (School B, Principal),

who got to know their staff (School A Principal) and in turn were trusted by teachers (School C Principal).

The principal of School B saw his role as "aligning the Low SES NP agenda, and opportunity, with the needs of the school and trying to make a match there so there's a fit and a deliverable improvement" (School B, Principal). He saw the local system's role was to allocate the funds and ensure that there is alignment with local projects and the national reform agenda (School B, Principal). The principal of School D also saw the leadership role of the local system in terms of managing the funding and administration of the reforms as "a real benefit" (School D, Principal)

The now retired principal of School B was critical of the system's role in leadership and project development,

> Even the executive of course got carted or got compelled to attend what I regarded as fairly useless Low SES NP inservices. …I felt at those that if you had a new whacky idea, well then you'd be up there speaking about it but if you'd cut the mustard and achieved good results and good outcomes for kids over the years of course that was perhaps less recognised. So sometimes you sat there and listened to people that really I didn't think would have had a lot of credibility…. But those days were compulsory and it would take six key people out of your school perhaps four times a year, five times a year. I thought it was a bit over the top.

4.4.2.2 Curriculum Coordinators

There were only a few comments made by curriculum coordinators about the roles and modes of leadership. They were largely positive towards the role of the Principal (School C), the relationship between the leaders of pedagogy and the Principal (School D) and the support the leaders of pedagogy gave to the curriculum coordinator (School C).

4.4.2.3 Leaders of Pedagogy

Leaders of pedagogy spoke about the support they received from their principal and their leadership team. They also commented on the leadership from the local system and of their middle managers.

A number of leaders of pedagogy affirmed their leadership team for their active support as fellow leaders of learning (School A, Ex-LoP2; School A, LoP1; School B, LoP2, School D, LoP2). One leader of pedagogy described the emotional support they

and her fellow leader of pedagogy gave, "it would be a very lonely job as a LOP if you didn't have a supportive leadership team and another LOP" (School A, LoP1). She described the absolutely overwhelming uncompromising uniform approach of the leadership team for improving learning (School A, LoP 1). A Leader of pedagogy from School D also placed their leadership team's support in absolute terms, "the Executive have been fully on board… 100 per cent of the Executive … that was fundamental".

Other leaders of pedagogy were more equivocal. One of the original leaders of pedagogy from School A felt that the capability of the leadership team to lead learning was such that they were "being lead along with the rest of the staff in the unpacking of what the reform agenda meant" (School A, Ex-Lop1). School B's LoP 2 stated that their leadership team had "been involved from a big picture perspective, but in the day to day running of it the LoPs have taken those projects and implemented them" (School B , LoP 2) . LoP1 from School C questioned the support of the Leadership team during the first years of the reforms and implied that they were resistant to the reform initiatives (School C , LoP 1).

Leaders of pedagogy from Schools A and C discussed the shared nature of leadership at their schools. Ex-LoP2 from School A stated, "that the Principal of School A has a very distributed form of leadership…Principal A had very much created, along with his leadership team, a culture of learning and incorporation" (School A, Ex-LoP2).

This shared culture was also noted by School A's LoP1 who described how the leadership team had worked with staff in forming a shared vision and purpose to "get people on board" (School A , LoP 1). School A's LoP1 saw that the challenge was to go beyond the desire to be collaborative and reflective and to have that evident in things such as meetings and in the way middle managers lead their teams (School A, LoP 1).

LoP1 from School C described the leadership at her school as being a "very distributed model ... So it's not a clear cut linear" (School C, LoP1). Leaders of Pedagogy from Schools B and D did not mention shared forms of leadership.

Some leaders of pedagogy mentioned the role of the local system in leading the reforms. Some leaders of pedagogy found that the system "started to impose certain projects that needed to be done and sometimes they didn't suit the local context" (School A, Ex-LoP1). LoP1 from School D agreed, stating that there was some good direction initially from the local system leaders but there "were a whole lot of things put on us" (School D, LoP1).

Leaders of pedagogy raised the roles of the heads of department. School A's LoP1 saw that a real challenge would be to develop the model of shared leadership with

heads of department (School A, LoP1) whilst School B's LoP2 saw that the development of heads of department as an important part of her role (School B, LoP2). School D's LoP1 claimed that heads of department were not supportive of the reforms and did not see themselves as leaders of learning (School D, LoP1).

4.4.2.4 Coordinators

Heads of department in Schools B and C were more favourable to their role in the reform initiatives and the leadership displayed by the Leaders of Pedagogy than in Schools A and D.

There were concerns raised by heads of department that they were not involved enough in the decision-making and were not given enough ownership of that process. (School D, Coord 4). A Coordinator from School A believed that heads of department had been disregarded and had as much the same role as a teacher in implementing the reforms with the result being that they felt alienated (School A, Coord 2).

Heads of department explained that it was their role to support the leaders of pedagogy and the leadership team (School A, Coord 1) but they felt "alienated to some extent in the sense that our feedback wasn't requested" (School A, Coord 2) or disempowered at "heated meetings where the leader of pedagogy thought they had the right to lecture me" (School D, Coord 2). In School C there was no stated concern over consultation and one coordinator stated that, "heads of department (need) to make sure that we're leading our team with the direction were given from the school in the right direction" (School C, Coord 3).

Coordinators in School B praised the organisation and communication of the Leaders of Pedagogy (School B, Coords 1&2) and in School C they also highlighted the support of the newly appointed Curriculum Coordinator (School C, Coord 1).

4.4.2.5 Teachers

Teachers in Schools B, C and D affirmed the leadership role of the leaders of pedagogy in their schools. Teachers in School A were pleased to have the support of their local system leaders.

Teachers from School B thought they were fortunate to have the support of their two Leaders of Pedagogy (School B, Teachers 2 & 3). Teacher 1 from School C gave a newcomers account of the new ideas being implemented into the school (School C, Teacher 1). The organisational skills of the leaders of pedagogy were noted by two teachers (School B, teacher 2, School D, Teacher 3).

The leadership role of system personnel was positively noted by three teachers from school A who described the support and direction they have received for students with special needs, eLearning, mathematics and science (School A, Teachers 1, 2 & 3).

4.4.2.6 System Leaders

System leaders spoke about their role in the decision making process. At the beginning of the reform process System Leader 1 met with principals and leaders of pedagogy and they "would come up with some innovative ideas about what (reform initiatives) might look like in the context of their school" (System Leader 1).

System Leader 6 claimed that the system had been "very open to ideas and to work through … with school leadership teams and working with leaders of pedagogy in terms of developing strategies to move forward and also looking at alternative ways" (System Leader 6). System Leader 1 emphasised that, "they don't want me to tell them what to do they just want somebody to listen to their thoughts and I think that's really important (System Leader 1)".

System Leader 1 also emphasised the need for shared leadership and a " shared vision of understanding the reform agenda in terms of improved student learning outcomes and everybody in the school's responsibility for it to happen, not just the leader of pedagogy". Leadership Team Development days aimed to broaden responsibility for the reforms beyond the Leader of pedagogy who "might be the driver and can help it happen but every person on the leadership team has to do the job, you all have to talk in the same language, have the same commitment" (System Leader 1).

System leaders also mentioned the important role of the principal and System Leader 1 explained the importance of the principal's knowledge of the local context and the capacities of their staff,

> The principal knows the school; the principal is critical in the whole process. One principal will say to a LOP that's the reform agenda you run with it because they trust that person and they know they're capabilities and they know who they're going to work with. They know that within that school context whatever that person comes up with will be met with acceptance, enthusiasm, the kids will be involved and the parents will appreciate it. But if you did that same thing in another school with a different teacher cohort, different student cohort in terms of their own autonomy it may not work. So I think the context is critical and we should never underestimate the value of acknowledging that (System Leader 1).

The principal as a visionary leader was also mentioned as a vital ingredient for success and that "where principals already have a strong vision of where they want to

take their school and their community" there was greater chance of success (System Leader 4). System Leader 6 also noted that some principals embraced the reforms and shared the leadership of learning by empowering and supporting the leaders of pedagogy whilst others were a "bit busy, (and) didn't necessarily have the time to commit to it" (System Leader 6).

System leader 6 thought the relationship between the leaders of pedagogy and the principal was very important because

> where it has been most successful is where the principal actually gave the opportunity for the leader of pedagogy to break through. Where schools didn't get that breakthrough opportunity, probably progress has been less pronounced than it is in other schools (System Leader 6).

System leader 4 agreed with this view that leadership of learning needed to be shared with "a sense of team, capacity to embrace the leader of pedagogy as an additional resource to keep that focus on learning (and) the interpersonal skills and ability to work with people to shift their thinking" (System Leader 4).

The different culture of secondary schools with its principals having greater autonomy than their primary colleagues was noted, "a secondary school principal is very much the leader of the school (and) has a lot of decision making capacity and ability …the secondary principals are very upfront in saying what they think of things and won't do something because the system says this is what you're going to do" (System Leader 4).

The leadership role of the heads of department was also raised by a number of system leaders (System Leaders 2, 4 and 5). System Leader 2 was concerned that the leaders of pedagogy have avoided the heads of department by working instead with younger teachers stating that, "unless you're going to challenge your heads of department nothing's going to happen" (System Leader 2). System Leader 4 thought that,

> the people whose capacity really needs to be built in the school is the heads of department… there isn't that modelling very much of a head of department who really runs with their department as a real PLC, and building the capacity of teachers within the department and making that administrative stuff a side thing (System Leader 4).

System Leader 5 observed that, "it's a rare department that runs well when you've got a less than satisfactory head of department. So I think that would be probably be one of the chief factors that would account for the lack of impact" (System Leader 5). System

Leader 2 had major reservations about the quality and capacity of some of the heads of department in schools and posed the question about whether students are being taught effectively,

> In one subject, three of the four heads of department are hopeless... My belief is they're critical. …. who's the leader in your classroom? - your head of department. So if they're not working, things aren't going to work. If they're not challenging their teachers also, we're too much about, oh, they're nice people.
>
> Well, that's nice but are they teaching the kids effectively? (System Leader 2)

System Leader 4 thought the quality of the heads of department as an important determinant of successfully building capacity, "it generally has been because the school has a HoD or a HoDs who see the need " to develop their teachers (System Leader 4).

Therefore system leaders were able to give broad perception of the nature of the leadership roles and how leadership was enacted in each of the schools. They identified the importance of principals, leaders of pedagogy and the sharing of leadership. They also raised some concern about the capacity of heads of department to lead learning.

Conclusion

Therefore the data according to role groups suggest that leadership was shared in different degrees from the principal to others. Heads of department emerged as a salient issue with principals, curriculum coordinators, leaders of pedagogy and system leaders expressing concern about their capacity or willingness to lead learning. On the other hand some heads of department in Schools A and D expressed concern about being sidelined by leaders of pedagogy in the leadership of the reforms.

4.4.3 Learning Culture experienced in each school

The learning culture of a school is the set of values and practices that encourage students and teachers to focus on and improve learning. Leaders of the four schools attempted to in some way to improve their school's learning culture. Some of these ways included raising the expectations about learning for both students and teachers; enhancing the profile of learning within their own school, leaders using data to plan teaching and learning, adopting a whole school approach to learning and providing extra resources to support learning.

4.4.3.1 School A

Leaders of School A attempted to strengthen the learning culture by developing school wide approaches to aspects of learning and by providing extra resources to support learning.

Documentary Evidence

The documentation from School A details the 2011 and 2012 plans to develop whole school approaches to pedagogy, ESL, literacy, use of data and eLearning; (School A, 2011 AIP, 2.1). In the 2012 AIP the formation of a learning belief statement that would include all teaching staff in its construction was planned (School A, 2012 AIP, 1.1) and this was augmented in 2014 the Annual Improvement Plan by the plan to develop an authentic learning framework to design assessment and learning.

Participants' Evidence

The Curriculum Coordinator of School A explained that in the first years of the reform they had been inserviced on using NAPLAN and HSC data but the analysis was largely descriptive without leading to using the data to "inform our teaching and drive certain agendas at the school" (School A, CCO). He was concerned that the heads of department needed to use the data more effectively (School A, CCO).

Heads of department in the focus group gave a counter view. Coordinator 2 stated that the use of data has "made us think more about being explicit about our goals and what it is that we want to achieve with the school and with the students on a classroom level as well" Coordinator 1 explained that, "each one of us with their faculty staff has worked on …the data and …we've been briefed on how we can implement, how we can read it, how we can interpret it and then how we can take it into our classroom" (School A, Coordinator 2).

LoP1 acknowledged that teachers were intensively trained on the use of data tools to analyse NAPLAN but she did not believe that it was being used to inform learning effectively. As she stated, "So whilst they have the skills to do that it's not been common practice to use it to personalise learning" (School A LoP1). A new reporting package was being implemented to enable the profiling of the students and to utilise it as tracking as "they can start to utilise (the data) in terms of knowing them as learners and then hopefully start to look at some differentiation" (School A LoP1).

Ex-LoP1 believed that the leadership culture was strengthened by the activities of teachers trialling and learning new ways and that they have this understanding that

the school is now focussed on teaching and learning (School A, Ex-LoP1). LoP1 summed up this focus by stating that "everything that we're doing is about learning - I'm a learner, you're a learner, the students are learners" (School A, LoP1). A system leader who worked closely with School A noticed that the leaders of pedagogy had moved the staffroom conversation to around teaching and learning (System Leader 7).

Principal A used the reform funding to resource teacher by paying them to lead evening tutorial groups for Year 12 students preparing for the HSC examinations and he noted that both the student and staff attendance at these evening tutorials was very high (School A, Principal).

Ex-LoP2 described how the reforms allowed collaboration and more rigorous expectations to strengthen the learning culture, "There was a tightening up of a number of protocols, procedures, et cetera …the notion of collaboration, the notion of working with each other…I think those things came together to make it an improved learning culture". (School A, Ex-LoP2)

This collaboration was not always evident. Early work on assessment design "wasn't successful because the collaborative design hadn't occurred and so it was imposed. So people were then feeling quite (negative) around assessment (as) it wasn't a co-constructive task" (School A, LoP1)

Therefore, leaders of School A attempted to improve its learning culture through such things as a focus on learning, data informed learning and targeted resourcing but there were conflicting assessments of its impact.

4.4.3.2 School B

Leaders from School B concentrated on raising expectation for students regarding attendance and setting aspirational goals for them. In the latter years of the reforms there was a significant focus on engaging students through the TILT project.

Documentary Evidence

School B's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan noted an expansion in provisions for career education for students in Years 10 and 12 to meet with the Careers Advisor to research opportunities available for students post school (School B, 2011 AIP, 2.1).

Leaders of School B set out to improve student attendance rates under a project called *Building Bridges: A Home School Partnership.* The project entailed the recruitment of a teachers' aide who would contact parents by telephone if their child was absent to ascertain the reason for that absence. Attendance reports were compiled

and presented to year coordinators who would follow up unexplained absences and high absenteeism of individual students.

The plan included the development of a partnership with parents from some identified cultural groups and letters were sent home emphasising the importance of regular attendance. The expectations were raised as parents were given firmer guidelines and expectations if they requested leave for their child. Attendance targets were set and Pastoral Care Coordinators were to discuss with students and staff the goal for the year (School B, 2011 AIP, 2.5).

The 2011 and 2012 Annual Improvement Plans called for motivational guest speakers to be invited to speak to students to develop their wellbeing as well as their ability to set academic, aspirational and vocational goals (School B, 2011, 2.5 & 2012 AIP, 2.2). A Homework Club to be operated by staff and past students was planned, for one afternoon each week. Individualised tutoring for indigenous students, in an area of their interest, was planned as well (School B, 2012 AIP, 3.2).

The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan included the intention to improve the transition process to post school with a careers day to be offered to students from Years 9 -12 to explore vocational options (School B, 2013 AIP, 2.1). School leaders also planned a whole school approach to data analysis with Heads of Department to agree on common ways to interrogate a range of data sources and to then develop and utilise common data analysis templates in all Key Learning Areas (School B, 2013 AIP, 3.4).

Another measure to bring a whole school approach to teaching and learning was the planned alignment of the work of the TILT program with School B's collaboratively constructed learning and teaching principles (School B, 2013 AIP, 3.4). In the final year of the reforms School B planned for a school wide strategic direction for eLearning, which would also be aligned with School B's learning and teaching principles (School B, 2014 AIP, 3.4).

Participants' Evidence

The curriculum coordinator explained the attendance project and described how it improved student attendance during 2011(School B, CCO). The program was perceived to have received strong endorsement from the staff and as one of the school's pastoral coordinators stated "when you've got the students at school, they're going to learn more, so their capacity for learning is going to be greater" (School B, Coord 4).

Coord 4 believed the student study skills program was increasing their capacity to learn and the greater focus on career options was also motivating students (School B,

Coord 4). Coord 1 reported greater student engagement due to the improved pedagogy, "teachers have found there's been less discipline problems because student's have been more engaged … discover(ing) their learning - rather than having the teacher centred approach … classes have been working a lot more productively that way" (School B Coord 1).

Coord 4 supported Coord 1's view that prior to the reforms that there had been a decline in student behaviour possibly from non-engagement in the classroom and that he noted that fewer detentions has been issued this year for such misdemeanour (School B Coord 1).

Another school initiative was the creation of a homework club. Coord 1 was disappointed with student attendance at this voluntary service but Coord 4 found homework club very valuable actually as a behavioural tool because senior students who have been placed on detention could attend the homework club and get assistance with their study whilst serving the time for detention (School B, Coords 1&4). A teacher reported that many students were staying back to get one-on-one tutoring (School B, Teacher 1). Another teacher believed that indigenous students who attended tutoring and others who regularly attended the homework club had benefitted as they have become more confident, better behaved and more directed to learning (School B, Teacher 3).

One of the leaders of pedagogy had noted that the learning culture was also changing the focus of the leadership team in what it spoke about in its own meeting time from a preoccupation with "practicalities" to "put learning front and centre" (School B, LoP2).

Leaders, coordinators and teachers attempted to strengthen the learning culture of School B through the use of data. System leaders professionally developed heads of department to focus on how teaching practice should change in response to the data (School B, CCO). Heads of department at School B have worked together to use common data templates when analysing HSC and NAPLAN results (School B, LoP2). A teacher explained how achievement data were being used to program through the TILT project teams which were in themselves bringing a whole school approach by including all teachers in the process of program writing for the new syllabuses (School B Teacher 2).

Conclusion

Participants reported the building of a learning culture at School B including the curriculum coordinator who reported, "I see learning as being reinvigorated, given new emphasis here. Teachers are responding positively to it" (School B, CCO). This was achieved through the work of both leaders of pedagogy and coordinators who raised expectations of students by targeting attendance and providing career advice. Heads of Department were expected to be involved in a school wide approach to data analysis and teachers were involved in a school wide approach to programming.

4.4.3.3 School C

Evidence from School C suggests that there was significant emphasis on strengthening the learning culture through a range of measures to focus the school more sharply on learning.

Documentary Evidence

In 2011 leaders of School C expanded provisions for career counselling to maximise the number of students transitioning from school into employment or further education (School C 2011 Careers, Transition and Partnerships Project) School C's 2013 Annual Improvement Plan included the development of "On Target" an academic success program for students (School C, 2013 AIP, 2.5). A project team including students and teachers were to identify the needs of students and personalise the learning according to those needs with workshops, collaborative learning and private study. This was further supported by the establishment of the "Seek Homework Club" which operated three afternoons a week after school.

A project called "Empowering Learners" aimed to build a learning culture that developed students ability to 'self regulate' their learning. The model of a Connected Learning circle was chosen to develop self-regulation and involved parents, students and teachers. In 2014 student management processes were to be reviewed with a view to raising expectations of students.

Whole school approaches towards ESL was noted in the 2011 Annual Improvement Plan (School C, 2011 AIP, 2.1) and the school looked to the final year of the reforms to align their curriculum mapping and learning sequences with backward design for programming of the new syllabuses. (School C, 2013 Empowering Learners Project).

Participants' Evidence

The Curriculum Coordinator reported that the subject selection process for senior students was strengthened as a response to HSC data analysis to ensure that students were enrolling in subjects that best suited their capabilities (School C, CCO).

Heads of department acknowledged that the reforms initiative funded the SEEK program, which allowed for additional student assistance for homework and assessments type. The reforms also focussed teachers on learning with the release of teachers from some classes spend more time on data analysis, program development and assessment changes (School C, Coords 4 & 5).

The principal was concerned that staff members were justifying their poor results on the lack of capacity of the students. She stated that, "We had to raise expectations of the students because it was very much, that's about as good as we can do because that's the students we've got. They don't know much English, they don't have the home support" (School C, Principal). According to the principal, staff expectations of students were low and students "were going through the school (and not) doing assessment tasks and no one was chasing that up. We had students who would complete a couple of years and not do a single task" (School C, Principal). The principal believed that School C was behind other schools because "we had to get the staff to understand there's a learning agenda and there's a whole lot of exciting things happening out there" (School C, Principal). One head of department explained that the principal and leaders of pedagogy,

> "certainly have raised expectations... …not just of middle managers of staff, but also staff and students, so that , as you said, the snowball effect, and I think even in the two years …I can see the academic rigour is increasing and the expectations of students is increasing" (School C, Coord 2).

A colleague in the focus group agreed "absolutely" (School C, Coord 4).

Another head of department emphasised that he thought "the biggest challenge is change or transforming the culture of the school" and that it is an "ambitious and difficult process" (School C, Coord 5). Coord 4 reported that, "We're starting to actually challenge some students and bringing in families and challenge them about their behaviours and things that affect not just their learning, but the learning of others." (School C, Coord 4). She described the implications of data analysis and spoke about parents needing to be realistic about their expectations (School C, Coordinator 4).

Teacher 4 reported noticing the changes as the leaders of pedagogy started to give the school some direction, "I felt that a lot of heads of department were running their own sort of show. Where as now we're coming together as a staff" (School C, Teacher 4). Teacher 3 appreciated the consistency being developed and Teacher 4 spoke of the advantages of having common assessment practices stating, "this year we've sort of all brought it together and I think that's much better. I find that everyone's on the same page." (School C, Teacher 4). Teacher 2 agreed that students had benefitted from these changes even though it meant some leaders were "displaced" and that she thought that it "could have been handled a little bit better" (School C, Teacher 2).

Participants spoke about the developing sense of a common vision. Coord 3 thought that the time, "working together and setting those goals together, and determining the school's direction, it really is about having a collective vision" (School C, Coord 3).

The leaders of pedagogy saw that their role included focussing the heads of department on teaching and learning and LoP1 believed that they were making good progress with most heads of department moving "to a model where most of their meeting time's become more about professional learning and less about administrivia. So the culture of leadership alongside the culture of learning is shifting" (School C, LoP1). LoP1 explained the difficulties when she first arrived at the school with heads of departments' written reports on annual HSC results focussing on describing rather than analysing and identifying improvement strategies,

> they just did things to get it done. One coordinator… said, you know data analysis is a bit of creative writing… let me write my narrative. ... Another coordinator said that they had deliberately put a line in their report to see if anybody had ever read it…the coordinators are starting to get a handle on looking at data across a couple of years rather than just one year in isolation, and understanding that we can strategically target (as a response)" (School C, LoP1).

> LoP1 intended to "build learning and a learning culture…and raise the bar (by) looking at higher expectations around the school in terms of what we're expecting of students and being explicit about how they could get there" (School C, LoP1).

Other measures to strengthen the learning culture included whole school approaches to plan teaching and learning, assessment and a school based pedagogical model which led to a common pedagogical language developing among the staff (School C, LoP2).

Coord 5 believed that student expectations were improving and he saw the importance of changing the learning culture through the action of these reforms. He also recognised the importance of student attitudes to what they see "as success or their attitude to their work and their belief in the school". Coord 5 saw this as part of the, "bigger picture process, is changing the culture, is changing those expectations"(School C, Coord 5).

Participants from School C reported that considerable progress was made in strengthening the learning culture of their school from a low starting point during the first three years of the reforms. Coord 1 summarised the impact of the reforms by stating, "there is a changing culture in the school and people are energised and there are some really wonderful things going on" (School C, Coordinator 1).

4.4.3.4 School D

School D focussed on whole school literacy, numeracy and ESL pedagogy to develop its learning culture along with a program designed to build student study skills.

Documentary Evidence

School D's documentary evidence included measures designed to improve the learning culture of the school such as the implementation of a "Learn to Learn" program which focused on students developing skills as independent learners (School D, 2011 AIP, 2.3). This program began in both Year 7 and Year 12 and was then expanded in 2012 into Year 8 and then Year 9 in 2013(School D, 2012 -2013 AIPs, 2.3). Also there was an undertaking to monitor attendance patterns and review unsatisfactory patterns of attendance (School D, 2012 AIP, 2.3).

A whole-school pedagogical approach to ESL learners was identified in both the 2011 and 2012 Annual Improvement Plan (School D, 2011-2012 AIPs, 3.3). A whole-school approach to improvement in literacy and numeracy standards was identified in the 2013 and 14 AIPs (School D, 2013-2014 AIPs, 2.1).

Participants' Evidence

The curriculum coordinator confirmed that the focus on learning had strengthened during the first three years of the reforms but he did not believe that the heads of department' focus on learning had strengthened during that time (School D, CCO).

One head of department thought that since the commencement of the reforms there had been a lot more discussion about data both at an executive level and at the faculty level. She believed that teachers were certainly aware of school trends and class data but were yet to act upon them (School D, Coord 4). Another head of department agreed with Coord 4 and stated further that there needed to be some school wide formalization of the next step of acting upon the data…[so] we have some … action plan for it. Because if you leave it just to teachers, it will never get done (School D, Coord 2).

Heads of department also raised concerns about the lack of engagement by the team of heads of department with data analysis. Coord 4 was concerned about the lack of school wide use of the RAP and DeCourcy Analyses, both HSC data analysis tools made available to schools,

> I'm going to be honest and frank, .., but I've been really, really disappointed with the lack of use of RAP….it is so useful, but I have not been in a [HoDs] meeting all year when it's been raised. We used to have sit down meetings with the curriculum coordinator discuss in detail the De Courcy, I haven't had one of those meetings in two years….I do remember a HoDs meeting -where we were trying to go through RAP and nobody cared (School D, Coord 4)

Coord 2 agreed that heads of department meetings do not discuss important pedagogical matters like data analysis,

> I'd like to see that sort of conversation in our HoDs meeting, a pedagogical discussion. Because we teach the same kids and the same issues aren't isolated to your department. Those - that real drilling down of causation can happen then, but we haven't attached ourselves to that, yet, we're yet to do that step two which is, how do we effectively use the data, not just be told, go and look at it (School D, Coord 2).

LoP 2 acknowledged that despite school wide training for teachers to use data the ongoing analysis was not school wide, "different KLAs who are open to it, (some) embrace it probably more than other KLAs." (School D, LoP2). He also acknowledged that, "We look at RAP and De Courcy as well, that's sort of gone off the boil a little bit - it was more a handout to people, they had a look and they commented" (School D, LoP2).

LoP 2 spoke about how School D had focused strongly on whole school literacy and whole school pedagogy for ESL learners to build the learning culture. The principal explained how students were part of the reform movement as they would question some

teachers why they were not using the reading and writing strategies that they were receiving from teachers in other classes. He stated that students were saying, "well we've learnt this in History, can we not use this in English or can we not use this in PE? I suppose it almost dragged the reluctant teacher along because at the end of the day they had to respond" (School D, Principal).

Teachers believed that students' attitude towards learning and reading had improved greatly during the past three years and that the borrowing rates in the library had nearly trebled (School D, Teacher 3). Teacher 5 acknowledged that not only had expectations for students been raised but "there's like a higher bar that we have to meet" (School D, Teacher 5). Another participant agreed that teachers have been challenged and stated overall that,

> the evolution of the culture in a positive manner needs to continue. I think we've got some teachers on board, well a lot of teachers on board now and I think we've got some students on board now and that just needs to continue, get them all in the net (School D, Teacher 1).

In summary, teachers from School D reported that progress was made in strengthening the learning culture of their school during the first three years of the reforms but heads of department and leaders of pedagogy reported that leaders' use of data analysis was not strongly evident.

4.4.3.5 System leaders

A system leader noted the impact of the appointment of the leaders of pedagogy on the learning culture of schools when she stated that, "by placing teachers there who, basically, their sole job was to look at how to improve teaching and learning, it straight away puts a context for a teacher to say this is an agenda item" (System Leader 7).

System Leader 1 agreed that the role of the leaders of pedagogy had been exemplary and that the synergy between projects designed to strengthen the learning culture worked in different ways in different schools, System Leader 1 stated that "the leaders of pedagogy have done an amazing job… you can see the real synergy around a focus on student learning, student data and collective responsibility for all students" (System Leader 1).

System Leader 5 acknowledged that the appointment of the leaders of pedagogy had led to "a more sharply focussed pedagogical leadership… that's been a fresh awakening" (System Leader 5) and that there was a "far broader engagement across many schools to embrace a whole school notion of pedagogy" (System Leader 6).

System Leader 2 acknowledged that school leadership teams had higher expectations placed upon them and they "have felt that there's been pressure on them to do a lot more." (System Leader 2).

In terms of the use of data System Leader 6 thought schools have demonstrated intelligent use of data with well-targeted interventions that he believed was leading to a shifting culture more oriented to learning (System Leader 6). Furthermore, he believed that

> it's been most successful where there's been some really strategic thinking …to embed itself in terms of the school culture but also in terms of teaching practice…schools that have seen it as something to build the capacity of teachers and to review the structures and operations of the school … have been very, very successful (System Leader 6).

This sense that the learning culture of some schools have been strengthened

more than in other schools is also evident in the data from other participants.

Conclusion

This presentation of the data on learning culture has demonstrated the range of initiatives school leaders introduced to strengthen their school's culture and the number of teachers who could recognise the impact of these attempts was noteworthy. There were differences in school focus with School B focussing more on teacher capacity building than School A which focussed more on student resourcing. Leaders use of data for planning varied with School B appearing to be more successful than other schools. We now turn to the extensive attempts of leaders to manage the changes necessary to implement the Low SES NP reforms.

4.4.4 Strategic Planning experienced in each school

The implementation of these reforms required school leaders to strategically plan for the four years of the reform and to make the improvement sustainable in the years following the reforms. This required leaders to identify long-term objectives and assess the progress of the reforms in their school and make modifications where necessary.

4.4.4.1 School A

There is evidence that leaders from School A planned the reforms strategically and modified them when their evaluations revealed resistance to the reform initiatives.

Documentary Evidence

The Annual Improvement Plans of School A outline a number of strategic approaches including a critical review of the school community, goal setting for teachers using the Personal Performance Planning and Review (PPPR) process and the establishment of a culture of renewal and reform to attract high performing teachers. (School A, 2011 AIP, 7.1). The 2013 Annual Plan included the identification of new strategic alliances (School A, 2013 AIP, 7.1) and the 2014 AIP set the goal of embedding a sustainable culture of continuous change and transformation using the Authentic Learning Statement (School A, 2014 AIP, 7.1).

Participants' Evidence

The Curriculum Coordinator recounted that the Leadership Team extensively planned the Low SES NP reforms, strategically mapping out the areas that School A needed to progress which would also align with both the reform agendas as well the school designed learning framework (School A, CCO). Ex-LoP2 believed the school leadership team "worked from the idea that it wasn't a deficit model that we were working from the first instance. It was a substantial model that we had and we were building on what had already been there...a high performing school and the Principal had very much created, along with his leadership team, a culture of learning and incorporation" (School A, Ex-LoP2). Ex-LoP1 described how in their planning they avoided the strong temptation "to change from the get go…. there were things we wanted to do straightaway but people obviously take time to come on board with those sorts of changes. So we decided that we'd start small" (School A, Ex-Lop1).

LoP1 described how a review of the first years of the programs, by the principal and the two new leaders of pedagogy, led to a fundamental reframing of their approach away from a series of projects and commenced conversations about transition beyond the funding with the objective of sustainable change. LoP1 described the backward design process used, "we made our conscious decision at the beginning of the year and we said right, what is it, that two years out of this, so as we move into 2015 what do we want this institution to look like?" (School A, LoP1). She noted "the strategic intent has been driven by us as a leadership team, which I believe it should be because we're the ones who are trying to transform, make the change"(School A, LoP1). LoP2 described

how they strategically reoriented resources into "two broad areas, one around teacher professional development and teacher learning and one about how we design learning and assessment" (School A, LoP2).

The principal noted the need to find future funding to maintain Leaders of Pedagogy at the school after the reforms finish for the leadership they provide to teaching and learning (School A, Principal).

4.4.4.2 School B

Leaders from School B strategically planned the reforms and adapted them to meet the local needs of their school.

Documentary Evidence

The 2011 Annual Improvement Plan set out intentions that the school would demonstrate a highly developed culture of evidence-based self review and improvement, that the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) would reflect school vision, mission and beliefs and that the school would develop and implement highly effective Annual Improvement Plans (AIP) that are focused on school improvement. The plan set out regular evaluation and communication of the major initiatives for school improvement and the objective that priorities for professional and leadership development be directly linked to the school's improvement planning initiatives (School B, 2011 AIP, 7.1).

In 2012 the school commenced planning for a new Strategic Improvement Plan. The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan stated the need for a timeline for the formulation of the Strategic Improvement Plan including consultations with stakeholders and staff workshops on the drafting of the school's vision and mission. The school's leadership team was invested with the responsibility of drafting the plan before the end of the year (School B, 2012 AIP, 7.1). The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan included the goal that PPPR processes for all teachers are aligned to the major areas for school improvement (School B, 2013 AIP, 7.1). There were no specific strategic intentions mentioned in the 2014 AIP.

Participants' Evidence

The leaders of pedagogy have been mindful of the local context and the educational data when planning for the reforms (School B, LoP1). Data from parent, student and teacher surveys were also used to inform the projects (School B, Principal).

According to LoP2 the role of the principal has been the "big picture look" to "align the projects to our strategic plan, to our annual improvement plan and to the needs of the college" (School B, LoP2). The principal saw it in similar terms, "my role is aligning the Low-SES NP agenda, and opportunity, with the needs of the school and trying to make a match there so there's a fit and a deliverable improvement" (School B, Principal). Being new to the school the principal of School B explained how he has learnt that the school needs clear priorities,

> I see my role as looking at the bigger picture in the school and really only getting a sense of where it is after two years, and I've got a good handle on it now... and we've just finished a couple of days where the Leadership team has met and gone very, very hard on revising our strategic plan until 2017 to ensure there's very clear priorities annually. So for next year there's really three areas in the school that will become our priorities and that's it (Principal, School B).

In summary, School B utilised strategic planning processes such as the preparation of the Annual Improvement Plan as one of their key strategies.

4.4.4.3 School C

Leaders from School C strategically planned the reforms and adapted them to meet the local needs of their school.

Documentary Evidence

The 2011 Annual Improvement Plan included an objective to "introduce teachers to the Strategic Improvement Plan and Annual Improvement Plans as a way of guiding professional development" and to "implement the use of the PPPR to inform directions for staff development and improvement" (School C, 2011 AIP, 7.1). The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan set out the requirement for the Leadership Team to evaluate the progress of Low SES NP projects using a range of data (School C, 2012 AIP, 7.1). There were no specific strategic intentions mentioned in the 2013 AIP but the 2014 AIP called for a review of leadership roles and structures and the exploration of potential staffing solutions to address future directions for when the reform period concludes (School C, 2014 AIP, 7.1).

Participants' Evidence

The principal of School C was concerned about the low starting point of the school's improvement journey. She saw that the "most crucial need was (that) we had a school that had no leadership for learning for years". Teacher 1 supports this observation by saying that, "coming from another school … there were lots of things missing, lots of processes…[that] that I could rely on as a new staff member to get my job done to be able to teach" (School C, Teacher 1).

LoP1 believed that the situational analysis undertaken during the first year supported future planning, "a lot of the work that we've done has been responsive to what was happening in the school, or what wasn't happening and working out where to go with that next strategically" (School C, LoP1). LoP 1's evaluation of the school's status during that first year described a school that had not kept up with changes in education, "A lot of ideas in the world of education…hadn't seen the light here at all, hadn't even been filtered out. People hadn't heard of, or it wasn't in practice. … So we have a lot of gap to make up" (School C, LoP1).

The curriculum coordinator had only been at School C since the beginning of 2013 and had come from a high performing school that had high order structures and processes in place. In building such structures at School C he could "really see how important (it was that) the structure, process and strategic thinking go hand in hand" (School C, CCO). The principal was conscious that the leadership team needed to have

> " the end vision in sight as we moved strategically over those few years, and
> most of it was about performance managing, introducing things, getting the
> school up to a standard but at the same time helping people talk about learning
> and educating the staff" (School C Principal).

LoP2 spoke about the role of the principal to be a gatekeeper of the initiatives, "you've got to be able to work strategically and say right, we're working on - this is our focus now - not trying to do five different things not well" (School C, LoP2).

Coord 5 praised the Principal's strategic recruitment of staff to drive school improvement,

> "strategically employing certain people who are going to drive things so that it
> works effectively. The leaders of pedagogy were mentioned and they've played a
> key role in what's been going on and driving it. I think the way that it's been
> strategically done has been really, really effective." (School C, Coord 5).

Coord 2 recognised the strategic nature of building the capacity of the heads of department (School C, Coord 2). Coord 1 perceived that "there's obviously a plan as to

why they're doing things and you can see through staff meetings and those sorts of things as to where we're going" (School C, Coord 1).

The use of data were perceived to be directing the school's future planning. Coord 5 was able to discern that, "the directives that we've had as a school going forward for me, have resulted from that analysis of that local data. So I would certainly say the direction of our school is being determined by data" (School C, Coord 5) and this has meant that "we've been able to establish a clear direction for our faculty and a way forward using the directives of the school" (School C, Coord 1).

The principal envisages that the final year of the reforms will be important to ensure that the school remains faithful to the vision of the reforms because "if you haven't got the end vision you're not going to be able to work towards it. Then I'm not going to be strong enough to be able to say to people well, why are you doing that if I haven't got that end vision?" (School C, Principal).

In summary, School C's strategic planning responded to the needs identified by its principal and other leaders and teachers as a school in need of substantial improvement.

4.4.4.4 School D

Leaders from School D strategically planned the reforms but some leaders criticised system leaders for their poor strategic approach to the reforms (School D, Principal and LoP1).

Documentary Evidence

School D's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan planned for collaborative staff engagement with the system process 'School Review and Improvement' which included the formation and review of annual improvement plans (School D, 2011 AIP, 7.1). School D planned to finalise, launch and implement its Strategic Improvement Plan which covered the years 2011-2013. The school also identified the need to manage of the collection and communication of evaluative data in both the 2011 and 2012 AIPs (School D, 2011 & 2012 AIP, 7.1). The 2014 AIP identified the need to prepare for the end of five-year cyclic review which was scheduled by the system for 2015.

Participants' Evidence

School D had anticipated being included in the Low SES NP reforms and had employed a learning coordinator similar to the role that came to be 'leader of

pedagogy' in the year prior to the reforms (School D, Principal). The Principal stated that in the first year of the reforms, "We were very calculated in what we did right from the beginning. I suppose we were very strategic. We looked at what the needs were. We tried to get a real sense of what was the agenda that we had to address" (School D, Principal).

The leadership team of School D planned and scheduled the projects and communicated to all the staff that they were able to receive time to work on those projects (School D, CCO). Coord 3 believed that this planning and release time created a "more optimistic and positive atmosphere around this round of change ... this has had a much more strategic framework that's surrounded it." (School D, Coord 3). The principal believed that "there was an openness amongst staff and …because of the strategic leadership in selecting staff, the programs were winners (School D, Principal).

In praising his leadership team for their skilled planning he acknowledged that the system produced poorly timed agendas "that you just have to deal with when they arrive". The top down approach of system leaders was also seen as a 'distracting' impediment to reform (School D, Principal). LoP1 spoke of how schools got themselves strategically established with "a clear road out in front" only to have system leaders impose new projects "coming in on the side" which may not have aligned well with the projects already established, "it's a right angle, it's not going in the same direction" (School D, LoP1). The principal expressed frustration with the unaligned strategic planning of the system, "one of the struggles we have had is that a lot of their reform thinking seems to arrive at the beginning of the new year and schools that are fairly organised have already planned what they're doing"(School D, Principal).

4.4.4.5 System Leaders

System leaders spoke extensively about strategic leadership in regards to the following areas: initial strategic planning, the role of the principal's vision, the different starting points of schools affecting their planning, the strategic role of the leaders of pedagogy, the need to consolidate and prioritise initiatives along with the sustainability of the improvements.

System Leader 1 recounted the complexities of the initial strategic planning that focussed on understanding the reform agenda, expectations, accountabilities and resourcing (System Leader 1). System Leader 5 explained how central office took leadership of the planning which differed from the normal process of the regions being responsible for implementation of system projects (System Leader 1). System Leader 7

was critical of the secondary school experience because, "It was a little bit rushed and there wasn't a lot of preplanning… It wasn't strategic in nature. I don't think that helped the cause (System Leader 7).

System Leader 6 believed that the great challenge was the government's rapid unveiling of the reform agenda and the flow of substantial funding meaning that "it came upon schools, I think, very, very quickly, without a great understanding of how to expend such a large amount of money" (System Leader 6) System Leader was hopeful that Principals would acknowledge that school autonomy was restored after the first twelve months or so of the initial planning and implementation of the reforms (System Leader 3).

Two system leaders mentioned the importance of the Principal's vision in guiding strategic planning. System Leader 3 thought that where principals already have a strong vision of where they want to take their school and their community they were really able to embrace this opportunity to plan for their improvements (System Leader 3). System Leader 4 thought that if the principal had a passion for learning the Leaders of Pedagogy could take forward a shared vision and direction. However, if the principal predominantly saw them as administrators rather than leaders then the progress was piecemeal with limited overall alignment of all the different things that the leaders of pedagogy achieved done (System Leader 4).

System Leader 4 observed that leaders of pedagogy were utilised as a strategic tools by some principals. System Leader 4 believed that a high capacity leader of pedagogy had a great impact in their school (System Leader 4). She used the example of School C to support her view that the leaders' of pedagogy situational analysis allowed for effective strategic planning (System Leader 4).

Strategic planning was also required to prioritise and align the wide breadth of projects that were commenced in the first year of the reforms. System Leader 7 was critical that the various projects were not "mapped around the learning focus" (System Leader 7) whilst System Leader 2 worked with schools to consolidate and link projects to make the reforms more coherent (System Leader 2). The work of Schools A's leaders of pedagogy to align and consolidate their projects was cited as an example of how they were making the reforms sustainable (System Leader 4).

System Leader 6 believed that the quality of the strategic approach was key to the success of reforms in particular schools and how effectively the school leadership understood and planned the reforms:

it's been most successful is where there's been some really strategic thinking

that's really tried to embed itself in terms of the school culture but also in terms

of teaching practice" where it has been used to "build the capacity of teachers

and to review the structures and operations of the school, I think have been very,

very successful" (System Leader 6).

Sustainability of the gains from the reforms were raised by System Leaders 4, 5

and 6 with all noting the need for the role of the leaders of pedagogy to be retained in

some way in schools (System Leaders 4, 5 and 6). System Leader 6 saw the improved

use of data as a way that well targeted and sustainable interventions have shown great

promise for the period after the reforms (System Leader 6).

4.4.5 Summary

Educators in schools emphasised different elements of leading learning. The

following summary highlights the most salient points.

Although the positive impact of the leaders of pedagogy was acknowledged by

participants in each school it appears that this impact was mitigated by staff changes,

relationships with the principal, fellow leadership team members and heads of

department in particular.

The level and nature of shared leadership that was distributed within and beyond

each school's leadership team varied from school to school. Leadership appeared to be

more distributed in School B than the other schools. The only other school to distribute

leadership for learning to heads of department was School C but its leaders experienced

issues sharing leadership within its own leadership team.

Heads of department emerged as a salient issue with principals, curriculum

coordinators, leaders of pedagogy and system leaders expressing concern about their

capacity or willingness to lead learning.

School leaders varied in their approaches to building capacity. School B

focussed more on teacher capacity building than School A who focussed more on

student resourcing. Leaders' use of data for planning varied with Schools B and C

appearing to be more successful than other schools. At School B leaders of pedagogy

and coordinators raised expectations of students by targeting attendance and providing

career advice whilst Heads of Department were involved in a school wide approach to

data analysis. All schools appear to have adopted a strategic approach to the

implementation of the reforms but there was criticism of the system's top down

approach and lack of strategic leadership.

4.5 RSQ2. What barriers to the reforms did leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required to implement the Low SES NP Reforms?

The scale and nature of the Low SES NP reforms required significant changes to school practices in a relatively short period of time. This necessitated careful management from school leadership teams and system leaders. Each school experienced resistance to change from various stakeholders and school leaders managed the changes required in different ways. There is no documentary evidence available for this component but there are extensive data from participants.

Two categories emerged from a total of 882 coded segments that were relevant to Barriers to Reform and Managing Change. This was more than 31% of the total number of coded segments in this study. The frequency of segments and the criteria for each of the categories were:

i. **Barriers to Reform** (482 segments) **-** including such sub-categories as resistance from stakeholders, resistance from coordinators and experienced teachers, previous successful results inhibiting reform, resistance to system mandates, ownership of reforms, pace and demands of the reforms.

ii. **Managing Change** (400 segments)- including such sub-categories as planning for change, moral imperative of the reforms, adapting the reforms to suit the local context, role of leaders to manage change, and the system leaders' approach to change.

4.5.1 Barriers to Reform

Leaders in each of the schools experienced barriers when leading the implementation of the reforms. The nature and intensity of that resistance varied from school to school.

4.5.1.1 School A

The leaders of School A experienced extensive resistance to their reform initiatives and had to abandon a number of them. Heads of department were particularly resistant to the work of successive leaders of pedagogy. Other barriers to the reforms included perceptions from teachers and coordinators that the initiatives were more about accountability than improvement, a lack of trust between teachers, coordinators and the

leaders of pedagogy, issues with communication and lack of head of department involvement in planning for the implementation.

The leaders of pedagogy attempted a series of assessment reforms. LoP2 described the resistance head of departments gave to these reforms designed to improve feedback, "heads of department didn't like that….they couldn't see the value in that. For them it was adding work" (School A, CCO). The heads of department had to accept this change but the leaders of pedagogy hoped that they would work with them and move forward (School A, CCO). Two years after the implementation of these assessment reforms a head of department was able to say, "some of the assessment stuff, despite the fact initially it was all a bit overwhelming …but I think I like it now. I think a lot of teachers are seeing the benefit" (School A, Coordinator 1).

The principal recounted that implementing whole school practices like a common computerised mark book received great resistance from the heads of department because it "actually has accountability in it. But I think that word accountability scares them a little bit because others can actually see what they're doing" (School A, Principal).

The leaders of pedagogy had to abandon some key elements of the reform process because of opposition from teachers and heads of department. All leaders of pedagogy were trained by the system to introduce 'instructional rounds' where a group of leaders and/or teachers visit multiple classrooms with the aim to observe particular elements of pedagogical practice. It was abandoned because of negative staff feedback and the CCO acknowledged, "in hindsight, it was probably something that was forced onto the staff …It's probably not the best approach to things and we basically had to scrap it" (School A, CCO).

A head of department offered the following explanation for its demise, "Some of the implementation or the communication about why it was being done didn't go as smoothly or as well as it could have" (School A , Coord 1). LoP1 explained the demise of it as the staff not trusting those who were implementing the reform, and that it was "seen as being imposed, probably not with a level of relational trust. People saw it as an inspectoral approach as opposed a problem of practice …so by engaging in that it's going to improve my practice" (School A , LoP1).

LoP2 stated that teachers were aware of the stated purpose but they believed it had other purposes,

> Even though we did a lot of groundwork on it, we did a lot of videos and took
> them through the process and showed them, there's four people going into the

room and we're looking at very specific things… but it was still seen as the
college is watching what we're doing rather than this is a chance to reflect on my
practice by looking at other people's practice (School A, LoP2).

Another project that was abandoned was the mentoring of faculty staff by the
heads of department. The leadership team decided that it "wasn't the best approach and
instead we scrapped that" (School A, CCO).

Heads of department were critical of the initiatives with one stating "they've
been resisted by many teachers...coordinators here, too - felt alienated in a sense, by the
manner in which it was carried out" (School A, Coord 2). One head of department
believed that they were not successful because the ideas were too 'new' and "a big jump
from the way we do things" (School A, Coord 1).

LoP1 described passive resistance from teachers who felt uncomfortable with
the reforms, "they might express themselves in various ways by not participating or
turning their backs on certain strategies or just not showing up to learn about new
things" (School A, LoP1).

LoP1 identified the heads of department as key group of resistors and as a
challenge for the leadership team focussed on reform,

> The big challenges were the middle managers who felt threatened by change…
> there were two types. There were the ones that felt threatened by change and
> then there were the ones who felt that they could ride it out for four years and
> once the project was over they knew we'd be gone and so therefore they could
> manage that" (School A, LoP1).

The principal of School A also identified that heads of department were misrepresenting
information being disseminated by the leadership team about the reforms. He explained
the frustration that,

> Sometimes we feel as a leadership team that the information that's transferred
> down is not quite what has actually been said at a HoDs meeting or come down
> from a leadership team meeting, it sounds like selective words are transferred
> across (Principal, School A).

Principal A advised his leadership team that, "you've got to say it three different ways
and do it three different ways and demonstrate it another six different ways before you
get them to actually to take it on board" (Principal, School A).

The Ex-LoP1 saw the heads of department as key group of resistance that
needed managing because "there was a real need to attack teaching and learning in the
middle school and heads of department particularly saw that as a real threat because we

were systematically changing the way they worked" (School A, Ex-LoP1). LoP1 agreed that the heads of department were a challenging group and that for them "a paradigm shift into change is hard" but she did say that change could happen in spite of the heads of department "because conversation (about learning) is starting to happen in classrooms and certainly in the staffroom" (School A, LoP1).

Another impediment to change was the school's "pretty exceptional HSC results given its SES" (School A, Ex-LoP1) but NAPLAN data suggesting that reading and writing results were declining in the junior school (Years 7-10) caused concern that there was an "increasing malaise in the student population and in the teaching staff" about this issue. (School A, Ex-LoP1). School A's very traditional and successful reputation with HSC results made it "hard to be on the ground working for transformational change" (School A, LoP1).

The curriculum coordinator believes that the demanding pace of the reforms rather than the nature of the reforms was driving resistance. He argued that teachers did not disagree with the reforms but it was perceived that they were all happening at the same time just (School A, CCO). Coordinator 2 agreed with this explanation, stating "they've perhaps tried to do too much in relatively short frames of time…. implementation could have been more effective having done fewer things" (School A, Coord 2). Coordinator 1 believed that the goodwill of staff was eroded by the number of demands "that required big shifts in thinking and in ways of doing things, that it felt like there was just too much" (School A, Coord 1).

Coordinator 2 referred to the book *Future Shock* by Alvin Toffler as analogous to the situation and was critical of the quantum of change, "Apart from the Low SES NP there's so much change happening in education...there are so many different things that have been tried. …if they just focus on say one or two of those …it would have been far more effective" (School A, Coord 2).

Poor communication was also mentioned as a barrier to reform. A head of department was critical that the " big picture plan…wasn't communicated to teachers as much as it should have been" (School A, Coord 3). Another head of department agreed saying that

> "very few people actually knew what was happening and why...we heard from
> the grapevine …or we weren't given a very, very clear statement. …and to
> implement something you need to believe in it and before you believe in it you
> need to understand exactly why it's happening" (School A, Coord 2).

The system provided challenges for the leaders of pedagogy to manage at the school level and ex-LoP1 recounts that too many system-designed projects were imposed on them, "and sometimes they didn't suit the local context and so there was a bit of resistance to some of those things " (School A, ex-LoP1).

The lack of staff ownership of reforms was raised by a number of participants as an issue. LoP1 explained that "there was a real sense that there was a lot of projects - so there was a real sense that there was a lot of initiatives… I don't know whether the staff had real ownership of them" (School A, LoP1). Heads of department (Coords 2 & 3) criticised the implementation process for not including them in the decision-making which created negativity,

> people tend to get their backs up and they tend to look at the negative rather than the positive….the way it was done it tended to make people feel as though … what we think is not going to make any difference with the way it's been brought in, it's just been this is the way it is; it's a fait accompli (School A, Coord 2).

At School A the creation of professional learning communities was also unsuccessful. Ex-LoP2 reported that was resistance to the introduction of Professional Learning Communities because "it was new, they'd never tried it before...a lot of work for no real gain in some minds" (School A, Ex-LoP2). LoP2 believed that the teacher learning communities didn't lead to any significant change because they were not 'owned' by staff, "they were mandated...there was very little ownership of those things" (School A, LoP2).

LoP2 explained that the professional learning communities did not work because they were "carried out artificially" by the leadership team selecting ten areas from the Strategic Improvement Plan and then making teachers choose one of the ten and release teachers from classes so they could meet with other teachers who had chosen the same strategic area so that they could discuss how to take the area forward. A number of these areas were incidental to the daily work of teachers. LoP2 argued that staff knew that because of the release of time made available to teachers that this model was not sustainable after the reform funding expired. LoP2 retold how some teachers said as such that they would wait until the funding ended and then return back to their old practices (School A, LoP2).

Ex-LoP2 reported how the principal had resourced the building of a purpose-built room to help facilitate collaboration to put two classes where team teaching could occur. However that met with resistance because "you were asking teachers to come out

of their usual model of operating and be open to the idea of others coming into [the classroom] to see what they were doing" (School A, Ex-LoP2).

Ex-LoP2 described how initially teachers and coordinators thought that the leaders of pedagogy were 'agents' of the principal and were going to intervene with their teaching practices and tell them what to do. Teachers were so wary of them visiting their classroom that the leaders of pedagogy had to adopt a 'knock and enter policy' by announcing if they were there on 'school business' or they were there to support teachers "to see how the strategies were going" (ex-LoP2).

One of the barriers to successful change management was also the fact that the school had four different leaders of pedagogy, "four different personalities with quite different strengths" (System Leader 4) and therefore experienced different approaches over the four-year period.

In summary, School A experienced resistance from heads of department and classroom teachers and change was difficult forcing the leaders to abandon key elements of the reform program.

4.5.1.2 School B

The leaders of School B experienced some resistance to their reform initiatives because of the school's existing academic reputation, system leaders imposing reform strategies and the interruptions the reforms created to teaching and learning at the school.

LoP2 explained the problem of being a school known to be successful with HSC results,

> The challenge for us we were a successful school, we got great results and all the subject teachers knew that. [but] we were spoon-feeding basically [and] we weren't necessarily equipping them with the skills they needed to succeed beyond school (School B, LoP2).

'Instructional Rounds' and other forms of classroom observations were trialled but the curriculum coordinator and one of the leaders of pedagogy noted that some staff were reluctant to be involved and they "don't like people interfering" especially if the observer is "not from their KLA and not an expert in their area" (School B, CCO).

The leaders of pedagogy attempted 'Instructional Rounds' twice and found that it challenged "experienced staff who were, some of them, expert teachers and they felt like they were being checked in on and they weren't comfortable with it at all." whilst

"our less experienced staff thought it was great, they loved it; they wanted to get in more and watch and observe and work together" (School B, LoP2).

The leaders of pedagogy spent time with staff explaining the purpose of instructional rounds but they still found that some staff would be absent on the day of their observations. However, LoP1 concluded that the experience was still quite positive partly due to their selection of a very low order problem of practice to observe.

Teachers whom were passively resisting changes to their classroom practice were typically, "people (aged) in their 50s and so on who thought that perhaps they could get through to the final bell without having to change a lot. I think they were starting to see that they couldn't do that" (School B Ex-Principal).

The curriculum coordinator was dismissive of the system for the poor quality of some teachers that they appointed to schools as leaders of pedagogy. He was critical of leaders of pedagogy being appointed "just because they spouted wonderful new theories of learning"(School B, CCO).

The school was highly protective of teaching time and the ex- principal commented that, "we didn't just allow people to go off willy-nilly to every in-service or to every excursion that they might have requested" (School B, Ex-Principal). A number of participants were critical of the interruptions to normal classes that were occurring due to the reforms including the curriculum coordinator who thought it was highly problematic, "the number of interruptions to classes because every time we were doing something we were taking away from what we're trying to improve them to do" (School B CCO). LoP1 observed that the side effect of literacy initiatives which required teachers to be released for a number of days was that by the end of the year people were complaining that their classes were being too disrupted as they felt that they were too rarely in class (School B, LoP1). The former principal acknowledged that the Low SES NP reforms required "having a lot more teachers away from classes, a lot more casual teachers replacing them... and not a lot of continuity in the teaching program" (School B, Ex-Principal).

The role of the system was also perceived as a barrier to successful implementation of the reforms. LoP2 believed that programs like 'Word Generation' were imposed without any consideration of whether the program would meet the local school needs because in the system office, "somebody thought that program would be a good idea" (School B, LoP2). Despite this LoP2 believed that "the schools did what they were told and implemented it" and it did not work because "it didn't really sit well in the secondary context and it needed a lot of work to de-Americanise the program and

make it appropriate for the kids."   As LoP2 concluded, "the decision making basically was made at the systemic level rather than at the local level and as a result it just didn't fit" (School B, LoP2).

The pace of the reforms was daunting for many with "just that four year window … you're rushing to get things happening and rolling which means a lot of change very quickly. Teachers …aren't the best with the face of change and it can be daunting, particularly teachers who have been around for a while (School B, LoP1). LoP2 was concerned that the pace, particularly with programming, had "exhausted some people. In all honesty, I think it's taken a toll on some of them" (School B, LoP2).

4.5.1.3 School C

The leaders of pedagogy and the Principal of School C faced resistance from highly experienced members of both the leadership team and teachers in implementing the reforms who felt that the pace of change was excessive.

There was initial resistance to the newly appointed Leaders of Pedagogy, neither of whom had worked at the school prior to the reforms. Teacher 1 saw the leaders of pedagogy initially as "being intrusive…they were presented in a way of super-teachers. So a lot of us that had been teaching for quite some time took offence to it….. So people did take their interest, their involvement, as intrusive" (School C, Teacher 1).

Teachers at first were reluctant for the leaders of pedagogy to enter their classrooms. LoP2 recounted an early conversation with a teacher at School C, "when I arrived one (said) - hello my name's so and so and don't think you're coming into my class" (School B, LoP2) Teacher 1 argued that although the resistance had lessened over time, "to some degree does resistance still exists… I was one of them who sat back and thought I'm okay Jack, you don't need to come into my classroom" (School C, Teacher 1).

Both the leaders of pedagogy and a teacher new to the school found the school to be relatively unprogressive compared to their previous experiences (School C, LoP1 and Teacher 1). Teacher 1 spoke of her previous appointment to the school which finished in 1991 and she then returned in 2012 to find long standing teachers still using the same teaching resources they developed when she was there 20 years earlier. She described the early atmosphere as being like "the LoPS versus the school" (School D, Teacher 1). Teacher 2 was a long-standing member of staff who struggled to accept the placement of leaders of pedagogy at School C. She appeared to take offence at Teacher 1's recollection by saying,

"I don't know about the resources … and having been at the school for quite a few number of years - I felt that everything that we had done so far was now no good and suddenly someone was here to show us the way. So I was personally taken aback by that thinking well we do - we do do a great job…It seemed as if they were here to liberate us into some sort of fantastic new way of education, because quite honestly what we'd been doing so far was terrible." (School C, Teacher 2)

After being asked by the researcher whether in hindsight that first impression had changed Teacher 2 replied, "It has changed slightly… but I can't help still feel that we have been 'saved'. ... To me that just seems wrong." (School C, Teacher 2) . So, there appeared to be some resistance from well-established members of staff towards the work of the leaders of pedagogy.

Participants spoke extensively about the demanding pace of the reforms. Coord 1 acknowledged the number of positive initiatives but he had "reservations about the pace of change… [and warned that] it's really important that you're taking the whole community with you. If the change is perceived to be too quickly, then there's a real danger of losing people" (School C, Coord 1). Coord 5 agreed saying that, " the rushed nature of change, driven by the imperative of the four years …means that reflective process often gets pushed right down the agenda. (School C, Coord 5). Coord 3 agreed and said, "I think there's been a lot of stress, despite the fact that it's been said many times that change takes time" (School C, Coord 3).

Heads of department reported staff concerns about the demanding nature of the reforms (School C Coords 1,3,5). Coord 5 received feedback from staff of a sense of being overwhelmed, "What may seem as - and may well be - a great initiative and a great change from up on high, can mean a lot of hard work for your classroom teacher… That can lead to resistance". (School C, Coord 5). As a leader Coord 1 saw that it was his responsibility to manage the workloads for his team by strategically choosing what reforms to pursue, "we're accountable for not overloading people… I'm choosing to strategically pick what we need to work on now " (School C, Coord 1). Coord 5 was concerned with the effect that the pace and amount of change was having on staff morale,

> I think it's used up some of the goodwill amongst the staff… You need to judge
> very carefully the morale of the school and how much people are prepared to
> give them and how much of that goodwill you're prepared to sacrifice in order to

ram some of those changes through in a narrow window of time (School C, Coord 5).

LoP2 saw the need for the Principal to strategically monitor the pace and number of different reform strategies and act "as a bit of a hang on, slow down because at times I think people feel they're hit with a baseball bat and we don't want to do that (School C, LoP2).

Heads of department also believed that better and more inclusive planning would have aided the change management process. Coord 5 stated the need for a "clear plan laid out on a year by year basis and that the middle management was involved in that process and certainly alerted to what the overall goal is (so) you can see where it fits into the bigger picture (School C, Coord 5).

The system also was seen at times as barrier to smooth implementation by the leaders of pedagogy. LoP1 was critical of some of the imposed reforms such as "word generation" which LOP1 believed threatened the "positive relationship with people (when) the system is telling us to do things that clashes (with) what we're trying to do" (School C, LoP1).

Therefore the work of the leaders of pedagogy was resisted by a number of well-established members of staff and as the pace of reforms accelerated a number of heads of department and one of the leaders of pedagogy became concerned with the effect of change on staff.

4.5.1.4 School D

The data suggests that School D's leadership team did not have confidence that its heads of department would embrace the reforms and so made most of the decisions themselves and concentrated on developing young enthusiastic teachers to take the reforms forward. Change was also managed by concentrating reform initiatives within the school's literacy and numeracy agenda.

Participants spoke of the decision making being restricted to the leadership team and how this built resistance amongst the heads of department. Coord 1 believed "resistance comes from when there is not enough information and they are not really open to discuss the things."(School D, Coord 1). Coord 3 believed the expertise of the heads of department was not being "tapped into as effectively as it could be" and for this "change process, it would be a shame not to use that pool more effectively" (School D, Coord 3). The curriculum coordinator acknowledged that decisions were largely made by the Leadership Team and "there hasn't been at a KLA level as much discussion

around what different projects would people want to see run, that sort of thing" (School D, CCO). Teacher 4 extended the criticism to the system leaders who needed to set the reform "agendas around what we need, rather than what they think we need" (School D, Teacher 4).

Conflict emerged between the leaders of pedagogy and one of the heads of department. Coord 2 was critical of "the lack of demarcation line between who's in charge of what issue, and that is an instant recipe for conflict" (School D, Coord 2). Heads of department also expressed frustration about conflicting directions and advice being given by system and school leaders. There was "the frustration of the mixed messages - it was debilitating early on in the piece, about the start, don't start, do it this way" (School D, Coord 3). Coord 4 was critical of the many layers of authority "all telling you things and …we were getting mixed messages" (School D Coord 4).

The number of projects was named as another barrier to reform. Coord 3 stated that, "we have been in a constant state of change and transition. So to say to teachers, we need to make another change…it's not easy and it hasn't been an easy process, there's been a lot all at once (School D, Coord 3). Coord 2 was critical that "there have been so many individual strategies within the last two years, I'm not sure there's a planned strategy on how you develop those skills in the long term." (School D, Coord 2).

Members of the leadership team expressed the concern that the heads of department were themselves a barrier to reform as they did not appear interested in leading learning. They were sent to professional development sessions at the beginning of the reforms but they "weren't particularly that supportive of those sorts of things"(School D, LoP 1). The principal thought that the administrative demands of the role thwarted heads of department from "actually see(ing) what's going on in the classroom" and teachers were not accustomed to have their lessons observed by others. This meant that the appointment of the leaders of pedagogy was questioned defensively by teachers and coordinators as, "are they going to come and tell us how to teach?" (School D, Principal).

Coord 4 acknowledged that the reforms such as backward design were not being embraced by all with only some "heads of department really take on board what was going on and be very proactive" (School D Coord 4). Coord 4 suggested that for the changes such as the Australian Curriculum to be managed more effectively staff needed to be " involved much earlier on in the process, and he believed the heads of department

were not involved enough and were not given enough ownership of that process (School D Coord 4).

Participants also spoke of the disruptive nature of the reforms on the day-to-day teaching of classes. The leaders of pedagogy needed to release teachers from their classes to complete professional development but as LoP1 stated, "we're going backwards before we're going forwards because kids get relief teachers rather than their regular teachers". (School D, LoP1) The principal shared this concern when he stated, "we've really struggled with too many teachers out of class doing professional development... and I think we may pay the price (School D, Principal). Heads of department also shared this concern that teachers feel the "the disconnect from their classes and that led to a little bit of frustration…classes effectively became job-shares" (School D, Coord 3).

Although LoP 2 believed there was some latitude given by system leaders for school leaders to fashion the reforms to their needs, system mandated initiatives like 'Word Generation' was evidence against this view (School D, LoP2). System projects like 'Word Generation' or 'Instructional Rounds' received robust criticism. 'Word Generation' was criticised for not being suitable to secondary schools and it was accepted that "it'd probably work quite well in a primary school…. I couldn't really sell it to the teachers. So they did it because I asked them to do it in the end, but it didn't have that real understanding in the classroom" (School D, LoP1). LoP2 dismissed 'Word Generation' and did not support its implementation as, "there wasn't research in it, I felt the people running it didn't know enough about it, they'd found it out there in cyberspace and it looked like a great idea, and it wasn't tailored to our context" (School D, LoP2).

The principal criticised 'Word Generation' as a "buzz program for a period of time" and 'Instructional Rounds' as almost " a 'Christmas thought' of somebody's and suddenly instructional rounds was the way to go and everyone got a book in a cellophane folder and you were supposed to be implementing instructional rounds" (School D, Principal).

He concluded his remarks about what he perceived as 'top-down' system reforms by stating, "we've taken a lot of those things on board. We think about them and then we work out how we're going to implement them. …When there's no ownership…They're only implementing it because someone said they had to" (School D, Principal).

In summary, a lack of teacher and head of department ownership of reforms as well as a 'top-down' approach by the system were salient impediments at School D for both system and school led reforms.

4.5.1.5 System Leaders

System leaders identified a number of barriers to the successful implementation of reforms including the imposed nature of the reform implementation plan from system to schools and resistance from middle managers, teachers and to some extent leadership teams. They also identified issues the leaders of pedagogy faced in implementing the reforms, poor communication and resistance from schools about the amount of professional development and time release for teachers being disruptive to daily teaching and learning at the schools. System leaders acknowledged that the culture of secondary schools was unfamiliar for some and that the reform agenda was too broad and unfocussed with too many unrelated projects occurring in some schools.

In the first few years the reform implementation process was "imposed" on schools by the system. As System Leader 3 stated, "at first …I know we placed a lot of importance on people hearing the same message…. So there may have been a sense that it was imposed" (System Leader 3).

System leaders surmised that this tension was due to a lack of consultation about the design of the reform strategies. System leaders designed the architecture of the response to the reform agenda. As System Leader 2 stated, "the system was making decisions….the schools didn't have any input at all… it was like imposed on rather than working with them… it was this is what you've got to do if you're going to get this money" (System Leader 2).

System Leader 3 explained that the directives from the Commonwealth Government were rapid and changing with little leeway for consultation, "as a system, I think we had to act very quickly and that created some tension …we were pumping out stuff pretty quickly. I think that wasn't a great thing but I don't think that it was something we had a lot of control over" (System Leader 3).

System Leader 6 was critical of the system's approach and lack of consultation and planning with schools stating that, "There needed to be a more measured process in terms of engaging schools with the process…Some of the original work…was very much a sheep dip... It needed some more individual work within the school's context" (System Leader 6). System Leader 1 agreed with this criticism stating that, "one of the great learnings with the lead strategy that was designed by the Executive Director (i.e.

creating leaders of pedagogy).… (it) should have been debated and created at the local level in terms of that local level context" (System Leader 1).

The imposed nature and poorly communicated way that projects were implemented also received criticism. System Leader 4 observed that something like instructional rounds "is never going to work in a school until you've got buy in from the principals...they need to know what it is and how it works… So it hasn't really got carriage in any of the secondary schools" (System Leader 4).

It was also suggested that not all system leaders understood the culture of secondary schools which System Leader 4 believed possessed "a different sort of mindset and wasn't understood to the level that it should have been" (System Leader 4). Furthermore System Leader 4 stated,

> there's a very big difference about the culture of a primary school compared to a secondary school…secondary principals …won't do something because the system says this is what you're going to do. That's been a little bit of a shock to some people in the system who - from the primary perspective - they tell the principals they're going to do something, the principals do it (System Leader 4).

System Leader 1 supported that view when she explained that when implementing ESL pedagogy in the secondary schools "it was very, very different and very, very difficult for them to get their head around how they could best do that in the context that there are so many teachers, kids go to, different subject areas, whose responsibility is it and even to set up a PD around that and the time for teachers to understand the use of ESL scales" (System Leader 1). She also acknowledged a level of distrust from secondary principals when she commenced working with them, "when I first experienced (the secondary context) to me it created great unease with me because everything was so complex in terms of relationships" (System Leader 1).

System leaders reported resistance to the reforms from leadership teams regarding their professional development for the reforms. Leadership teams resented being required to attend whole day meetings scheduled by the system leadership because of the disruption it caused at the school. System Leader 1 recounted that in the end system leaders had to reduce the attendance requirements to meetings twice a year (System Leader 1).

System Leader 2 observed that it was not just the disruption from school but also it was the fact that "leadership teams were just spoken at one after the other and they were not happy campers"(System Leader 2). System Leader 5's perspective of this matter was that some principals felt "insulted" that they had to attend meetings that they

judged as not being that useful (System Leader 5). System Leader 6 believed the leadership team days "was a challenging strategy because it did confront that traditional thing of people not wanting to be out of school…it did impose upon them" (System Leader 6). However System Leader 1 stated that the tension was worth it because of "the bang for your buck you got when you had the leadership team driving the change… back at the school and the motivation and the language and then six months later you'd hear the great impact of that day…I think that is a critical part of the whole project to have that leadership team in the same space" (System Leader 1).

System leaders also noted resistance to the reforms from heads of department. System Leader 1 believed that this group provided the most resistance to the reforms, "the biggest resistance came from middle managers because… (the LoP) was a new role, they didn't have a class, so in the eyes of other say coordinators, curriculum coordinators they all had a class and… far more responsibilities (System Leader 1). System Leader 4 agreed with System Leader 1's belief that "the biggest hurdle (for Principals and the leaders of pedagogy) has been the heads of Department…. (and) the people whose capacity really needs to be built in the school is the heads of department" (System Leader 4). System Leader 6 also agreed that further development of heads of department was critical and was concerned that, "sometimes the LoPs have avoided the heads of department and gone to the teachers and other people. I think unless you're going to challenge your heads of department nothing's going to happen" (System Leader 6).

In the early days system leaders felt pressure from the government to implement the reforms quickly. System Leader 3 recalls, "that we were driven to act very quickly and implement a lot of things" (System Leader 3). The speed of implementation meant that "the aim of the project wasn't fully understood in the early stages" (System Leader 6). Teething problems emerged and there was a "fair bit of messiness around resourcing and finances and how it all worked… I don't think it was set up for a good start in the beginning and there were a lot of mixed messages given to schools…. so I think initially there was a fair bit of anxiety" (System Leader 2). System Leader 5 believed that "if there was resistance it was in the sense of what they perceived to be lack of clarification of what was coming through from system leaders' (System Leader 5).

System leaders reported resistance from school leaders to releasing staff for professional development because it had the potential to disrupt the school's day-to-day teaching and learning. System Leaders 3 and 6 believed the challenge was to shift principals into accepting that teachers needed to be released from some of their normal

classroom duties for professional learning (System Leaders 3 & 6). System Leader thought that for, "some of the cultures of schools having a teacher in front of a class consistently was very, very important" (System Leader 6).

Another issue was the sheer breadth and number of projects which was thought to be a barrier to successful reform implementation. System Leader 2 stated that by the end of the first year of reforms in 2011, "schools had all these projects …they were doing bits and pieces all over the place" (System Leader 2). System Leader 4 noted the lack of alignment of projects in some schools when she stated that, "some schools have a lot of projects going but haven't actually aligned them under a whole school agenda, so they're a bit piecemeal…what we're trying to do is get their projects under one umbrella that will make it a bit more sustainable (System Leader 4). System Leader 1 was ambivalent about whether the number of projects was an issue and it depended more on "the synergy across the projects (System Leader 1). System Leader 4 was less ambivalent about School D's leaders of pedagogy' progress because, "they've got so many balls in the air and they work quite separately but together as well, like they have different things they do" (System Leader 4).

4.5.2 Change Management

Leaders attempted to manage the change required through a range of ways and their success varied from school to school.

4.5.2.1 School A

In the first two years of the reforms Ex LoP1 believed that change was managed through incremental steps. He believed that in the first year the Leaders of Pedagogy "tried to get people to share that experience along the way" before bringing in larger reforms like Instructional Rounds in the second year. He believed that they had brought "people on board with small steps in small strategies" and "they were kind of getting used to the idea of change." (School A, ex-LoP 1).

Ex-LoP1 spoke about the early challenges to join a school community and build credibility with staff. In his second year he ignored a system direction not to teach and taught a class to give him that credibility in the eyes of other teachers. He reflected that if he had done this in his first year, "I would have built credibility straightaway (and) shown people that I could teach" (School A, ex-LoP1).

LoP1 recalled a conversation with the principal and LoP2 after her first month at the school which was at the beginning of the third year of the reforms in 2013. There was an honest conversation that the reforms were not going well,

> There was a real sense that there was a lot of projects … I don't know whether the staff had real ownership of them. I think we sat down and (were critical) of the whole idea of a project mentality, … If we wanted to implement sustainable change we needed to reframe what we were doing,… and be really explicit to the staff in that reframing…so we just put a stop really halfway through and did a reflective activity and said okay, what is it that we wanted to achieve, reframed it I suppose, gave it a vision, gave it an umbrella. (School A, LoP1).

LoP2 recalled his concern about the project mentality of the previous two years, stating that, "because we weren't changing the underlying way in which teachers did their business, I could definitely see that having these projects in place wasn't going to lead to long term change" (School A, LoP2). LoP2 explained how they changed the way the professional learning communities operated by decoupling them from the Strategic Improvement Plan and connecting them with the new Australian Professional Teacher Standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014). They set up a system of 'reflective partnerships' centered on professional coaching.

The leaders of pedagogy attempted to use these reflective partnerships as a vehicle for teachers to reflect and talk about their practice. As LoP2 explained, these partnerships replaced instructional rounds,

> "What we wanted to do was make a culture, so drive cultural change where people felt comfortable talking to each other about their own professional practice. We tried to implement instructional rounds a year or so ago without doing the foundation groundwork around having a structure or a culture where people could discuss their own professional practice in a safe environment. We sort of just thrust in instructional rounds upon the college and asked for volunteers and did that, and got a lot of resistance because people saw it as an audit of themselves rather than a chance to learn from their peers." (School A, LoP2)

As a result of this change in approach Coordinator 2 remarked, "it's become more focussed. I think they've [the LoPs] became more aware of perhaps mistakes they've made. They have focussed on one or two programs, which are beneficial - very beneficial to the school in the long run (School A, Coord 2).

Three School A leaders mentioned the moral imperative to reform for the sake of students. The curriculum coordinator described the reforms as a journey to allow teachers to realise that the reforms were beneficial for their students (School A, CCO). One of the heads of department acknowledged that he was at the school for the betterment of the students and if an initiative was perceived as being in the best interests of students he and others would support it completely (School A Coord 2). This was a similar observation to ex-LoP1 who stated,

> I think teachers generally still, even the entrenched ones, still have that moral imperative. They want to do the best thing that they can for kids. So if you are able to show them that this is not just a four year fad, which is what they believed, if you can show them that there actually are ways of improving what they do and it improves a lot of kids then generally most of them will try it and some of them will even make changes to themselves in order to do that…I think inherently they do believe that they're there for the kids and that they are willing to change if it means improvement for kids. (School A ex-LoP1).

The staff worked on a teaching and learning framework and a mission statement aimed to build a sense of shared purpose. These were achieved through staff workshops led by the Principal (School A, Ex-LoP2) but the Curriculum Coordinator acknowledged that "it might come across like it's the leadership team building a framework and everyone get on board or you're going to be lost" but he believed the Leadership Team was always open to feedback (School A, CCO). Coordinator 2 had a view counter to this and dismissed this by saying "our feedback wasn't requested. We were given a chance to make feedback on pieces of paper at various times…but you felt that that was more or less just an ad hoc type of thing" (School A, Coord 2).

The principal spoke about the ever present nature of change for educators and the importance of giving release time for teachers to help manage the changes required (Principal, School A). The Principal of School A also believed that change was well managed through having the leaders of pedagogy positioned within the school rather than being external agents. Being based in the school allowed them to become "embedded in the staff, they get to know the staff, they get to know those staff they need to coax along, those staff that need a little bit more support and those staff that they can really give some responsibility to let fly" (School A, Principal). LoP2 agreed with this view of the crucial importance of the leader of pedagogy, "without that position, someone in the school to know the local context of the school, get to know the staff and then work with the leadership team of the school on how you can building

teacher capacity in the long term, without that person on the ground…it wouldn't happen" (School A, LoP2).

4.5.2.2 School B

The leaders of pedagogy of school B effectively managed the changes required for the implementation of the reforms through building relational trust, negotiation and good planning. School B attempted to manage the pace of the reforms through a deliberate and gradual process. LoP1 recalls that the ex-Principal was well versed in change management and was concerned with its effect on this large school,

> It's fairly traditional and conservative in its approach, so he kind of held it off and … was fairly conservative in what he allowed to evolve and he wanted it to evolve slowly. So the first year was gradual. I don't think people were too shocked by it and they were just given the opportunity to get used to having LOPs around (School B, LoP1).

LoP1 identified the resistors as "the people who have been in teaching for a while … they get tired of the constant cycle of change and they just think, here we go again." (School B, LoP1). As a response the leaders of pedagogy sought volunteers for a number of their initiatives rather than imposing them on all staff (School B, LoP2). A head of department reported that 'Instructional Rounds' were successful because they were targeted to a younger group of staff (School B, Coord 1). They also carefully chose project leaders "who were going to lead the change, people who we thought would be more effective in working with people was a critical part" (School B, LoP2).

The new principal arrived in the second year of the reforms and gave the leaders of pedagogy greater standing by appointing them to the leadership team. He saw his role as to "trust the LOPs" who had " great ability to get across the agendas in the school well" and they have "great credibility with staff" (School B, Principal).

After experiencing resistance to the first phase of instructional rounds the leaders of pedagogy restructured to make it less demanding and more achievable. LoP2 recalled,

> we thought if we structured it so that it could be an open and positive experience it would change the way they looked at it. I think that proved true because at the end of it, at the end of our feedback session everybody spoke about it as a positive experience. (Teachers) definitely wanted to do it again. It wasn't necessarily, in inverted commas, effective in terms of improving practice but I think it was critical for opening the doors and just setting the climate for it"

(School B, LoP2).

Both leaders of pedagogy recounted how they dealt with the rising criticism of staff during the second year of the reforms that their classes were being too disrupted. They consulted with staff and received extensive feedback that "it's so disruptive and it's so difficult to maintain" (School B, LoP2). In response they integrated professional development within the timetable (School B, LoP1).

Principal B also continued his predecessor's approach to adapting the reforms to suit the local context, as he stated that he would continue "the filtering of (reforms) at the local level we'll do it at our own pace and our own ways." (School B, Principal). Although he was appreciative of system support he understood that "local circumstances and the culture and needs of this community determine how we implement the reform agenda" rather than system directives (School B, Principal).

The moral imperative to reform for the sake of students was mentioned by four participants from School B. The curriculum coordinator believed that the staff, "thought the things we were doing were good and they thought the kids were benefitting from them. So there wasn't a huge resistance" (School B, CCO). One of the leaders of pedagogy recounted how one resistant coordinator came on board when he saw what is was doing for students' learning (School B, LoP 2).

The leaders of pedagogy were aware of the need to build strong relationships with staff. LoP1 recounts how she was,

> "conscious of not going in too forcefully. But I was excited and so I think I did
> put a couple of people off side to begin with…But they were resistant to it, so I
> learnt from that, from those couple of negative experiences to just step back a
> little bit and just nudge people along" (school B, LoP1).

LoP2 was also conscious of this and believed that shared goals or agenda made the implementation of the reforms easier. She thought the process of establishing school-wide principles of learning and teaching was important as the staff needed a common language to discuss learning (School B, LoP2). She recounted how the leaders of pedagogy negotiated with staff over their programming initiative to gain their support,

> A lot of it just comes down to relationships too in all honesty, it's how you work
> with the people and how you support them rather than tell them…I think a lot of
> the resistance in TILT came about because they were told do this by this date, do
> this by this date and they were pushed, pushed, pushed and they just dug their
> heels in ...we took a different approach with them and just really worked with

them and supported them and they changed their whole approach to it (School B, LoP2).

The principal believed that the leaders of pedagogy's relationship with staff has been the most effective form of change management, "they have worked alongside the staff really, really well and I think they would have experienced the pushback of no change more heavily than I have as principal. They've managed it well" (School B, Principal).

Coordinators were positive towards the reforms by the end of the third year reporting that, "everyone's kind of gotten behind it and it's working well" (School B, Coord 2) and there was "a sense of ownership" (School B, Coord 4). Leaders of Pedagogy were affirmed as they were "very knowledgeable and nothing was ever an issue if there was ever a problem" (School B, Coord 2) and staff had input "to add things that they wanted to do as well…it gave them a voice that we could take with and run" (School B, Coord 3). These observations matched the principal's belief that, there was a "great sense in which people are behind what we're doing" (School B, Principal).

Teachers reported a sense of a team approach and the program has allowed teachers' input and to work with teachers from other faculties,

"all of the challenges were overcome and we worked effectively as a team. …You could communicate not only with people in your own faculty, but there were opportunities for communication between faculties. I think that was a really eye opening experience that you were able to look at, not only your program and your resources but you could work with other KLAs [faculties] (School B, Teacher 3).

Teacher 2 agreed with this idea of a "team approach, and right from the top they know what they need to do and that gets filtered through to us, which makes it organised and no chaos" (School B, Teacher 3).

The communication and organisation of the implementation of the reforms appears to be well regarded by many participants (School B, Coords 1, 2, 3 and 4; School B, Teachers 1, 3 and 4) As Teacher 4 stated "we were given clear timelines with what was expected of us throughout the terms" (School B, Teacher 4). The leaders of pedagogy were highly regarded for their ability to mange the changes (School B, Principal, Coords 2, 3 & 4, Teacher 2 & 3).

4.5.2.3 School C

The leaders of School C prioritised performance management and recruitment of new staff in the first years of the reform to refocus the school's learning culture. There is evidence that this was successful and that barriers to reforms were successfully managed.

The principal of School C challenged a number of coordinators and teachers through performance management procedures following a situational analysis of the school learning culture during the first year of the reforms. The principal also recruited a number of new staff as part of the reforms. The principal, curriculum coordinator and the leaders of pedagogy then engaged in an approach that both supported and challenged coordinators and teachers as the reforms were progressively implemented.

The principal's adoption of performance management procedures included the non-renewal of coordinator contracts, disciplinary procedures and other direct measures to challenge poor performance. Some staff resigned or moved to other schools. The scale of the actions was extensive with the principal noting that, "there's been 15 people have moved on since I got here. It's been a hard, hard slog…[some of whom were] teachers who were in front of classrooms who were really, really problematic" (School C, Principal).

The principal explained how this performance management led to a change in the balance of staff bringing in less experienced but more enthusiastic and diligent staff, "there's quite a good turnover now and there's a healthy mix of staff... if I did not challenge the ones that were not doing their work I would not have got all the good ones on side" (School C, Principal).

The principal's performance management of long term but ineffective staff members was a significant action. Coord 2 agreed with the performance management because for change to be achieved decisions had to be, "strategic and some of it has had to be about staffing and having the right staff in the right positions…they had to be challenging of staff in some roles" (School C, Coord 2). Coord 3 and LoP2 agreed. Teacher 2 did not agree with the approach of the Principal and thought that "it could have been handled a little bit better... There have been people whose sensitivities were not regarded" (School C, Teacher 2).

The staff turnover allowed for heads of department to work with the principal to "target certain people and hire certain people who might best fit our faculty" (School C Coord 1). The principal used Low SES NP funding to attract and retain capable young teachers. They were often placed temporarily at first on short term contracts but the

principal identified a number of "highly effective dynamic teachers" whom she used to permanently replace staff who had left the school due to performance management (School C, Principal).

The leaders of pedagogy both spoke about the resistance they received from staff within a particular faculty. This 'problematic faculty' had a 'challenging staff, (with) lots of work still to be done in areas of curriculum' (School C, LoP1). LoP2 noted that the staff included "a couple of personalities who were not challenged perhaps and felt very comfortable and were probably the people who needed to be challenged the most" (School C, LoP2). The principal's policy of placing young enthusiastic "staff who were very conscientious, mostly coming straight from university, …and really passionate about what they were doing" led to the "tide changing" and LoP2 believed that "we applied the right sort of challenge and pressure where it's needed" (School C, LoP2). The principal believed that the Low SES NP funding allowed her to "energise and show other teachers exactly what learning should look like, because this place had been - it was like the frog that had boiled to death (School C, Principal)."

Good relationships were important and the principal was pleased with the newly appointed curriculum coordinator because he was "working well with them as a human being and having expectations and chasing things up" (School C, Principal) The leaders of pedagogy were also conscious of forming good relationships with staff. LoP2 regarded it as a key for effective change management, "being able to have that conversation how are you going, knowing somebody had a baby last week or whatever, and having that positive relationship and that says so much for co-planning and team teaching" (School C, LoP2).

Connected to good relationship was the need for staff to feel included in the decision making so they would support change. LoP2 recounted how she consulted with stakeholders when planning for parent and community initiatives to give her project authority to those who might oppose it, "You've really got to ask stakeholders their opinions and come up with recommendations" (School C, LoP2). The Principal of School C believed that the Leaders of Pedagogy, "had the capacity to win people over and to be trusted and to go hands on with others, at point of need" (School C, Principal).

The new Australian Curriculum provided an opportunity and rationale for reform. LoP2 believed that it has "been a great lever for change" (School C, LoP2). Teacher 1 affirmed the work of the leaders of pedagogy using backwards design with faculties,

it was being orchestrated where everyone's strengths…It's just really built so much more trust within the department. Now we're all wearing the same hat. Because we're all wearing the same hat … and everyone's bringing their strengths to be able to deliver the curriculum - the best curriculum we can - for the students that are in our care (School C, Teacher 1)

The moral imperative to initiate change "for the betterment of learning of the kids in the classroom" was mentioned by Coord 1. LoP2 saw her role as a "to play such a part with so many people in schools and at the end of the day; you're making a difference with students in the classroom" (School C, LoP2).

The importance of additional time release to implement change was mentioned by heads of department (School C, Coords 1, 2 and 5). Coord 1 saw it as critical for implementation of the reforms,

we've been able to get extra time for professional development,... this project has given us time as middle managers to be able to reflect on our leadership and how we're going to lead our team forward. So I think that's the most critical thing, it's allowed us the actual time (School B Coord 1).

Adapting the reforms to suit the local context was also seen as an important element to manage the implementation of these changes. Coord 5 reflected that the directives of the school's leaders of pedagogy were legitimate because they "resulted from analysis of local data.…the direction of our school is being determined by those sorts of data. (School C Coord 5). The principal of School C rejected some system driven projects because they did not suit the local context of a school that needed more direct intervention as a 'low start" school,

It got to my second year before I said stuff it, I'm not going to do that; I can't because my vision is this.…the context here is different. ... I felt a tension where they were saying now you're going to do this, you're going to do that, but we weren't ready for that so I had to reject that" (School C, Principal).

Coordinator 1 stated that there are "clear directives coming from the system and the leaders of pedagogy are implementing those. …it's a combination of local needs, but also some general directives from the system" (School C, Coord 1).

Overall there were favourable comments from participants about the management of the implementation of the reforms. Coord 4 stated that "the management of it has been as effective as it could be, given the demands of it. …most people are energised. I'd say most people are exhausted as well. Without our principal… it wouldn't have worked as effectively" (School C Coord 4).

4.5.2.4 School D

The leaders of School D managed the implementation of the reforms by appealing to motivated and enthusiastic young teachers to pioneer many of the initiatives and by focusing on the key reforms of literacy and numeracy and strategically aligning other reforms to these key elements.

The leaders of pedagogy chose to work with young teachers on staff who hand chosen for their desire to being successful classroom practitioners. As LoP1 explained they chose them partly because they would be the least resistant to reform,

> we could work with those that listened well, mostly the younger teachers, and so that then, when we implemented these literacy changes … we continued to take on more and more people until we, after this stage now, we're working with our more established teachers, ones that we thought might be resistant to change, more resistant to change (School D, LoP1).

As LoP2 said, "we worked with the young educators or people who'd embrace it " (School D, LoP2). One of these teachers spoke about, "how people were hungry for that kind of pedagogical improvement, they knew it was making them better teachers" (School D, Teacher 3). The principal thought there was an openness amongst staff to the reforms because of they were "very selective in who we brought into the programs …people (who) would have been open to it and excited by it and as their classes were making great progress we almost got the positivity by people saying well why aren't I being included?" (School D, Principal).

The young teachers' enthusiasm for the program was evident. Teacher 3 believed in positive encouragement as a way to manage change,

> if you're enthusiastic about what you're doing and you believe that it's making good positive changes then it's almost impossible for people, even if they don't agree with you (to resist) - so that we all have a positive, united front in front of our students (School D, Teacher3).

Teacher 1 thought that with the resourcing of additional time and encouragement fellow staff would involve themselves as "the end factor is that it's going to help the kids" (School D, Teacher1). Coord 1 also was inspired by the moral imperative "that we're all ready to implement anything just for the sake of having students learn" (School D, Coord 1).

To these altruistic thoughts about the motivations of teachers LoP1 was more grounded, "Teachers become teachers for different reasons, hopefully they get a love of

kids and a love of teaching kids somewhere along that journey. Some of them … it's a love of the pay cheque at the end" (School D, LoP1).

Initiatives were strategically aligned to the key issues of literacy and numeracy. Projects were developed "upon the needs of the students…we embraced what we thought we needed" (School D, LoP1). Coord 3 agreed that the simplicity of some of the projects allowed for them to " cut through [into the classroom]…like a common language about literacy, with reading and writing, you've got to keep it simple"(School D, Coord 3).

Innovations like classroom observations and professional learning communities were based on literacy strategies and young teachers were targeted. This eased the access of leaders of pedagogy into the classrooms, "because we targeted those teachers who we knew would be open to change, then that worked really well". (School D, LoP2).

The ability to tailor initiatives to suit the local context of School D was also appreciated. The principal believed that the leadership team became very skilled at it and that tailored programs meeting the local context were the most successful (School D, Principal).

Members of the leadership team believe that change was implemented incrementally. LoP2 recalls that the principal directed the leaders of pedagogy to restrict how many projects they would implement at any one time, "the principal was very adamant that you pick a couple of battles that you're almost guaranteed to win" (School D, LoP2). LoP1 had a similar observation when he tried to implement backward design and the principal responded by saying that some other project must be stopped for that to happen (School D, LoP1).

A contentious strategy used by the leaders of pedagogy to implement the reforms was to by-pass the heads of department to avoid the prospect of them resisting the reforms. LoP 2 admitted that, "we did bypass the KLACs [HoDs] initially for the first year…we worked on enthusiastic teachers who we knew would embrace it" (School D, LoP2). System Leader 2 worked closely with School D and was concerned that,

> One of the fears I know at School D is that the two LOPs are working with the teachers …I've been saying, make sure the LOPs are working with the Heads of Department to build their capacity because if they don't do that, then what's the sustainability?" (System Leader 2).

LoP2 justified the by-passing by stating that most of the heads of department have been at the school a long time and, "almost all of them are still in the same positions …To them (the reforms) would have been, that's more work, who's going to do this, who's going to do that? So we bypassed them" (School D, LoP2).

The need to build positive relationships was also identified by members of the leadership team as necessary for good change management. LoP1 saw himself as "being a good builder of relationships" who "worked with the people on staff, so that things that they thought were important for them", were discussed and considered (School D, LoP1). The two leaders of pedagogy worked closely to try and get members of staff onside because "if you can get most of the people on board, then some of those who are resistors might find themselves isolated" (School D, LoP1).

The importance of giving people time to work on initiatives was seen as a critical strategy to implement the reforms. The curriculum coordinator stated that the funding,"afforded us the time and the staffing to be able to do it properly" (School D, CCO) especially because "you get all these great ideas, you go to a course … and then you go back and you just forget about it because you're too busy" (School D, Teacher 5). LoP1 agreed stating that "teaching is a demanding occupation, your energy and your time, those two factors. If your energy and your time start to diminish…what happens in the classroom?" (School D, LoP1).

Coord 2 was appreciative that reform ideas that were implemented in small groups working together (School D, Coord 2). *Literacy the Next Step* was praised because teachers were given time to sit with somebody and collaboratively plan future lessons (School D, Teacher 5).

The credibility of the leaders of pedagogy was recognized by the principal as a key factor in implementing the reforms because they "were really respected by the staff… they had credibility" (School D Principal). The leaders of pedagogy believed that to have credibility on staff they needed to ignore the system directive and teach at least one class. LoP1 explained that, "I need to model… If I have not got a teaching role within the school, I think it's easier for teachers to say, what would he know, he's not teaching. (School D, LoP1) Teacher 3 affirmed the way the leaders of pedagogy managed the implementation extremely well (School D, Teacher 3).

Presenting a positive perspective on the reforms was also considered to be an important tool for successful change management. The principal believed the reforms were put to the staff "in the most positive way we could" (School D, Principal). Teacher 3 supports this notion and stated, "always remaining positive and saying it's for

the greater good of everybody" was important to bringing staff on-board (School D, Teacher 3). Teacher 4 noted the "very gentle approach and the positives …this will make you a better teacher and this will make your classrooms easier to manage" (School D, Teacher 4). Two teachers perceived that the early resistance to the reforms had past and that there was a more positive view of the reform initiatives (School D, Teachers 4 & 5).

4.5.2.5 System Leaders

System leaders perceived that school leaders were adopting a range of measures to manage the change required to implement the reforms and that in the face of criticism from school leaders the system moved away from imposition of reforms to allowing school leaders to fashion the strategies to meet the local needs of their schools.

Five system leaders identified that the changes were managed partly because system leaders, over the course of the four years of the reforms, consciously moved away from a "one size fits all" and "top down" approach to decision making in the face of both resistance from schools and the realisation that a school's context needed to be considered when shaping reforms (System Leaders 1, 4, 5, 6, 7).

System Leader 4 agreed that the locus of decision making shifted from the central office to secondary school principals. She used the example of instructional rounds to describe that it,

> "became part of my role to work around (resistance to instructional rounds) but interestingly, I think it went away then because it wasn't pushed. The schools are far more (in control)….Perhaps that was a bit of establishing that saying 'you will do this to schools' was not going to work with secondary schools but it took a little bit for the system head office to realise well, 'that's not going to work' (System Leader 4).

System Leader 4 described that the resistance eased because "schools have found their own (way of implementing their version of instructional rounds)- they know where they have to go and if it's not relevant to their school they don't worry about it".

System Leader 1 acknowledged that she "grew into the secondary program as well and realised that there was more than one way to skin a cat". System Leader 1 now realised that "it's important that we should never say you have to do it this way. We can say these are the parameters, here are some ideas but at the end of the day you have to implement it" (System Leader 1). She wondered whether her expectations had been lowered but she had "been more flexible because of context" (System Leader 1). System

Leader 6 saw that "there's been an evolution in that process but I suppose that's one of the strengths of the project as well, is that it's been responsive to change" (System Leader 6).

System Leader 3 described the evolution towards school centred decision making by stating, "over time ...principals have felt greater autonomy, and that the leaders of pedagogy, that their role and their profile has increased, first it was information giving and directions, whereas now…it's more two way" (System Leader 3).

Six system leaders identified that a key way schools are managing the reforms is by adapting them to suit the context of the school. System Leader 1 stated that,

Every school is different and every school has implemented differently depending on the context of their school and the expertise of the leadership team and I think that's been really important…. that's part of the success of the project in some schools, the creativity of their different projects, the innovation that they've used (System Leader 1).

System Leader 1 described the difference between the four funded secondary schools who are all "relatively very similar in socioeconomic areas, the type of students that they have in their schools in broad terms but the context of - none of those schools are the same in how they deliver anything" (System Leader 1) and the challenge that principals and leaders of pedagogy have with, "the relationships with the people at the ground level, the knowledge of where teachers are at in terms of their own career, who's got the expertise in the school to be able to courageously challenge teachers to go to another point" (System Leader 1). System Leader 4 agreed that at the beginning "all the four funded schools were at very different places it seems" (System Leader 4).

System Leader 1 acknowledged the key role of principal in discerning and responding to various capacities of individuals in the local context and that one program will work in one school but fail in another because of the level of readiness and capability for reform. She emphasised that "the context is critical" (System Leader 1).

System Leader 2 saw the importance of the school's leadership learning what works and what fails and what to do about it. System Leader 5 spoke of the balancing act of principals trying to "encourage the fact that the reform agenda might be possible" and to "lighten the loads of people" in order for that to happen (System Leader 5). System Leader 4 believed that from the beginning Principals modified strategies to suit their schools' context and the system eventually stopped insisting otherwise. System

Leader 7 accepted that decisions needed to be contextualised but, "at times people lost a little bit of the purpose behind (the reforms) " (System Leader 7).

Five system leaders saw the leaders of pedagogy as change agents implementing the reforms and managing the resistance as it emerged (System Leaders 1, 2, 4, 5, 7). System Leader 1 noted the training leaders of pedagogy received from Central Office "to be effective change agents in their school" (System Leader 1). System Leader 1 explained that as newcomers to the schools leaders of pedagogy had to be "personable, knowledgeable, and credible but also really, really flexible in how they saw where they fitted on the leadership team so that they could adapt… to the context of the school" (System Leader 1).

System Leader 4 believed that leaders' of pedagogy impact has been 'obvious and strategic'. System Leader 2 spoke of the work of the leaders of pedagogy of School B in developing the capacity teachers blending some innovation with the traditional practices and making gradual change away from teacher centred practices. System Leader 1 spoke of some leaders of pedagogy' ability to form strong relationships as the key to managing the changes. Similarly, System Leader 5 thought leaders of pedagogy grew into "the role and were able to persuade and cajole and inspire colleagues" (System Leader 5).

She also noted how some leaders of pedagogy shared leadership with heads of department whilst in other schools "they haven't even started that because that context in that school doesn't operate like that because the leader doesn't drive it like that" (System Leader 1). This concern was shared by System Leader 2 who cautioned that lasting reform would only be possible if the leaders of pedagogy developed the leadership of the heads of department.

Four system leaders also emphasised the importance of the Principal as an agent of change. System Leader 1 stated, "the principal knows the school; the principal is critical in the whole process" (System Leader 1). System Leader 3 believed that principals who had a "strong vision of where they want to take their school and their community were able to really embrace this opportunity" (System Leader 3). System Leaders 2 and 4 spoke of the change management of the new Principal of School B in "moving slowly but very purposefully to actually take the teachers with them, rather than frightening teachers" (System Leader 2). System Leader 4 reflected that if the principal was "more collaborative and wanted people to take ownership of what's happening with the learning. … that's had a real impact on how much, how quicker things are moving and change has been seen a bit more" (System Leader 4).

Additional release time and the Australian Curriculum were both used to manage the change required for the implementation of the reforms. The advent of the Australian Curriculum was not part of the Low SES NP Reforms but school leaders used the requirements of the Curriculum to implement NPSS reforms in pedagogy and learning. System Leader 2 explained that NPSS schools had no staff resistance over programming due to the advantage of time release.

4.5.3 Summary

Experiences carried from school to school. School A's teachers and coordinators resisted much of the work of the leaders of pedagogy during the first few years of the reforms. Initiatives like instructional rounds, professional learning communities and the mentoring of faculty staff were either abandoned or severely altered into more palatable alternatives. Participants cited lack of relational trust, poor communication and excessively demanding reforms as factors for the poor implementation. Participants from the leadership team identified heads of department as key blockers of reforms. The new leaders of pedagogy had to make sizeable changes to the reform agenda and jettisoned much of the reforms that were aimed to raise expectations of teachers and improve pedagogy.

The leaders of School B experienced some resistance to their reform initiatives because of the school's existing academic reputation, system leaders imposing reform strategies and the interruptions the reforms created to teaching and learning at the school. The data suggests that through the skills of the leaders of pedagogy and a responsive leadership team the changes were well managed. System imposed reforms were modified to meet the perceived needs of staff and students and this also limited resistance.

The leaders of School C re-focussed the school's learning culture partly through the replacement of some well-established staff with young and more enthusiastic staff who were more disposed to the reforms. Although there were concerns raised about the pace of reforms the schools leaders have managed to adjust the initiatives to suit the local needs of a school which began the reforms in need of substantial improvement to its learning culture.

School D experienced resistance to the reforms from established members of staff including heads of department. The leaders of pedagogy decided to by pass the heads of department by instead professionally developing young enthusiastic teachers. Change was managed also by integrating many reform initiatives under the school's

literacy and numeracy agenda. The leadership team projected a positive perspective to the staff about the purpose and value of the reforms.

Perceptions from the different role groups also varied. Principals particularly mentioned the role of the leaders of pedagogy to manage change and the support staff gave the reforms because they could see the need for them and that they well resourced with additional time. They also saw the need to adapt the reforms to meet the local context as a technique for managing change.

Leaders of pedagogy mentioned that the creation and sharing of a vision for what they hoped to achieve through the implementation of the reforms was important. Some leaders of pedagogy sought to limit the number and slow the pace of the reforms in order to focus the teaching staff to successfully implement a few key reform areas. Most of them stated the need to develop good relationships with staff and saw the moral purpose of the reforms as being an important stimulus for action. They also saw the need for adapting the reforms to the local context and strategically selecting supportive and enthusiastic staff to be involved in the reforms.

Heads of department criticised the reform process for attempting to implement somewhat ineffectual reforms that were so numerous and demanding that they overwhelmed staff. They blamed poor communication, lack of consultation and poor planning from school leaders for the level of resistance the reforms received. Heads of department also acknowledged that the moral purpose of the reforms to improve student outcomes did motivate staff to engage with the reforms and some heads of department did acknowledge the need to carefully select staff and they affirmed the provision of additional time to manage the changes required. They also recognised that school leaders did learn from the mistakes of the first years of the reform by focussing on fewer but more important strategies in the final years of the reform period.

Teachers reported barriers to reforms included the perception that leaders of pedagogy were 'super teachers', resistance from established staff members and the rushed nature of the reforms. They believed that the changes were well implemented through the motivation of the moral purpose of the reforms, the resource of release time, good communication and organisation by the leaders of pedagogy and by maintaining a positive and team approach.

System leaders noted many of the barriers to reform but identified the system's devolution of decision-making and acceptance of a school's context as an important way that change was managed successfully. They also emphasised the important role of

leaders of pedagogy and principals as change agents. Finally, they noted the advent of the Australian Curriculum and the resource of release time as levers of change.

Chapter 5 Presentation of Data for RSQs 3 - 6

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data for the final four research sub questions which emerged from the exploration of the documents provided by the schools and the experiences of educators in these different secondary schools who were all involved in a system driven common reform agenda. The RSQs follow:

RSQ3 How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school?

RSQ4 How was 'professional learning' built in each secondary school?

RSQ5 How was 'parent and community engagement' built in each secondary school?

RSQ6 To what extent do participants identify improved student and teacher capacity for learning as a result of the initiative?

5.2 Research Themes

The data will be reported for each research sub question for each school. Data for the research themes of quality teaching and professional learning will be presented using categories that emerged from the analysis as sub-headings where possible. Due to less data being collected for the other research themes the presentation will be simply by school. These categories for each of research sub-questions 3-6 are set out in Table 6.1. Some minor categories were collapsed into larger categories as part of the data reduction process. Also, because of its summative nature RSQ6 did not require categories to be formed as they were identified in earlier RSQs.

Data is presented for each school and for system leaders. A table setting out the frequencies for each sub-question and category is set out in Appendix 1. The first RSQ to be presented is RSQ3.

Table 6.1 Categories for RSQs 3-6

RSQ3 Building Quality Teaching
1. Assessment reforms
2. Literacy, Numeracy and ESL Focus
3. Pedagogy
4. Curriculum Programming
5. Use of Data
RSQ4 Building Professional Learning
1. Professional collaboration
2. School and system networks
3. Leadership Development
RSQ5 Parent and Community Engagement
1. Developing a partnership between home and school
2. Engagement with learning
3. School liaison with parents
4. Developing a partnership between home and school
RSQ6 Improved Capacity?

5.3 RSQ3 How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school?

A theme that was generated from the literature that underpinned the National Partnerships for Smarter Low SES Schools was the research theme of quality teaching. Five categories emerged from a total of 537 coded segments that were relevant to quality teaching. This total was more than 19% of the entire total number of coded segments in this study. These segments were recoded progressively after collapsing some codes and categories emerged from the data that seemed to fit particular criteria. The frequency of segments and the criteria for each of the categories were:

i.   **Assessment reforms** (67 segments) including such sub-categories as using standards to improve assessment practices, cross –curricula assessment, project based learning, differentiation of assessment tasks, rich tasks that use higher order skills, cooperative planning of tasks, improving student feedback from tasks and teachers receiving professional development on the topic of assessment.

ii.   **Focus on literacy, numeracy and English as a Second Language (ESL)** (179 segments) including such sub-categories as literacy and numeracy projects, building teacher capacity to improve students' reading, writing and numeracy, reading programs, ESL pedagogy, identification of ESL students using the ESL

scales and setting individual student education plans, additional resources for literacy, numeracy and ESL and teachers receiving professional development on the topics of literacy, numeracy and ESL.

iii. **Pedagogy** (156 segments) including such sub-categories as whole school pedagogy projects, development of teaching and learning statements, eLearning, teachers receiving feedback on their pedagogy, reflective practice, blended learning, teaching in open learning spaces, student wellbeing and engagement, personalised learning and teachers receiving professional development on the topic of pedagogy.

iv. **Curriculum programming** (81 segments**)** including such sub-categories as implementing the Australian curriculum and new syllabus documents, understanding by design, backward design, collaborative programming, differentiated teaching programs and teachers receiving professional development on the topic of programming.

v. **Use of data to inform teaching and learning** (54 segments) including such sub-categories as teacher analysis of student results, teacher use of data packages and data skills assessment website, whole school data plans, teacher symposiums on data teachers receiving professional development on the topic of the use of data.

5.3.1 Background to the reforms to improve quality teaching.

Participants and school documents reported various reforms to improve teacher quality. Initiatives to improve student assessment included adjustments to the language of tasks to make them more accessible to students and the creation of cross curricula tasks. Schools attempted a wide range of strategies to build the capacity of teachers' pedagogical skills. The strategies and emphases for assessment and pedagogy varied from school to school

The reforms provided schools with opportunities to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills. The multi-cultural nature of each school's student populations meant that learning English as a second language was an important mainstream educational issue. The system supported schools by offering *Literacy the Next Step,* a five-day intensive program to build the capacity of leaders and teachers to address student literacy needs. In the final two years of the reforms the system also extended a primary school based reading and mathematics program, RAMP, to support

mathematics in the early years of high school. School leadership teams developed both programs in different ways.

Schools began planning for new state mandated Years 7-10 syllabuses in English, Mathematics, Science and History in 2013. These syllabuses were guided by the new Australian Curriculum which was being introduced into state syllabuses. School and system leaders saw these new syllabuses as an opportunity to provide more engaging and student centred teaching programs using a new paradigm, backward design. Schools also referred to this paradigm as "backward mapping" or "Understanding by Design". The system sponsored Dr. Jay McTighe to present to system and school leaders in 2012 regarding his work with "Understanding by Design" and following this conference schools began the next year using his process for programming for the new syllabuses (Krawec, 2012).

Schools planned for the on-going analysis of student results in NAPLAN and HSC to inform future teaching and learning. A significant tool for the analysis of NAPLAN data is the School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit (SMART) which provides annual feedback on the NAPLAN results to NSW schools (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2014) A Results Analysis Package (RAP) for schools was available for leaders and teachers to use to analyse their HSC results. Principals of Catholic schools in NSW were also provided a multilevel analysis of HSC data of Catholic secondary schools which included measures of comparative learning gain from NAPLAN to HSC (DeCourcy, 2005). Schools attempted to analyse the data to inform classroom practice but this was achieved to varying degrees.

The data for each school will now be presented demonstrating the different emphases and degrees of implementation of these approaches to improving teacher quality.

5.3.2 School A

5.3.2.1 Assessment Reforms

School A's Annual Improvement Plans and commentary from participants revealed some attempt to reform student assessment. The Annual Improvement Plans noted a number of planned changes to assessment including the provision of options within tasks for some subject faculties, the integration assessment tasks across different subject areas with the desire that they would be intellectually rich and engaging (School A, 2011 AIP, 1.2, 2.1); the intentions to embed a literacy and ESL rich approach to assessments, to strengthen formative assessment and to use backward design for both

programming and assessment (School A, 2012 AIP, 3.2; 3.5) and the plan to integrate tasks across different subject areas in Years 7 & 8 (School A, 2013 AIP, 3.1).

LoP2 described reforms to senior assessment that were designed to provide more detailed feedback but were not well received by heads of department because for them "it was adding work" (School A, CCO). Two years after the implementation of these assessment reforms a head of department was able to say that she and other teachers could see some benefit from the changes (School A, Coordinator 1).

LoP1 described how assessment has become the starting point in curriculum planning an programming using the process called backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). LoPs from School A described the work in aligning assessment to the syllabus standards, cross-curricular mapping and collaboration and making the tasks more accessible (School A, LoP1 & LoP2). The Principal of School A recruited an Assistant to the Curriculum Coordinator to manage the project who summarised the work with assessment for students by stating, "the main thing is developing tasks that have meaning for them, that allow all students to achieve" (School A, Teacher 2).

School plans and comments from participants emphasised the importance of literacy to improve student outcomes. The ESL population was also given attention and to a lesser extent numeracy was mentioned.

5.3.2.2 Literacy, Numeracy and ESL Focus

The Annual Improvement Plans of School A show that school leaders planned for a significant number of interventions and support for the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and for the support of students whose language background is other than English including teachers being supported with 'Teaching English Language Learners' (TELL) a program for mainstream teachers of ESL students (School A, AIP 2011, 2.3.); Professional Learning Communities were to be established for either literacy or numeracy skill development and text types were to be mapped across faculty areas and ESL practitioners were to increase the amount of team teaching with mainstream teachers(School A, AIP 2011, 2.1).

Students were to be identified as Phase 1, 2 or 3 ESL learners to assist with future planning and response. Year 10 and 11 students were to be trained to be peer tutors of students who had reading difficulties (School A, AIP 2011, 2.3) and a DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) program was instituted, as was a 'Read & Write Gold' project (School A, AIP 2013, 3.1). Students were to be encouraged to create word banks for vocabulary development (School A, AIP 2011, 2.3). It was planned for staff to be

exposed to a shared meta-language to use for literacy development (School A, AIP 2011, 3.4).

There were also plans for a shared meta-language for numeracy and numeracy opportunities were to be mapped across the curriculum areas (School A, AIP 2011, 3.4). Leaders from School A planned the joint development of a numeracy parent support program for teachers with the system office and the Australian Catholic University (School A, AIP 2011, 6.1).

Participants from School A reported that literacy was perceived as a 'driver' for school improvements, that literacy is emphasised and that there was satisfaction with the school's engagement with literacy (School A, Coord 1, Coord 3, Ex-LoP2). LoP2 saw literacy skills as key transfer skills from school to future employment (School A, LOP2 Interview).

The principal and two leaders of pedagogy regarded the system's literacy professional development highly. The system program, *Literacy the Next Step*, had been presented to leadership teams and the school planned to extend this to others, "so that within every department I've got a core amount of people who can drive the literacy change" (School A Principal).

The principal reported that teachers have been released from classes in teams to embed literacy and numeracy strategies into programs. The Principal also had appointed a Literacy Coordinator to work with faculty teams and the leaders of pedagogy. A literacy intervention program for students, MultiLit ("Making Up Lost Time In Literacy") developed by researchers at Macquarie University, was also introduced (School A Principal).

A system leader recounted the progress School A made with ESL pedagogy which she thought would provide "a great platform by which to change classroom pedagogy" (System Leader 7). The ESL practitioner also worked with Heads of Departments to focus actions on the verbal aspects of literacy to encourage students to talk and discuss matters before they began writing about them (School A, LoP 2). Students in School A were also helped with the literacy demands of mathematics which was perceived as an overlooked area (School A, Teacher 1).

5.3.2.3 Pedagogy

School A documented modelling, professional learning communities, learning symposiums and a periodic focus on a particular teaching strategy. Participants noted the progress made with improving pedagogy particularly in the first years of the reforms.

School A's 2011 Annual Improvement Plans included an aim to develop a school wide approach to pedagogy that included modelling pedagogical practices at various professional development sessions. A Professional Learning Community based on pedagogy was also planned (School A, AIP 2011, 2.1).

The following year the plan included further development of a whole school pedagogy via a Learning Symposium and faculty meetings and other resources, The practice of focussing on a teaching strategy each month was included (School A, AIP 2012, 2.1).

In 2013 School A's AIP included further development of existing strategies along with the implementation of instructional rounds in the school (School A, AIP 2013). In the final year of the project the plan called for a revised "Learning Belief Statement" to underpin the system-wide Authentic Learning Framework which was being developed in 2014-15 (School A, AIP 2014, 3.6).

A leader of pedagogy from School A described how the teachers on staff were discussing pedagogical practices more explicitly in their conversations and that projects designed to enhance their pedagogical practices such as eLearning, coaching and mentoring, class observations, and demonstration lessons and other forms of professional learning. One such project was for the school to concentrate on one teaching strategy a month, "and then any classroom visits we made that month would be to do with seeing how that strategy was working in the classroom" (School A, Ex LOP2).

The ex –LoP 1 from School A described how pedagogy was linked to other elements of professional learning. He described how through demonstration and observation lessons he coached and mentored teachers and young leaders (School A, Ex-LoP1).

Modelling to teachers and giving feedback to teachers on their classroom practice was seen by one leader of pedagogy as critical elements to improve practice. He reflected that, "the most effective thing I found was when I was actually with a teacher in their class … showing them different ways of doing things or letting them do it and watching them and giving them feedback" (School A, Ex-LoP 1).

School A's principal saw the potential of programming to bring about pedagogical change and spoke of the emphasis on pedagogy in the school's professional development program (Principal, School A). Teachers reported trying different approaches in the classroom and looking at the different styles of learners and tailoring their teaching to those students so that all students are able to achieve. One teacher

commented that he had "thoroughly enjoyed teaching and the funding has helped in terms of my teaching" (School A, Teacher 2). However this same teacher was critical of the lack of in class support from leaders of pedagogy believing that too much time was being spent on out of class pedagogical training (School A, Teacher 2).

5.3.2.4 Programming

Leaders and teachers from School A were positive towards the programming of new syllabuses and had planned for their introduction. School A documents show evidence of planning in 2013 for professional development on the principles of backward design and the implementation of the new syllabuses. (School A, AIP, 2013).

Leaders of pedagogy appreciated the timing of the new syllabuses as it allowed them to use backward design as a framework to design learning. (School A, LOP2). Heads of department valued the extra time given for programming but one felt that the focus on backward design had not been developed enough for the implications of using it be fully understood by teachers (School A, Coord 2).

The teacher appointed to coordinate the programming saw the great opportunity for the programs to improve student engagement. She explained that the programs would, "engage the students and give them real world experiences" (School A, Teacher 2).

5.3.2.5 Use of Data to Inform teaching and learning

Documentary evidence presents a clear plan to train teachers how to use data. Leaders from School A were equivocal about the progress made in using data to inform classroom practice.

The 2011 Annual Improvement Plan identified who was responsible for leading training for teachers and coordinators to learn how to use data (School A, AIP 2011, 2.1 & 3.3) The Leaders of Pedagogy were charged to professionally develop teachers to use the SMART package to analyse NAPLAN data. Heads of department were to be trained with the RAP toolkit by the Curriculum Coordinator. The heads of department were then responsible for analysing HSC results and teachers were provided with their analysis to inform future classroom practice. (School A, AIP 2011).

The Curriculum Coordinator acknowledged that teachers and heads of department had been trained to analyse the data, "but in terms of really drilling down to the data, some are better than others" (School A, CCO) and it was yet to inform whole school teaching and reform agenda. LOP1 agreed that a lot of whole school staff training on use of SMART had not led to data-informed learning. He stated, "So whilst

teachers have the skills to do that it's not been common practice to use it to personalise learning" (School A, LOP1).

He was more satisfied with the school's use of HSC data to improve results and believed that the school's HSC results were a product of "getting into the data and particularly looking at personalising that…and to have the conversations with the teachers … and looking at what practice(s) could improve that so that we've got learning gain for those students (School A, LOP1).

Coordinators (School A, Coords 2 & 3) felt that they had benefitted from the analysis. One head of department "liked to think" that the analysis had worked its way to being used by classroom teachers. Another Coordinator spoke of the impetus it gave literacy development, personally for him it gave "a better idea of my kids as learners, my students as learners (and) we've done so much work on developing literacy in our programs and providing opportunities there for the students and looking at where the main areas of need are for the student learners" (School A, Coord 3).

5.3.3 School B

5.3.3.1 Assessment

School B's Annual Improvement Plans included an aim for more effective programming to improve the quality of student assessment. In the 2014 AIP assessment was to be guided by the school's newly created 'Principles of Learning and Teaching' (School B, 2014 AIP, 3.2).

School B's Annual Improvement Plan also stated the aim to implement its newly designed principles of Teaching and Learning into assessment tasks (School B, 2014 AIP, 3.5). In the 2013 AIP the document expressed the intention to develop differentiated programmes and assessments for the Australian Curriculum and to support collaboration between the subject areas and their Coordinators in exploring common assessment tasks (School B, 2013 AIP, 3.4). Teachers from School B mentioned moving away from traditional examination based tasks and utilising ICT (School B, Teachers 2 & 3) but no other comments were made by leaders of School B regarding assessment.

5.3.3.2 Literacy, Numeracy and ESL focus

School B planned an extensive response to meet the literacy needs of its students. The 2011 AIP includes a significant number of interventions and support for the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and for the support of students whose

language background is other than English. It detailed the intention to create Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for all new arrival students and for students who were at or below the minimum benchmark for literacy and numeracy (School B, AIP 2011, 2.1.) Inservice events were planned for teachers to show them how to use ESL scales and how to implement strategies to support the skills of teachers to assist ESL students (School B, AIP 2011, 2.1).

Literacy and numeracy specialist teachers were to be appointed by the principal and homework clubs and intensive reading programs were to be established to respond to the literacy needs of students (School B, AIP 2011, 2.1) .The system's *'Literacy the Next Step' (LTNS)* program figured frequently in the plan with a staged rollout to leaders and a condensed version for all teachers (School B, AIP 2011, 3.1).

Students were supported with a "Reading to Understand Project" to assist students in Years 7 & 8. Teacher aides were hired to operate reading groups where students who were at or below the minimum national reading level were withdrawn from class on a regular basis and supported in their reading comprehension (School B, AIP 2011, 3.1). An expert in the English curriculum from Sydney University was employed to review the English faculty's units of work (School B, AIP 2011, 3.1).

The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan included the extension of programmes such as 'MultiLit' (Making Up Lost Time In Literacy) to include Year 9 students. A 'Word Generation Project and a numeracy data analysis project were also noted (School B, AIP 2012, 3.2). Literacy, numeracy or ESL strategies were not mentioned in any significant way in the 2013 or 2014 AIPs.

Participants spoke about literacy, numeracy and ESL in much less detail than the documented plans. The leaders of pedagogy both saw literacy as a critical area for school improvement (School B, LoP1 & 2) and the documentary evidence reflected their attempt to respond to that need. One leader of pedagogy spoke about how the condensed version of LTNS also included data analysis at the classroom level to allow, "focusing particularly on reading and writing, focusing on analysis of data, putting a face to the data, kids' faces to it" (School B, LoP1). LOP2 mentioned how teachers analysed data from their class and then conducted action research to discover the points of need in their classroom. The five-day action research was so extensive it was rolled on into 2012 (School B, LoP2).

A teacher spoke of student involvement in an intensive reading program and how they have to accommodate students who were withdrawn from their classes (School B, Teacher 3).

5.3.3.3 Pedagogy

Leaders from School B emphasised student engagement in their approach to school wide pedagogy and much of the planning involved programming which would include contemporary pedagogy but there was limited mention in the AIPs of strategies to improve teaching skills and in the participants commentary there are different opinions as to the scale of achievement in this area.

School B's planning for the development of whole school pedagogy included the need to build the capacity of teachers to implement contemporary literacy pedagogy in assessments and units of work (School B, AIP, 2011, 3.1); to renew the Learning Skills program to promote independent learning skills and leaders of pedagogy were to publish a quarterly teaching and learning newsletter which would present best practice ideas in teaching and learning (School B, AIP, 2012, 4.2).

One head of department reflected on the positive changes he found in working with teachers doing instructional rounds, "the staff in general are very supportive of changes…so there's been instructional rounds in maths, we've …worked with them, looking at each other's teaching" (School B, Coord1).

The ex-principal of School B spoke of his team's desire to create projects that would make a difference in the classroom. He reported that the leaders of pedagogy had a mixture of success and that their work in improving classroom pedagogy didn't always go well. In the end he thought, "they were trying to help people who struggled in the classroom a fair bit with new ideas or concepts or classroom management" (School B Ex-Principal). He also spoke of the importance of the connection between pedagogy and student engagement with, "new approaches to teaching and ways of getting kids interested that were just turned off by chalk and talk " (School B Ex-Principal).

One leader of pedagogy explained the problem that teachers were proud of the school's reputation for the HSC but "the focus was never really on the student's engagement" (School B LoP 1). The other leader of pedagogy thought the good results were a product of "spoon-feeding" (School B LoP 2). System leader 6 agreed with the need for School B to move away from "a very teacher centred pedagogy" (System Leader 6).

Common principles of learning and teaching were discussed, established and published for all teachers to get a clear idea of what innovative learning looked like and what effective learning looked like (School B LoP2, Interview). This early work was sometimes difficult but it was seen to lay the groundwork for developing a common language for learning in the classroom (School B, LoP 2, Interview).

A school developed project called Tailored Innovation in Learning and Teaching (TILT) attempted to challenge this traditional pedagogy, by exploring some new models of learning and teaching and think about how that might impact on engagement or motivation or challenge students (School B LOP 2 Interview).

LoP2 of School B did express that the prospect of teaching observing each other's lessons "really challenged people… and they felt like they were being checked in on and they weren't comfortable with it at all" (School B LoP 2). LoP2 described how she needed to gently introduce classroom observations to make staff feel comfortable with such a new practice and that she realised that observations required a specific focus (School B, LoP2, Interview).

LoP 1 believed that the staff of School B had begun to realise the possibilities of a student centred pedagogy and that "it's shifted that focus, so it's not just results driven, it's actually about the learner and the long term learning for their futures" (School B, LoP 1) and changing teacher practice was seen by LoP2 as "the most critical part [of the reforms] because basically unless there are changes [to teacher practice] it's hard and nothing will happen." (School B, LOP 2, Interview). School B teachers appreciated the new opportunities to take risks in what was a conservative school culture. One teacher said, "that's provided me with a bit more confidence in some of my ideas because at times they did seem a bit too revolutionary or too contradictive to what our school is used to" (School B, Teacher 3).

A pastoral coordinator at School B reported that there are fewer discipline problems because students have been more engaged and the students have been able to really enjoy (lessons) and "really discover their learning - rather than having the teacher centred approach where they're just forcing everything onto them " (School B Coordinator 1).

5.3.3.4 Programming

Educators from School B placed emphasis on the role programming would have in improving a range of factors including pedagogy, student engagement, assessment and collaboration. The leaders of pedagogy were responsible for supporting staff to integrate the school's principles of teaching and learning with the principles of backward design as teams of teachers programmed for the new syllabuses (School B, AIP 2013, 3.4). The 2014 AIP included the intention that the TILT (Tailored Innovative Learning and Teaching) project be the medium to construct programs that

were meaningful and challenging whilst allowing for the development of creativity, collaboration and higher order thinking (School B, AIP 2014, 3.1).

Leaders of pedagogy provided inservice on backward design and supported TILT teams throughout the process. A teacher noted that, "backward mapping was a critical part of programming through TILT in that the first thing you develop is the assessment task and then you work towards that" (School B, Teacher 2).

The leaders of pedagogy described the process as being collaborative and team based (School B, LoP1, LoP2). The principal stated that "our programs for phase one have a richness about them.... because we've had time and opportunity to actually depth the new curriculum and to think about how do we make this tailored and innovative for the kids" (School B, Principal, Interview).

5.3.3.5 Use of Data

School B's documentation set out expectations for the training of staff in 2011 but in the 2013 AIP the requirement to broaden the range of teachers using data were included. Participants reported effective use of the data to guide teaching and learning.

School B's Annual Improvement Plans established the need for a whole school plan for teachers to use the SMART package using three eLearning modules (School A, AIP 2011, 3.1) and to broaden the range of teachers with access to and involved in data analysis in order to encourage evidence-based and data-informed teaching practice (School B, AIP 2013, 3.4)

School B provided a condensed version of *Literacy the Next Step* called *Literacy Now* for teachers which incorporated the use of the SMART package as part of the program. This did not require teachers to formally report on their learning as would be expected by Year 12 teachers following the HSC results analysis (School B, LOP1). LOP 1 valued the process stating that data analysis was, "focussing particularly on reading and writing, focussing on analysis of data, putting a face to the data, kids' faces to it". Teachers were required to "identify the point of need for their particular classes and then conduct action research" (School B, LoP1). LoP2 also believed that the data analysis with *Literacy Now* made an impact, "particularly in terms of things like using data, using evidence and really looking at what we have, knowledge we have about students" (School B, LoP2, Interview).

However it was perceived that the analysis of HSC results needed to be broadened beyond the Faculty Coordinators to classroom teachers because "previously they didn't ever see their DeCourcy Analysis it was just the heads of department … the

subject teacher didn't know whether they were having an impact in terms of growth"
(School B, LOP2). The leaders of pedagogy, " really pushed to increase the access and
then support them with knowing how to analyse it. We spent a lot of time with the
Heads of Departments around getting a common approach in some ways to data
analysis" and that "it's certainly been a focus to get data in more people's hands, right
from the class teacher to coordinators to the executive" (School B, LOP2).

No coordinator from School B spoke of data analysis.

5.3.4 School C

School C's approach to improving assessment was well documented and
participants spoke about it in detail.

The 2011 AIP of School C included the aim to align its assessment practices to
the school designed principles of Teaching and Learning (School C, AIP 2011, 3.5).
The 2012 AIP of School C had a considerable focus on assessment and included the aim
to align the Board of Studies' standards with the design and marking of assessment
tasks. It furthermore aimed to build teacher capacity to develop valid, reliable,
authentic and differentiated assessment tasks that will enable students to demonstrate
their knowledge and potential as learners. In the last year of the reforms School C aimed
to develop processes for assessment practices that would ensure quality feedback for
student learning (School C, AIP 2014, 3.5).

 Pastoral coordinators experienced being leaders of learning by raising
expectations of students in submitting work and being involved in any subsequent
appeal process and that this created a greater partnership between them and heads of
departments (School C, CCO).

Numerous participants referred to the work of leaders of pedagogy training
teachers to use the common grade scale to build teachers' language repertoire for
assessment and to bring commonality to assessment judgements (School C, LOP1;
Teachers 2 & 4, and Principal). LoP1 at School C described the lack of staff
understanding of the language of assessment and how staff learnt to apply descriptive
language and judge student's work processes and work samples and school wide
templates to "support those understandings were really crucial" (LoP1, School C).

Common assessment scaffolds were introduced and participants stated these
improvements were in the best interest of the students. One teacher from School C
stated, "that we're trying to target at the end of the day the best for the students" (School
C, Teacher 2). Teachers from School C also referred to tasks being improved to make

their language more accessible to students who do not have English as their first language (School C, Teachers 2 and 4).

Teachers in School C reported improvement in procedures towards common tasks and allowing students to demonstrate their potential. One teacher described the realisation that these assessments needed to be more accessible,

> Assessment tasks were written to suit the teachers. The language that was
> in it was fine for a teacher who has expertise in their field, but with our
> students with English as their second language, the confusion to the
> assessment, the stress levels, the disengagement from it completely …We
> need to give students access to this assessment for them to be able to
> show us what they know and what they've understood. (School C,
> Teacher 4).

Teachers from School C described that leaders of pedagogy reviewed tasks to ensure their language was accessible and worked with teachers when they were not. System Leader 4 reported that the leaders of pedagogy were understating the progress they have made with assessment in School C, and that "they've made a huge change to assessment in the school (and) to the level of accountability Head of departments".

5.3.4.1 Literacy, Numeracy and ESL Focus

School C focused on numeracy and the ESL language needs of students as well as their literacy needs.

Over a three-year period School C constructed a whole school literacy plan and an ESL literacy program to address the literacy and ESL language needs of students (School C, AIPs 2011-2013, 3.2). LTNS was planned for specific faculty areas and action research was expected as a follow up (School C, AIPs 2011, 3.2). Individual education plans were planned for students who fell below the minimum standard for reading, writing or numeracy (School C, AIPs 2011, 2.1). A progressive rollout of compiling student profiles of language proficiency was undertaken. This profile was intended to support mainstream students working with LBOTE students.

The commencement of the system-led Reading and Mathematics Project (RAMP) in 2013 focused the school on improving numeracy. Students with low numeracy scores were planned to be case managed (School C, AIPs 2013, 2.1) and in the following year a *Quicksmart* numeracy project was introduced to support students at risk in Mathematics (School C, AIPs 2014, 3.4). By 2014 the planning moved to

improving the vocabulary of students through explicit instruction (School C, AIP 2014, 3.4).

The literacy coordinator reported progress with implementing a wide reading program in years 7 to 10. She selected resources to engage students in reading and deleted old resources that she believed were less engaging (School C, Coordinator 2,). LoP1 described how ESL practitioners developed personalised learning plans for ESL students.

The two leaders of pedagogy completed LTNS and this was highly regarded by both of them. LoP2 stated that it was "one of the best things …that I've ever done was the Literacy: The Next Step programme… then I was able to then in a distributive way push that out within the school" (School C, LoP2).

5.3.4.2 Pedagogy

Documents did not detail significant plans to improve teacher pedagogy with the exception of the 2012 AIP. Participants also did not comment in great detail on this area but some progress was noted. The Annual Improvement Plans of School C documented the aim of developing a school wide teaching and learning model which focussed on teacher passion, student engagement and personalised learning (School C, AIP, 2012, 3.1). The model incorporated explicit teaching practices and established literacy and in particular oral language as a priority (School C, AIP, 2012, 3.1).

LoP2 at School C described the desire of the school's leadership team to have pedagogy as a big reform item and move, "pedagogy to student centred - from teacher centred – from teacher at the front of the room, to students being more co-creators of knowledge" (School C, LoP2).

The school's pedagogical model was created using a backward design model which allowed staff to adopt a common language for pedagogy. LoP2 described how she worked with teachers and observed their classes. She used coaching questioning techniques to develop teachers and, "they just crave the feedback" (School C, LoP2). LoP1 also characterised her work as collaboration with teachers both for planning and team teaching (School C, LoP1).

A teacher in the forum group concluded that the school's work on pedagogy had helped her development as a teacher and "to realise the big picture things and how to improve and develop my own pedagogy in the classroom" (School C, Teacher 3).

5.3.4.3 Programming

School C's documentation also planned for collaborative programming and participants spoke of the advantage of using backward design to focus on the important elements of the curriculum. School C's 2013 AIP noted the intention to collaboratively develop programs of work that incorporated strategies that would meet the personalised needs of students using backward design (School C 2013 AIP, 2.1, 3.4).

LoP1 explained that the backward design model was adapted to their approach to teaching and learning. She explained that "We've looked at the development of a whole school approach for teaching and learning…my work is actually working with teachers in a collaborative, planning and team teaching sense (School C, LoP1). Teachers and heads of department spoke of the collaborative approach to programming and the work of the leaders of pedagogy to facilitate that approach.

Documentation from School C's AIPs shows a planned intention for teachers to use data more effectively to inform their future practice. Educators from School C described that progress has been made in teachers accessing and using data to inform classroom practice.

5.3.4.4 Data informed teaching and learning

The 2011 and 2012 AIPs for School C include the intention for teachers to become more familiar with the SMART software modules and for this to lead to planning for their teaching and student learning (School C, AIP 2011 & 2012). The School also planned HSC Symposia where teachers would learn about their HSC data to inform their classroom practices (School C, AIP 2013 3.5).

LoP1 described how data has been analysed and the students' level of vocabulary was identified as an area requiring improvement and she believed that the Heads of Departments have made progress from looking at data as a description of performance to using it as a tool to ask questions to improve future performance (School C, LoP1).

Coord 3 explained how the faculty had been using NAPLAN and other standardised tests(Australian Council for Educational Research, 2016) to see how students achieved and how they could change their teaching to improve the learning of students (School C, Coord 3). He recounted that, 'as a department, (we have) been looking at analysing (data) and looking how we can change how we go about teaching to improve the learning of students…. so that we can make a difference' (School C, Coord 3).

Another head of department made the point that, "Never before have we looked so...closely at all of the data… and realised (that) when you look at the data, it tells you so much more, if you look at it in depth" (School C, Coord 4).

5.3.5 School D

5.3.5.1 Assessment

School D's plans did include an aim for more differentiated assessment tasks but participants did not discuss assessment. The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan of School D included the need to trial project based learning in a subject and to build teacher capacity to create differentiated assessment tasks that catered for a diverse range of learners (School D, AIP 2013, 3.7).

5.3.5.2 Literacy, Numeracy and ESL Focus

School D focused on literacy in the first two years of the project and then began to emphasise both literacy and numeracy during the final two years of the project. The documentary evidence and participants' commentary for this area were both detailed and extensive.

The 2011 AIP for School D included the goal of all students meeting the minimum standards in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of the reform program (School D, AIP 2011 2.1). The school planned to rollout LTNS over the four-year period so that teachers received the full program covering five days (School D, AIPs 2012 3.3; 2013 3.7 & 2014 3.7).

The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan documents the intention to set up Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for reading and writing (School D, AIP 2012, 3.3). A Targeted Reading Intervention Program (TRIP) withdrew students who were below the minimum standard for reading and teachers worked on their reading skills (School D, SSNP Project TRIP Report, 2012). The school also worked with the Australian Catholic University in a word generation program for Year 7 students (School D, AIP 2012, 3.3).

Numeracy received greater attention in the last two years of the program and in the 2013 AIP an intention to have a whole-school approach to improvement in numeracy standards was mentioned and a numeracy specialist teacher was appointed (School D, AIP 2013, 2.1). The system driven RAMP program supported mathematics teachers and the leaders of pedagogy worked with the mathematics faculty to explore innovative and creative ways of teaching mathematics (School D, AIP 2013, 2.5).

Teachers and leaders from School D reported extensively about activities and emphases with student literacy. The Curriculum Coordinator described the operation of PLCs focused on writing strategies (School D, CCO). A Coordinator commented how instructional rounds were utilised to observe specific literacy strategies in action (School D, Coord 4).

Leaders of pedagogy were encouraged by the progress made through LTNS which began to show evidence that teachers were independently implementing literacy strategies in their classroom (School D, LoP1). One teacher claimed that it gave her a new sort of energy to implement what she had learnt into the classroom (School D, Teacher 3). Also noteworthy was the implementation of explicit whole school strategies to address writing skills. Parent workshops on these strategies were also held to support the on-going use of these strategies (School D, LoP2). The principal believed that students were writing better as a response to this work (School D, Principal).

A literacy facilitator at the school described the work to institute a whole school reading program, a reading intervention program called 'Literacy Circles' and an ESL peer mentoring program. The school's focus on literacy meant for one teacher that, "literacy is no longer the English department's responsibility, literacy is now the homeroom teacher's responsibility, the Year Coordinator's responsibility…it's more widespread" (School D, Teacher 3).

Teachers of School D were buoyed by early results with intervention programs that showed extensive growth in student literacy skills. A beginning teacher was aware that, "the reading intervention programs showed an 80 to 100 per cent growth in the students who were involved in the first term of this year…it's definitely changed the culture" (School D, Teacher 2). A beginning teacher acknowledged that she "didn't know how to teach reading, I wasn't taught that at university and so it's definitely changed drastically the way I teach" (School D, Teacher 2).

A first year teacher described how she had the opportunity and support of working together with other teachers on reading strategies (School D, Teacher 2). A more experienced member of staff believed that one of the biggest changes was the reading and writing strategies learnt from LTNS which the teacher implemented for class observation by the leader of pedagogy. (School D, Teacher 5)

LoP1 summarised School D's approach, "it was all about literacy, it was all about turning our results around" (School D, LOP1).

5.3.5.3 Pedagogy

School D did not present extensive plans for improving pedagogy but participants spoke in some detail about the progress teachers at School D had made and how they focussed their energy on improving pedagogical strategies for literacy and ESL rather than a wider gamut of pedagogical approaches.

School D's documentation mentioned the exploration of innovative and creative methods in the teaching of Mathematics and a whole school approach to ESL pedagogy (School D, AIP, 2011, 3.1).

A head of department at School D recounted an earlier discussion with fellow teachers at her school about the aspirations of the staff, "…to be the models of good practice and good pedagogy" (School D, Coordinator 3).

School D modified instructional rounds to suit the local needs of the school and tied it to ESL pedagogy and literacy strategies (School D, Teacher 4). Teachers received feedback on how they were implementing those strategies and one teacher recalled that he was allocated to a group of five teachers who visited each others' classrooms to observe the implementation of "reading and writing strategies that they had learnt at '*Literacy: The Next Step*' and that was a really good way to get constructive feedback and then re-implement that into your classroom" (School, Teacher 2).

LoP2 believed that 'Instructional Rounds' were effective in challenging teachers to go beyond their complacency to reflect on their teaching and act on feedback. However LoP1 felt classroom observations were not held frequently enough, "it was good to have colleagues in the classroom, it opens up true collaborative discussions of pedagogy. But it doesn't happen often enough" (School D, LoP 1, Interview).

Teachers confirmed that modelling and implementing other teaching and learning strategies to improve student literacy and academic performance were occurring (School D, Teachers 2 & 4). Coordinators appreciated how the professional development on pedagogy assisted beginning teachers who were new to a lot of the strategies and they need guidance as to how to best implement them in the classroom (School D, Coordinators 3 & 4). The Curriculum Coordinator of School D summarised the overall impact of the reforms on contemporary pedagogy by stating that, "Teacher capacity is much improved. …it's much more innovative and much more modern pedagogy, more suited to the kids that we have" (School D, CCO).

5.3.5.4 Curriculum Programming

School D also adopted backward design but its implementation was affected by issues of resourcing and some participants were critical of the way it was implemented.

School D's AIPs documented their aim to strengthen their programming and assessment through backward design (School D, AIP 2012, 3.2). In 2013 the school aimed to improve teacher capacity in the writing and assessment of differentiated teaching programs (School D, AIP 2013, 3.7).

One Coordinator expressed high aspirations for their school's programs to be "system-leading programs" (School D, Coordinator 3) and the leaders of pedagogy looked beyond the heads of department as program writers, to both build teachers' leadership capacity and to sustain backward design as a programming model (School D, LOP 2, Interview).

Heads of department raised the issue of a lack of their ownership of the program writing process and that the leaders of pedagogy had taken over the leadership of programming for the new syllabuses (School D, Coordinators 2 & 4). System support for the new programs in the form of network meetings of regional schools was also criticised for its lack of effectiveness (School D, Coordinator 2) and the style and timing of inservicing of staff for backward design was seen by coordinators as ineffective. One head of department concluded that for his faculty "lecture-style education had zero impact". (School D, Coordinator 2) Another head of department acknowledged that, "there was too much talking and not enough doing" (School D, Coordinator 4).

One head of department recalled the stressful impact programming had on his faculty and how "some of the teachers are even going to work in the Christmas holidays to get some of these programs done" (School D, Coordinator 5). Another head of department concluded that there were poor change management practices occurring with the implementation of programming and he was critical of the lack of involvement and interest of some heads of department (School D, Coordinator 4).

5.3.5.5 Use of Data

Although there is evidence of plans for data informed practices only one participant referred to them during the interviews and focus groups. He was equivocal about the progress made with teachers using the data regularly but he was positive about the difference it was making to learning.

The 2011 Annual Improvement Plan of School D included data training for all staff (School D, AIP 2011, 7.2) and the leadership team were up-skilled to use the SMART package and in the following year it was unrolled to teachers. The 2012 AIP included plans for staff to use a range of data tools (School D, AIP 2012, 7.2). The 2013 AIP identified the intention to empower heads of departments to skill staff in the best use of data (School D, AIP 2013, 3.7).

LoP2 was the only member of School D who spoke about the use of data to inform learning. He gave an example of how the analysis of RAP data in the faculty of Technical and Applied Studies (TAS) revealed to the Coordinator that there were issues in the responses of students to the written paper and that the faculty had concentrated almost exclusively on the other section of the course which involved a major project. The following year the Coordinator had rescheduled their programming and rooming to ensure that the written paper received better preparation. Overall, LoP2 was positive towards the benefits of teachers using data to inform their teaching but he did place acknowledge limits on the frequency of its use and its overall impact. He posed a question that he answered himself, "Are teachers using it all the time? Are they using it regularly? Probably not… but I think it has also helped us move away from this idea of teaching content (School D, LoP2).

No other participant from School D referred to data informed learning.

5.3.6 Summary

Teachers and leaders in schools emphasised different elements of teacher quality. From the data the following was observed:

(i)   School C particularly emphasised improving student assessment with detailed documentation and extensive commentary from participants

(ii)   All schools had detailed plans and commentary on literacy, numeracy and ESL initiatives. School D emphasised this more than the other three schools and their approach linked these initiatives closely with professional learning and pedagogy.

(iii)   All schools had detailed plans and commentary on contemporary pedagogy. School B discussed this issue more frequently than other schools.

(iv)   Participants in each school discussed programming extensively. School B emphasised its use for developing contemporary pedagogy.

(v)   The use of data to inform learning was mentioned frequently by most schools except for School D

5.4 SRQ4 How was professional learning built in each secondary school?

Another theme that was generated from the literature that underpinned the National Partnerships for Low SES Schools was Professional Learning. Three categories emerged from a total of more than 394 coded segments that were deemed relevant to professional learning. This was approximately 14% of the total number of coded segments in this study. The frequency of segments and the criteria for each of the categories were:

i.   **Professional Collaboration** (178 segments) including sub-categories of collaborative practices like coaching, mentoring and the development of professional learning communities. The category also involves formal learning experiences with others as well as team teaching and peer feedback using teachers standards and the growth of a performance development culture.

ii.   **School and system networks** (67 segments) including such sub-categories as school teams working with other school teams for professional learning as well as the role of the system to lead professional learning within but particularly across the network of schools in the system

iii.   **Leadership Development** (146 segments) including such sub-categories as developing teachers, leaders of pedagogy (LoPs), principals, system leaders, middle managers including heads of department (HoDs), curriculum coordinators and the leadership teams of schools to be leaders of learning. Sub-categories such as new leadership opportunities for staff and various opportunities for staff to build their leadership capacity were included.

Through the reform experience the system and the schools considered ways to develop the capacity of teachers to be leaders. The system requested all leadership teams to be involved in their "Leadership Matters" Program from 2011 until 2013. The Leaders of pedagogy experienced extensive professional development to support them to carry out their role. Principals took the opportunity of the funding to create new positions of responsibility that either brought in expertise to the school or allowed existing staff members more responsibility to lead some of the reform projects that were developed. Each school responded to their context in different ways in developing leadership in their school. The data will be presented school by school.

5.4.1 School A

5.4.1.1 Professional Collaboration

The School's Annual Improvement Plans included a number of strategies to enhance professional inquiry and collaboration including the development of professional learning communities for literacy, numeracy and pedagogy (School A, AIP, 2011), the establishment of Professional Learning Plans for each member of staff (School A, AIP, 2012) and teachers undertaking action research projects as part of the renamed "Teacher Learning Communities" (School A, AIP, 2012).

In 2012 symposiums were held on firstly reflective partnerships and coaching with staff utilising the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standards. The second symposium was based on designing assessment for the school's learning framework which involved building teacher capacity to design learning that embeds explicit literacy transfer skills and ESL pedagogy, utilising 'Understanding by Design (UbD)' (School A, ASRC, 2012).

The Annual Reports to the Community recorded the professional learning for the designing the assessment and learning using Understanding by Design for the new Australian curriculum (School A, ASRC, 2012), continuing the work on student and staff wellbeing (School A, ASRC, 2013) as well as designing learning and assessment (School A, ASRC, 2014).

School A's Ex-LoP 1 recounted how the two leaders of pedagogy had the freedom to design and deliver, "different projects that would build the capacity of the teachers in order to improve the learning of kids (including) coaching and mentoring teachers and young leaders"(School A, Ex-LoP1).

Collaboration was encouraged from the beginning of the reforms by the leaders of pedagogy in the hope that teachers would share best practice and "understand that we're all kind of on a journey when it comes to learning about new ways of teaching and learning" (School A, Ex-LoP1). School A's Ex-LoP 1 believed that the most positive element of professional learning was the coaching and mentoring because it was grounded in classroom strategies that he could model to build teacher capacity by "showing them different ways of doing things or letting them do it and watching them and giving them feedback" (School A, Ex-LoP1).

Teachers also collaborated through team teaching by joining classes together and working with the other teacher in conjunction with your own class. This was particularly common in the one of the faculties. School A's Ex-LoP 2 used that as "a

model for good practice and they were quite happy to have other teachers come and see what was going on." (School A, Ex-LoP2). The coaching model took some time to influence other staff but the leaders of pedagogy wanted to put forward that the goal was not "to tell you what to do but rather to improve performance." (School A, Ex-LoP2). The team teaching gave "teachers and coordinators on the ground in the classroom permission to experiment and to collaborate and to team-teach with each other and to learn from each other" (School A, Ex-LoP2).

That vision of collaboration and reflection continued when LoP1 and LoP2 replaced Ex-LoPs1 & 2 and there was a conscious decision to use the money to release staff for collaborative exercises (School A, LoP1). One of the aims was for staff to work together in KLA faculties for assessment design or planning learning design and to have conversations around good practices (School A, LoP1).

The curriculum coordinator believed progress was being made when professional development often became the sole focus of the heads of department meetings (School A, CCO). However LoP1 described it as a "challenge" to "encourage our heads of departments to be having [their own] professional learning meetings where they are collaborating and reflecting" (School A, LoP1).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) were established during the first years of the reforms but were restructured. At first there were PLCs for pedagogy, literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, religious education and leadership which Ex-LoP 2 believed "covered the whole gamut." All teachers were expected to be part of the PLCs and they were released from their normal classes to be meet as a PLC (School A, Ex-LoP2).

School A's LoP 2 believed that the PLCs were implemented "artificially" by releasing teachers and structuring the groups through focus areas of the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) but "people thought that all they had to do with teacher learning communities was in that meeting and nothing took place outside the meeting time" (School A, LoP2).

With the change in leadership the new leaders of pedagogy reviewed the PLCs and concluded that they were not leading "to any significant change in how people operated because they were mandated… people weren't doing things with them outside of those meeting times because really they didn't have the interest in the area". (School A, LoP2). They changed 'Professional Learning Communities' to 'Teacher Learning Communities' (TLCs) emphasising reflective practice. LoP 2 described the objective of this change was to use coaching to "make a culture where people could start to reflect

and talk about their practice" (School A, LoP2). The new TLCs included opportunities for people to go into other people's classrooms and do observations "if they felt comfortable, if they felt that was necessary for their own professional development" (School A, LoP2). Heads of department and teachers did not give evidence that they did such observations. The whole staff were trained for growth coaching led by the leaders of pedagogy and LoP 2 was pleased that it went well and he believed that it had an impact on some staff (School A, LoP2).

The coaching model utilised the new AITSL Teacher Standards and teachers reviewed their own teacher practice against the framework. LoP 2 explained the process of teachers selecting a coaching buddy, reflecting with their buddy about their practice and selecting two other items from the standards that they would like to develop and improve upon this year. Working with their coaching buddy they developed an action plan. There was a follow up meeting later in the year with their coaching buddy to discuss progress (School A, LoP2).

One tension amongst teachers was the absence of the leaders of pedagogy in their classroom to professionally support teachers. Teacher 2 believed that as the reforms progressed and the original leaders of pedagogy were replaced there was less focus on supporting individuals in their classrooms and more focus on whole staff training. (School A, Teacher 2). Teacher 3 reflected that some leaders of pedagogy were more hands on than others and believed that he best learnt from when leaders of pedagogy, "come into class and help you and (suggest) how you can change your teaching methods or strategies or classroom management skills" (School A, Teacher 3).

Therefore the nature of professional collaboration evolved in School A and the changeover of leaders of pedagogy took School A in new directions.

5.4.1.2 School and system networks

Documents from School A did not refer to school or system networks. Participants from School A noted that were opportunities for sharing ideas with other schools during the reform period. School A's Ex-LoP1 saw that ideas were shared from one Low SES NP school to the next through the writing of case studies and sharing projects at meetings (School A, Ex-LoP1). LoP 1 acknowledged that the system contributed to the building of a network of leaders of pedagogy facilitating visits to others schools.

5.4.1.3 Leadership Development

School A's documentation and participants report a range of practices to support leadership development but there was particular emphasis on the new opportunities for leadership created by the reform initiative. School A's Annual Improvement Plans mention the appointment of stage learning coordinators, a literacy coordinator, an assistant curriculum coordinator, transition to work coordinator, and a NAPLAN facilitator to support the planning and delivery of Low SES NP projects (School A, 2012 AIP, 3.1).

Principal A spoke of a range of measures implemented to build leadership including increasing the number of leadership positions which have built the leadership capacity of those young aspiring teachers who have typically taken up these roles and who will develop and eventually assist other schools with their leadership (School A Principal). The principal of School A saw leadership development as important and he had no misgivings when his two Leaders of Pedagogy were promoted to system leadership positions. He saw it positively as he was "creating leaders for the future" (School A Principal).

The curriculum coordinator of School A perceived that the reform program had allowed teachers to grow immensely because of the opportunities that have been given to a number of young staff to lead various teams through the various reform projects (School A, CCO).

Ex-LoP1 spoke of the support that he had received to lead both the projects and the staff: "we were given lots of training, lots of professional learning and development around that and ways that we might investigate strategies and programs and how we might lead the staff in their learning" (School A Ex-LoP1).

The other initial leader of pedagogy spoke of the leadership development of the heads of departments and the newly appointed assistant coordinators (School A Ex-LOP2) but LoP1 spoke of the challenge in refocusing the heads of departments towards reflection and collaboration rather than simply administration (School A LOP1).

5.4.1.4 Summary

Leaders from School A endeavoured to embed collaborative practices amongst teachers but had mixed success with the abandonment of the professional learning communities. Networking was noted to exist for the leaders of pedagogy and the focus on leadership development was though the appointment of additional leadership positions which provided new opportunities for staff.

5.4.2 School B

5.4.2.1 Professional Collaboration

Leaders from School B utilised programming for the new Australian curriculum as their main medium for collaboration.

School B's Annual Improvement Plans established that learning teams within specific KLAs would take part in action research project to improve teacher capacity (School B, AIP, 2011); beginning teachers were to be coached and mentored (School B, AIP, 2012) and team teaching was identified as one method of providing feedback and formative evaluation of teaching (School B, AIP, 2012). Teachers were also able to choose to focus on an aspect of their pedagogy to improve student achievement as well being provided with literacy and ESL professional development (School B, AIP, 2012). The 2013 and 2014 Annual Improvement Plans set out the implementation of the TILT project (Tailored Innovative Learning Teams) supporting collaboration within and among KLA & PC teams to provide new pastoral and learning programs. It also aimed to utilise existing online learning spaces to promote collaboration and communication (School B, AIP, 2013). Other areas of professional development in 2014 were authentic learning and researching and designing tailored and innovative programmes of teaching and learning for the on-going implementation of the new Australian Curriculum (ASRC School B 2014).

The principal of School B saw the reform funding as an "opportunity to invest in teachers and free them up and at the same time have quality people working alongside them, mainly our LOPs, and then to engage them in teams and working together" (School B, Principal). By the end of the third year he was satisfied that the leadership capacity of the heads of department had been built and he looked in time to the "flow-on effect to the teams in the school, the subject teams in the school" (School B, Principal).

Describing a traditional culture of classrooms with teachers having "the doors closed [and] blinds were down" the curriculum coordinator reported that the leaders of pedagogy worked with the heads of departments to give them more skills as leaders of learning and how to gain the trust of their colleagues and go into classrooms to help their teachers (School B, CCO).

The curriculum coordinator was certain that "teachers are collaborating far, far more than they ever have before (School B, CCO). eLearning was another area for teacher collaboration and School B's Coordinator 1 believed technology had made "a big difference with being able to collaborate… people have been able to share documents and do things in their own time as well" (School B, Coord 1). Coordinator 2

agreed that sharing of resources and ideas had increased and "there's more collaboration between everyone on staff and there's more cohesion" (School B, Coord 2).

The TILT project (Tailored Innovative Learning Teams) gave chances for people to work with staff they had not worked with before "and finding out how they manage things was a big eye opener" (School B, Coord 2). LoP 2 structured TILT on similar lines to PLCs and Teacher 1 thought to "work in the TILT team and to collaborate with other teachers was a fantastic opportunity to be able to share your ideas and talk to other expert" (School B, Teacher 1). As a beginning teacher, Teacher 4 found TILT to be "a good opportunity to learn from other teachers" (School B, Teacher 4).

Before the school could engage in reflective practices teachers had to come to a shared understanding of what was good teaching practice. For LoP2 this became, "a conundrum… because around effective teaching and effective learning we didn't speak a common language. .... So we spent a lot of time having that early conversation with people so that we were able to have more effective conversations about learning in the classroom" and the leaders of pedagogy used the AITSL standards to inform the conversations (School B, LoP2).

In summary, participants from School B believed that they had made some progress in developing capacity for leadership for learning and many reported improved collaboration amongst teachers and particularly with projects like TILT.

5.4.2.2 School and system networks

Leaders from School B acknowledged the support they received from the networks established by system leaders. Heads of department from School B noted the support received to implement the new Australian Curriculum from presenters and colleagues at network meetings. Network meetings were increased in frequency and expanded to allow Coordinators to bring an assistant with them (School B, Coord 1 & Coord 2).

5.4.2.3 Leadership Development

School B's documentation included some leadership development initiatives but some participants spoke of the emphasis and challenge of developing the leadership of learning of the heads of departments.

The curriculum coordinator of School B described as a major challenge of leadership development was for the leaders of pedagogy to transform the heads of

departments into leaders of learning. He spoke of the leadership development of heads of departments who were being challenged to go beyond their management of the curriculum and use data informed learning, team teaching and conflict resolution to lead their faculty teams (School B, CCO). He recounted that,

> We had the leaders of pedagogy worked with the heads of departments… giving them more skills in how to consider their teachers - themselves as teachers of leading and learning and how to go into classrooms and help their teachers. Because traditionally the model was teachers were in the classroom, doors were closed, blinds were down….next year the heads of departments will spend one lesson a fortnight with each of their teachers and be in the classroom with them and team teach with them (School B, CCO).

LoP2 acknowledged the time spent building the capacity of heads of department discussing learning, teamwork and coaching them to have difficult conversations with staff but admitting that,

> Some have responded better than others. Some…feel burdened by the administrative aspects of it and have been empowered by the Low SES NP agenda…there are others who have come into the role not necessarily for that reason…I think they've been challenged by the reform agenda (School B, LoP2).

LoP 2 shared with the CCO the view that the challenge of the reforms has been to have the heads of departments reimagine their roles from being managers of curriculum to leaders of learning. LoP2 believed that, "we've tried to empower them …some responded so positively like they were waiting for that opportunity, but for others it was more difficult" (School B, LOP2).

One leader of pedagogy had been promoted from being a head of department within her own school to the leader of pedagogy and she described the growth in herself and the heads of department,

> "I know people who have been here for 30 years and I've seen them shift and that's been really a joy to see…I think I've shifted as well because I was a head of department and I think I had a fairly blinkered approach because I'd been here for so long. I think it's expanded my horizons and views on education and pedagogy so it's been really beneficial (School B, LoP1).

The impact of the reforms on a young teacher's leadership development was recognised, "it's allowing us to learn how to lead others or how to implement all these great ideas" (School B Teacher 2). The principal of School B perceived that leaders of pedagogy had an important role as developers of future leaders (School B Principal).

5.4.3 School C

5.4.3.1 Professional Collaboration

There was extensive documentary and participant evidence collected regarding collaborative practices at School C.

School C's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan included a strategy to invite interested community members to participate in "Think Tank" to explore alternative models of professional development including team teaching, KLA team workshops, online Learning Communities as well as the sharing of external PD experiences among staff (School C, AIP, 2011).

The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan included the establishment of professional learning communities and of project teams to take forward strategic areas including future professional development, and the implementation of structures to enhance collaboration between faculty and pastoral teams (School C, AIP, 2012).

The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan called for professional learning that would engage middle management and the executive team in reflection of planning activities using the AITSL Standards. It also set out the need for collaborative approaches to such practices as Instructional Rounds and the College Executive also planned to partake in the "Developing a Coaching Culture" professional development program (School C, AIP, 2013; ASRC, 2013).

There was extensive commentary from participants from School C about collaborative planning. The principal noted how effective the leaders of pedagogy have been in working collaboratively with staff members who had been previously held back by the school's poor learning culture (School C, Principal). Teacher 3 appreciated the one-on-one work with the leaders of pedagogy and their collaborative planning with all the faculty members. Teacher 1 appreciated the leaders of pedagogy's ability to model good collaborative practice. Teacher 3 thought it important that now teachers were "able to aim for a common goal. Whereas before everyone had their own agendas" (School C, Teacher 3).

Coord 5 appreciated the collaborative planning with the leaders of pedagogy whilst Coords 3 and 4 agreed that the reforms had brought about a more collaborative and holistic approach to their work. LoP 2 believed that much had been achieved in changing towards a more collaborative culture. She described staff, "working together and with that collective wisdom they're just getting much richer lessons, and with that spirit of collaboration also comes openness of our classrooms" (School C, LoP2). She

believed the staff to be far more unified, with the notion that "we're all in this together" (School C, LoP2).

LoP1 saw the real focus of collaborative practice on the building of the collective discourse and she appreciated the role of the reforms in bringing about greater dialogue towards shared understandings about different educational matters. (School C, LoP1). For Teacher 1 this meant that now teachers were no longer "endlessly debating amongst themselves, but working together and identifying what the issues are for students in their classrooms" (School C, Teacher 1) and for the principal that meant heads of department reporting back and sharing ideas about their action research projects and "collaborative(ly) planning with the LoPs so that everybody gets excited about learning" (School C, Principal). System Leader 6 recognised the leaders of pedagogy of School C for their work with action research in terms of "getting people into classrooms to see what other people do. As a result, they can see exemplary practice and that, I think, led to reflection on their own practice" (System Leader 6).

Mentoring and coaching were two forms of collaborative practices that were implemented at School C. LoP1 stated that there was a lot of coaching and mentoring practice including training days for the middle management to build their capacity as leaders of learning. (School C, LoP1). LoP2 described her approach as working with staff and not coming in "using an ambulance model of come in and I will fix it" but rather it is about the leader of pedagogy asking "questions and hoping that it will make them think, then come up with the strategies [themselves]" (School C, LoP2).

Teacher 1 was aware of the leadership teams coaching approach and "everyone's listening to each other" (School C, Teacher 1). Teacher 3 described how she had been closely mentored by the leaders of pedagogy when embedding practices such as 'Understanding by Design'.

The leaders of School C used the AITSL teaching standards to structure some of the professional learning. They were used with heads of department to reflect on their learning and on their performance as leaders. Coord 1 stated that the reforms have allowed her " as a leader to be quite reflective and have the time to be able to look at my leadership strengths and weaknesses and develop those"(School C, Coord 1). LoP1 was certain that " it's made [Heads of Department] much more cognisant of their leadership and much more reflective about where they'd like to be next in their journey (School C, LoP1). Principal C concluded that the years of reform have been "about developing people through collaborative planning, helping them understand what is good learning and then developing your middle managers"(School C, Principal).

In summary, participants from School C reported improvements in their professional culture through collaborative practices including coaching and mentoring as well as using the AITSL teaching standards to guide reflective practices.

5.4.3.2 School and system networks

Leaders from School C also acknowledged the support they received from the networks established by system leaders. Documents from School C provided two examples of school networking. A SSNP Report recounted that teachers visited three other schools in different school systems to investigate various collaborative learning environments before deciding upon a Connected Learning circle model to develop self regulation for students (School C, SSNP Report, Empowering Learners, 2013). A local team with representatives of all Catholic primary and secondary schools to met to facilitate effective transition into secondary school (School C, AIP, 2014).

LoP2 acknowledged that the system provided a professional network of leaders of pedagogy where "we can share our ideas, we can ask each other questions, challenging questions, and walk away with perhaps things we can implement in our school" (School C, LoP2) whilst Coord 3 affirmed the effectiveness of the system's regional mathematics network as well as the network of leaders of pedagogy (School C, Coord 3).

5.4.3.3 Leadership Development

School C's documentation referred to projects designed to build the leadership capacity of middle managers and the leadership team. Participants spoke of the opportunities the reforms provided to develop their own leadership of learning and the leadership of others. The School's 2011 AIP referred to the leadership team's involvement in the Leadership Matters Program facilitated by system leaders (School C, AIP, 7.1). It also set the goal of the leadership team participating in training for the SMART data package (School C, AIP, 7.2).

In 2012 a project to build the capacity of the leadership team was developed and this followed in 2013 by a project targeting middle leaders such as heads of department and pastoral coordinators for development. Leadership team members were linked with middle managers using a coaching model. Coordinators worked with their teams to understand the new Professional Standards for Teachers created by AITSL. These standards informed the action research project which each coordinator undertook. The leaders of pedagogy were responsible for the oversight of this project which heads of

department were charged with framing their action research to involve their faculty team members using the principles of a professional learning community (School C– Middle Leadership Project).

The principal of School C had observed the close work of the leaders of pedagogy developing the leadership of learning of both the heads of department and teachers and getting them onside with the learning agenda set by the leadership team. She observed the transformation with the, "amazing growth with the heads of departments, to the point where now you can go into a heads of department meeting and they're arguing and tossing ideas around and talking learning all the time" (School C, Principal).

Principal C emphasised the importance of the middle leadership team of heads of department and pastoral coordinators and the need for their leadership to be restructured and developed. She spoke of the opportunity offered by the new teaching standards created by AITSL to allow middle managers to reflect on their role and work closely with the standards. She also personally reflected that the reform initiative had led to her own growth as a leader of learning.

Heads of department largely agreed that the reform process had provided opportunities for their leadership development (School C, Coords 2, 3,4,5). Coord 4 affirmed the principal for being aware of "each of our individual strengths and weaknesses and has targeted to develop our strengths… and then you take that and move it on to down the line. It's snowballs down the line (School C, Coord 4).

Coordinators expressed their appreciation for the nature of the professional development and Coord 5 concluded that,

> middle managers have been one of the winners out of this process. We've all been challenged in our leadership style and we've also been given the opportunity to reflect upon that and grow. Also being able to oversee these changes and manages process has been a great learning experience…It's the actual process of implementing it has been a very valuable learning process. In terms of leadership for middle managers, it's been a real positive (School C, Coord 5).

LoP2 and the principal both reflected on their own development and believed that the reform process had strengthened their own leadership for learning. LoP2 stated, "when I think about my capacity and what I could do three years ago, and what I can do now, it's really amazing" (School C, LoP2) whilst Principal C stated that, "to build my

capacity as a leader of learning the Low SES NP agenda couldn't have been better" (School C, Principal).

When teachers of School C were asked about how these reforms have assisted their leadership of learning they gave accounts of how the reforms had "helped me to understand my role as a teacher" and "how to improve and develop my own pedagogy in the classroom" (School C Teacher 3). Teacher 4 spoke of the opportunities that the reforms provided to lead and build leadership capacity to bring the best out of students.

In summary, participants of School C were very positive and appreciative of the leadership development they received through the reforms.

5.4.4 School D

5.4.4.1 Professional Collaboration

Leaders from School D reported attempts to build collaborative processes but some were disappointed with the outcomes.

School D's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan included the objectives that teacher capacity would be expanded through collaborative structures (School D, AIP, 2011) and the 2012 Annual School Report to the Community stated that there was a continuation of discussion about ICT, pedagogy, staff professional development and sharing of best practice (School D, ASRC, 2012).

The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan included the expansion of the professional learning communities focused on improving student writing and reading as well as a collaborative approach between teachers to differentiate other teaching programs and assessment tasks (School D, AIP, 2013).

The professional learning communities centred on reading and writing were seen by the CCO and LoP2 as being somewhat effective but once the classroom visits and training were completed the teachers did not continue to meet and share their ideas. LoP2 concluded, "what we would have hoped become a fully blossoming PLC hasn't really happened" (School D, LoP2).

Participants did believe the reforms had improved collaboration. In acknowledging the progress made to create a more collaborative culture Teacher 1 called for further development to evolve "the culture in a positive manner" (School D, Teacher 1). Teacher 3 believed they had "opened up opportunities for people across different faculties to communicate about students and to work together more to create strategies that are actually going to help the students … it's encouraged collaboration

between teachers" (School D, Teacher 3). Coord 5 acknowledged the level of sharing and collaboration afforded him by Coord 4 and the leaders of pedagogy. However LoP2 was not as positive noting that because teachers are busy "they don't want to be taken out of class, they don't want to meet, they're happy to go in and do their own thing" (School D, LoP2).

In summary leaders from School D were concerned about the sustainability of some of their efforts to build collaborative practice in the school.

5.4.4.2 School and system networks

Leaders from School D disagreed about the usefulness of the networks established by system leaders. Coord 4 was critical of the different messages being received from different network meetings regarding the Australian Curriculum and Coord 2 was dismissive of the extra network meetings scheduled to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Coord 4 was critical that his KLA network was not led by a specialist and the agenda is generalised too much. However, Coord 3 was very affirming of her KLA Network as being a great personal support.

Leaders of pedagogy were appreciative of their network and training they received. LoP1 believed that their training guided them to be "better practitioners" in their roles (School D, LoP1). LoP2 agreed that they received "good support, especially [with the] parenting workshops (as two system leaders)…came out and supported us in the early days (with)…a couple of the other leaders of pedagogy" (School D, LoP2).

The leaders of pedagogy established a network with teacher educators from their feeder primary schools discussing reading and writing strategies and sharing analyses of NAPLAN data (School D, LoP1).

5.4.4.3 Leadership Development

School D's documentation referred to external initiatives to support leadership development rather than school developed strategies. Participants spoke of the lack of leadership for learning development existing in the group of heads of departments.

School D's AIPs include the intention for the Leadership Team to be enrolled in the system's "Leadership Matters" Course (School D, 2011 AIP, 7.1). The 2013 AIP refers to building leadership capacity by: supporting staff to achieve the requirements of the system's accreditation policy which calls for future senior leaders to have post graduate qualification in religious education or theology; encouraging staff to enrol in

leadership programs offered by the system and encouraging staff to undertake formation and aspire to positions of leadership as opportunities arise (School D, AIP 2013, 4.4).

The curriculum coordinator of School D believed that leadership development has been focussed more at the leadership team level than the middle managers. Professional learning support has been focussed at less experienced teachers and believed that heads of department's leadership for learning had not been enhanced by the reform initiatives (School D, CCO).

LoP1 went further and was critical of the role and lack of leadership of learning existing in the heads of department group,

> Getting back to this whole idea of leaders of learning. Some of our heads of departments don't see themselves as that, the whole job description of a heads of department is to run your department, make sure that your teachers have their reports done, have their assessment tasks done, but they have never had that particular role of developing them as teachers…. a lot of the heads of departments, 90 per cent of their time it's about management rather than development of their staff...How often do our heads of departments invite their staff into their classroom to have a look and see - this is how I think it works, to be models within the classroom. I think that's a pretty rare thing (School D, LoP1)

A beginning teacher in her first year spoke about the way she has learnt about literacy and numeracy as a way her leadership of learning has developed (School D, Teacher 2) but there was no comment from the principal or coordinators from School D about leadership development.

5.4.5 System Leaders

One system leader described the formation of the leaders of pedagogy as an important agent for leadership for learning development describing it as "critical" and noting that it included the principles of adult learning coaching (System Leader 6).

System leaders supported the need for their "Leadership Matters" course which required the leadership team of each school undertaking the Low SES NP reforms to attend regular full day meetings each term about leadership for learning. System Leader 1 believed that the course allowed understanding of the reform agenda to be shared across the Leadership Team rather than be totally in the domain of the leader of pedagogy.

System Leader 3 perceived that the leaders of pedagogy' role in schools such as School C to build accountability and leadership for learning within the group of heads of departments was very important and System Leader 2 noted the work of the leaders of pedagogy at School B whom she believed had been working well with the heads of department to develop their capacity, to lead learning within their faculties (System Leader 2).

System Leader 1 noted the progress made where leaders of pedagogy now had the expertise to " be able to courageously challenge teachers to go to another point or to get teachers to sit down at one table and talk about pedagogy" and that she saw the next step was to give heads of departments the same skills (System Leader 1). System leaders did not universally share this view that leaders of pedagogy were training heads of department to lead. One thought that in some cases, "the LoPs have avoided the heads of departments and gone to the teachers and other people" and that this inaction would mean that "unless you're going to challenge your heads of departments nothing's going to happen" (System Leader 2).

In summary, system leaders acknowledged that there leadership development was evident but it was more successful in some schools than others.

5.4.6 Summary

Professional learning had different emphases at different schools with leaders from School A concentrating on recruitment and promotions for leadership development whilst leaders from Schools B and C emphasising the leadership development of their heads of department. Leaders from School D identified the need for leadership development of heads of department but there is little evidence they addressed this need.

The schools' ability to engage with parents and the wider community also varied from school to school. The data from the schools' engagement with parents and community is the next research theme to be presented.

5.5 RSQ5 How was 'parent and community engagement' built in each secondary school?

A theme that was generated from the literature that underpinned the National Partnerships for Smarter Low SES Schools was the research theme of parent and community engagement. Three categories emerged from a total of only 154 coded segments that were relevant to parent and community engagement. This was little more than 5% of the total number of coded segments in this study. The frequency of segments and the criteria for each of the categories were:

i. **Developing a partnership between home and school** (44 segments) – including sub-categories of consultative decision making with parents and educators recognising the role of family in education.

ii. **Parental engagement with learning** (56 segments) - including such sub-categories as eLearning support, literacy and numeracy workshops and parent briefings on homework, reporting and the Higher School Certificate.

iii. **School liaison with parents** (37 segments) - including sub-categories of personalising support, community liaison officers, community building, collaborating beyond the school community and communicating with parents.

Participants spoke less about parent and community engagement that the other themes and so the data will not be presented by category but rather by school.

The system requested all schools to conduct the "Parent and Community Engagement Survey" in 2011. System leaders administered a survey which was designed to reflect the dimensions of the Family School Partnership Framework (DEEWR (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations), 2008) with an additional 'dimension' around connecting home, school and parish.

The survey instrument appears in Appendix J with a summary of the results. It was an online survey with materials provided for a pen/paper option. The survey and materials were translated into main community languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Korean and Chinese. It was administered by school leaders during 2011 with an opportunity for schools to administer a post-test late in 2014. None of the four schools participated in the post-test.

In summary there was consistent perceptions by parents across the four schools with strong agreement to the statements that:

(i)   families feel welcomed and valued and

(ii)   that parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

Parents were also consistent in least agreeing to the statements that:

     (i)   parents can come together and engage in programs that will help develop their skills in supporting their child's learning

     (ii)   parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan

     (iii)   parents' skills are used and/or developed to support school programs and learning at home

It was envisaged by system leaders that school leaders would use these data to plan how to strengthen their school's ability to work with their parent community with the opportunity to re survey parents at a later stage of the reform process in order to gauge progress. However no parent was re surveyed from any of the four schools because no school leader requested it to be repeated at their school. The documentary and interview and focus group data will now be presented for each school.

5.5.1 School A

School A's documentation and participants reported the desire for parents to have a stronger voice in school life as a way to develop a stronger partnership between home and school. School A's data set out intentions but beyond gathering survey data there was no evidence to suggest that these intentions were acted upon.

The 2012, 2013 and 2014 Annual School Reports to the Community documented each year using the same words that School A,

> prides itself on the effective lines of communication between parents and the College. Parents are invited to nominate for committees and are represented on the Finance Committee and local Council of Schools. An Advisory Council is currently under investigation. The College has a clear policy on parental feedback. The distinct lack of expressed dissatisfaction in any form of communication indicates clearly parent confidence in the College and its administration. (School A, 2012, p19; 2013, Section 10 and 2014 ASRC, Section 10).

The 2013 ASRC and 2014 ASRC both included the comment that community engagement is a key initiative and parent feedback is sought at seminars held in areas as varied as parent partners in literacy and numeracy and policy reviews (for example, student rights and responsibilities).

   School A's LoP 1 acknowledged that the professional development the leadership team received about parent and community engagement had changed their,

"understanding of the power of that partnership (with parents). The challenge is how to build that partnership, and certainly in a secondary setting where traditionally parents are quite happy" (School A, LoP1). Furthermore School A's LoP1 described the need to restructure events away from being information sharing, "it's the teacher saying this is what the report is and this is the evidence " to more consultative forums on how parents "can be in partnership in the educational journey" (School A, LoP1) but there was no evidence that this restructure occurred during the reform period.

School A offered a number of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. Two leaders of pedagogy raised concerns about parental attendance and the sustainability of some of the reforms. School A's ex-LoP1 described how parent groups and classes were established to teach both adult literacy and how their children were learning literacy (School A, ex-LoP1). School A's LoP2 described the "Parents as Partners in Literacy Program" which showed parents how they could assist their children with their literacy but he was disappointed that the course "attracted low numbers of parents" (School A, LoP2). School A's LoP1 recounted the work in 2013 with the Vietnamese parent community, explaining changes to the school's reporting procedures and how the common grade scale is used to assess achievement (School A, LoP1).

School A's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan documented the "Schools as Community Centres" which aimed to link the school and family with government and non-government services, and connect parents with a range of community programs for young children. The plan also set out to develop links with universities to assist in the development of new pedagogy (School A, 2011 AIP) but no participant referred to this project.

In summary, leaders from School A were able to engage small groups of parents in their child's learning they had limited success in developing consultative decision making with parents.

5.5.2 School B

School B's documentation set out the school's approach to gathering data on parent needs and there was no evidence to suggest a stronger partnership between home and school was considered necessary by school leaders.

School B's 2012 Annual Improvement Plan noted that School B's parent consultative group operated regularly and that parents would be engaged in the development of the 2013-2017 Strategic Improvement Plan (School B, 2012 AIP, 6.1)

The 2014 Annual Improvement Plan set out to organise parent forums on planned changes to reporting system (School B, 2014 AIP, 6.1) and the 2014 Annual School Report to the Community stated that parental feedback included a high level of parent satisfaction for a range of school initiatives (School B, 2014 ASRC, Section 10).

School B offered a number of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning and they particularly emphasised literacy, numeracy and attendance. The 2012 Annual Improvement Plan included the project 'Building Bridges' to support parents developing their child's literacy and numeracy as well parental engagement with the drive to improve attendance and punctuality. LoP 2 stated that the purpose of the parent workshops was "to try to support them to help their children with their homework" (School B, LoP2).

The 2014 Annual Improvement Plan included the strategy that parents will be provided the newsletter electronically and in a range of languages to families via email and the parent portal (School B, AIP 2014). The Annual School Report to the Community that year set as one of the School's achievements that "Parent engagement through information and training sessions, consultations, discussion groups and forums" had occurred. (School B, ASRC, 2014). Teacher 3 from School B recounted that Sudanese students were being assisted with a mentor to help them "socially, what's happening in their home life, what's happening in school. Basically, helping them to adapt to this kind of culture and the Australian way" (School B, Teacher 3). This initiative did not appear to involve parents.

In summary, leaders from School B do not refer in much detail to initiatives to strengthen engagement with parents and the community and report that parents were highly satisfied with the initiatives of the school. Documentary evidence details some initiatives to support parents in their engagement with their child's learning.

5.5.3 School C

School C's documentation of Annual Improvement Plans, Annual School Reports to the Community and a SSNP report on Arabic Liaison and Community Support establish that the school was increasingly active in consulting with the parent community. The principal reported that the school began at a low point of development in this area but School C's data present that there was a detailed school response to improve the partnership between home and school but there was little evidence of improved levels of parent involvement in decision making.

School C's 2011 Annual Improvement Plan set out to enhance consultation and communication with parents by consulting parents on their needs. The school also planned to investigate ways to bring parent voice to decision making (School C, 2011 AIP, 6.1) and the 2011 Annual School Report to the Community mentioned that 'Listening Assemblies' featured during 2011 where parents, teachers, students and support staff were given the opportunity to identify successes and achievements and to suggest ideas to inform our strategic direction (School C, 2011 ASRC, p. 16).

The 2013 Annual Improvement Plan documented the need to review parent/teacher student learning conferences (School C, 2013 AIP, 6.1) which was then introduced by leaders of pedagogy and the 2014 Annual Improvement Plan set out to "refine the progress of Parent Advisory Group structure" (School C, 2014 AIP, 6.1).

The 2013 Annual School Report to the Community stated that feedback was received from parents via surveys, family learning workshops, parent network evenings and anecdotal evidence and included parent agreement to the assertion that School C is proactive in a number of areas including addressing the needs of students and families who are new to the country. The report noted that, "parent engagement and the chance to participate in social and health initiatives as well as English and citizenship classes has been profound" (School C, 2013 ASRC, Section 10).

School C's SSNP report on Arabic Liaison and Community Support described that families have been attending morning tea support groups called "The Bridge" which were designed to assist them to understand the education system and to provide life skills for living in Australia as well as a forum for questions about their child's schooling (School C, 2011 SSNP Report Arabic Liaison and Community Support).

The principal of School C saw the need to employ an Arabic community liaison officer, "because we had an isolated parent group who were too scared to come in the school grounds and we had a staff that didn't see that the parents had any role in the school" (School C, Principal).

School C offered a range of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning through its multiple parent networks. School C's Annual Improvement Plan for 2012 included the expansion of parent networks such as "The Bridge" and a "Connected Learning Circle" for Parents (School C, AIP 2012, 6.1). Assyrian and Vietnamese 'The Bridge' meetings were offered respectively each fortnight.

School C's 2011 Annual School Report to the Community noted the holding of curriculum information nights to inform parents of future directions and parent workshops on topics such as understanding assessments, transition to high school,

homework help, technology as an educational tool and cyber-bullying were offered (School C, ASRC 2011). The annual report stated that, "Family learning was promoted as an acknowledgement of the central role of the family in a child's learning and served to engage families in dialogue with us about learning" (School C, ASRC 2011, p.16).

In 2013 the school began a "Connected Learning Circle" for parents offering monthly meetings on a variety of parent requested topics including learning to navigate the College website, computer use, helping students be organised, challenges of secondary school education, money matters and parenting with teenagers (School C, 2013 SSNP Report Empowering Learners).

The 2013 SSNP Report about the 'On Target Project' described how it was an action research project focussed on academic success. In response to negative feedback from parent and teacher surveys, research undertaken by LoP2 who saw the need to further develop a triad of communication between parents, students and teachers to improve parent teacher evenings and make them a learning opportunity for all. The project trialled students "showcasing their learning rather than parent teacher interviews being merely a place to repeat the marks achieved... Parents and students want to know what needs to done to improve the students results" (School C, 2013 SSNP Report Empowering Learners).

The principal of School C described that the first challenge was to make refugee parents feel welcome and get them "through the gate, helping them because they struggle so much…[and]..who were too scared to come in the school grounds" (School C, Principal). LoP2 supported this perspective when she described the need to be how to get parents through the security of the school gate and make them feel welcomed, and then "how to begin a culture of family learning where we learn from them and they learn from us" (School C, LoP2).

LoP1 explained that parental engagement had many different layers including support their child with homework and helping them to settle in Year 7, (School C, LoP1). Teacher 2 explained that parents expressed the need to learn how to use the computer so they would have a better understanding … of what their children were doing on the (school) laptop" (School C, Teacher 2). Coord 4 saw the value in parents being more involved in their child's education as it would help them to be more "realistic and make sure that they know, they understand what's expected" about secondary education (School C, Coord 4).

Leaders from School C also attempted to strengthen the liaison between school and home. Parents were taken on a tour of the local TAFE and the Australian Catholic

University campus (School C, 2013 SSNP Report Empowering Learners). The student led "Polyfest" initiative for families of Pacific Island background also commenced in 2013. This initiative welcomed the Pacific Island community into the school enabling the community to connect and to develop an intercultural understanding (School C, 2013 SSNP Report Empowering Learners).

LoP2 described how support to parents was not always directly linked to student learning but rather parent well-being like accessing social security, advice on renting and tenancy rights. She saw these as important because it gave balance "between the academic and the well-being focus for parents" (School C, LoP2). System Leader 3 reflected that at School C, "parent engagement did not sit as an adjunct to what was happening, that throughout the program and by the end, I think even the frontline office staff understood why a parent was coming into the school " (System Leader 3).

In summary, leaders from School C strengthened their engagement with parents through initiatives that offered greater engagement for parents to be involved in their child's learning and parents were supported with language and social supports. There were also attempts made by school leaders to improve the level of consultative decision-making between parents and educators.

5.5.4 School D

Leaders from School D developed a range of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. They also created collaborative links with feeder schools to support student learning.

School D's Annual School Reports to the Community from 2011-2014 repeated a statement each year about consultation with parents that "regular verbal communications were received from parents commending the work of various staff in relation to specific events, subjects taught and on the resolution of specific incidents." A parent consultative committee gave feedback as did parents at information evenings, interviews and celebrations (School D, ASRC, 2011-2014). The 2014 Annual School Report to the Community Parent highlighted the overall satisfaction levels of parents in an external school review in relation to the quality education provided for their children by the school (School D, ASRC, 2014, Section 10).

Parent gatherings to discuss initiatives around student wellbeing and strategies to assist student learning were featured in School D's 2012 Annual Improvement Plan. Parenting forums on reading, writing, numeracy and study skills were also planned as was a Careers Evening for parents and students. Participants from School D spoke about

the literacy program and parent workshops. Teacher 2 recounted how he would attend workshops and sit down with the parents, helping them out with explaining the techniques that the leader of pedagogy presented to the large group (School D, Teacher 2). Teacher 3 saw the importance of this as "making parents more aware of their child's need to read at home and the importance of that" (School D, Teacher 3). LoP2 described how they ran literacy workshops on two literacy strategies that then required follow ups with students because parents came home and asked their children about the strategies only to find that some teachers were not using the techniques (School D, LoP2).

A learning summit for parent, students and wider community of Pacific Islander students was also part of the annual plan (School D, AIP, 2012, 6.1). System Leader 4 retold of her experience when School D brought elders from the Islander community to the school as some of the Pacific islander students were not engaging well in the classroom. One parent explained to System Leader 4 why students would culturally not answer questions in class, was because "any question to a young Islander is rhetorical. You never answer a question that an elder asks you" (System Leader 4).

System Leader 4 had the impression that parent engagement was in its early stages at School D but she believed community events like the one she witnessed were making a difference (System Leader 4). She supported that view with her observations of the literacy seminars conducted for parents who were very positive about the experience (System Leader 4).

Leaders from School D developed collaborative links with feeder schools to support student learning and increase cooperation and data sharing between Teacher Educators and Leaders of Pedagogy in the 2012 Annual Improvement Plan (School D, AIP, 2012).

An African Parent and Student Liaison Officer was employed to join the Arabic Liaison Officer presently employed (School D, AIP, 2011). Teacher 1 from School D conducted parent seminars on cyber bullying and wellbeing working with the parent liaison officers. Teacher 1 was concerned with the number of students and members of the family suffering depression, alcohol abuse and drug abuse (School D Teacher 1).

5.5.5 Summary

School leaders emphasised different elements of engaging with parents and the community. Schools C's documentation particularly emphasised the development of a partnership between home and school whereas there was little commentary from any school for this category. All of the schools focussed on parental engagement with

learning with extensive documentation. School C particularly mentioned school liaison with parents. Of the four schools leaders from School C appeared to have a greater focus on parent engagement.

The only mentions of school engagement with the community were for collaboration with primary feeder schools (School D) and liaison with the Australian Catholic University (Schools B and C).

5.6 RSQ 6 To what extent do participants identify improved capacity for leadership and learning in the school as a result of the initiative?

Most participants identified improved capacity for leading learning as a result of the initiatives. There were 100 comments coded from 31 participants (out of a possible 35) that responded positively when asked this question. Only 14 participants (out of a possible 35) responded negatively to this question and they made 24 comments. The perceived extent and nature of progress differed from school to school and therefore data will be presented separately for each school to identify these differences.

5.6.1 School A

Participants from School A particularly commented that the reforms built the capacity of teachers allowing them to try new things and use data more effectively to inform their teaching.

The CCO of School A noted that the promotional positions provided by the reforms allowed some teachers to grow immensely so that now they are leading meetings and teams driving literacy, numeracy or ESL. Importantly it gave teachers the opportunity to reflect on their practice. Coord 3 noted the advancement in teachers using data and literacy activities whilst Coord 1 believed that it had made teachers more conscious of being explicit about learning goals. The curriculum coordinator felt that more could have been done to build the capacity of teachers to use the data to inform learning but Teacher 3 thought the reforms had resulted in teachers using more informed teaching strategies.

Three participants from School A referred to the reforms resulting in teachers working together and trialling new methods. School A's ex-LoP1 observed, "capacity being built with that collaborative team approach with the staff and I saw evidence of people trying different things and people focusing on the importance of teaching and learning" (School A, Ex-LoP1). Teacher 3 stated that the reforms "opened my eyes up to what's current research" (School A, Teacher 3). Teacher 1 also acknowledged these different approaches to tailor teaching so that all students are able to achieve as the reforms "helped me to lead learning… understand(ing) more of what is required to teach, and …different type of students there are and the different ways that students learn" (School A, Teacher 1). Ex-LoP2 thought that the reforms "gave teachers and coordinators on the ground in the classroom permission to experiment and permission to

collaborate and to team-teach with each other and to learn from each other" (School A, Ex-LoP2). Ex-LoP 2 concluded that the reforms did "build a capacity for teachers to have increased student outcomes and they did contribute to a stronger learning culture" (School A, Ex-LoP2).

Two leaders of pedagogy acknowledged that the reforms led to greater teacher understanding of the importance of parent engagement (School A, LoP1 & Ex-LoP1).

There was less agreement about reforms resulting in improved capacity of the heads of departments. School A's curriculum coordinator believed that it had led to improvement but this view was not shared by two leaders of pedagogy (CCO, School A, LoP1, Ex-LoP1).

There was also disagreement about the impact of the leaders of pedagogy working closely to give feedback to teachers. School A Ex-LoP1 believed that "close coaching and mentoring with teachers is what built their capacity the most" (School A Ex-LoP1) but Teachers 2 and 3 were both disappointed that leaders of pedagogy were not visiting classrooms much for observations (School A, Teachers 2 and 3).

Coordinators 2 and 4 believed that the expansive array of the reforms meant that the implementation lacked focus and limited capacity building (School A, Coord 2 &4) and Ex-LoP 2 and LoP2 both believed that some of the innovations were not sustainable beyond the reform period (School A, Ex-LoP2, LoP2).

5.6.2 School B

Participants from School B particularly commented that the reforms built the capacity of teachers allowing them to use data more effectively to inform their teaching. They also noted how the reforms created a more collaborative and professional culture at School B. They also highlighted how the reforms had strengthened the learning culture of the school through improved student engagement and attendance.

Four participants noted the improved capacity of teachers and coordinators to use data to inform teaching. LoP 1 believed that the work to focus teachers' analysis of data on reading and writing and getting them to complete action research on their students' literacy needs was highly effective. She concluded that it led to improved literacy scores and greater teacher confidence in using data (School B, LoP1). LoP 2 and the curriculum coordinator both stated improved capacity for teachers to use data.

Five participants from School B identified that the capacity of teachers was built through collaboration, mentoring and leadership opportunities. Teacher 4 found

"opportunity to actually learn from other teachers and get other teachers to ask you questions from what you learnt" (School B Teacher 4) whilst Teacher 3 saw the advantage in "up-skill(in) each other so rather than looking to somebody as the beacon of all knowledge" (School B, Teacher 3). Teacher 2 believed that, "it's also allowing us to become future leaders or allowing us to learn how to lead others or how to implement all these great ideas" (School B, Teacher 2). LoP1 believed that the reforms have "allowed people to reflect about their practice and that can only be valuable to give them the opportunity to do that…I think it's expanded horizons and views on education and pedagogy so it's been really beneficial" (School B, LoP1). School Teacher B reflected that

> we've had the opportunity to work with experienced staff members, which has been a really big benefit…I felt getting ideas and even I guess some constructive criticism from some more experienced teachers towards my teaching approach, towards my ideas has been quite effective"(School B, Teacher 2).

The curriculum coordinator was confident that " teachers are collaborating and analysing far more than they ever have before (School B, CCO).

This capacity building was also supported with innovation and a greater focus on learning. Teacher 2 acknowledged that the reforms made it possible

> "to lead learning in our own way. We were really encouraged to put in our ideas, be innovative. We'd suggest something that we'd think would probably be rejected and then we're told, hey, that's actually a really good idea... (The reforms) provided me with a bit more confidence in some of my ideas because at times they did seem a bit too revolutionary or too contradictive to what our school used to do" (School B, Teacher 2).

The curriculum coordinator felt that the reforms had led to learning "being reinvigorated, given new emphasis here. Teachers are responding positively to it" (School B, CCO). This greater focus on learning was also acknowledged by LoP2 who believed that it had put "learning front and centre" (School B, LoP2).

A number of participants reported the strengthening of the school's learning culture through improved student engagement and attendance. Attendance improved and Teacher 4 remarked that "when you've got the students at school, they're going to learn more, so their capacity for learning is going to be greater" (School B Teacher 4). The curriculum coordinator, LoP1 and the principal all commented on the improvement of attendance. The curriculum coordinator believed that the reforms had shifted the focus away from simply academic results towards student engagement so that "people

now are realising that it's possible that we could get even better results by actually making sure they're engaged and they're actually motivated to do and that it's real for them" (School B, CCO). Teacher 3 reported that "students learning, attitude, behaviour and confidence has improved… "So it's had a fantastic effect on our kids" (School B Teacher 3). This view was supported by Coordinator 1 who perceived that "teachers have found there's been less discipline problems because students have been more engaged…students have been able to really enjoy them and really discover their learning - rather than having the teacher centred approach" (School B, Coord 1).

Participants from School B also reported that the reforms had built the capacity of both heads of departments and the leadership team of the school. LoP2 thought that, "The most substantial impact has probably been with the heads of departments… just them reimagining their roles so shifting from the managerial arm to think of themselves as leaders of learning… we've tried to empower them" (School B, LoP2).

Coordinator 2 agreed that the reforms had made him more confident in his role as a leader of learning (School B, Coord 2). Members of the leadership team also recognised that "within the executive team there was a lot more discussion of teaching and learning than there had been prior " (School B, Ex-Principal) and that the leaders of pedagogy had "added great value to teachers and to the College Leadership team" (School B, LoP2) but their impact was restricted largely to the heads of departments rather than teachers because, "teachers do what they want in a lot of ways...Once they're in their classroom…they have that freedom to do what they like... but I think that the more significant impact was with the middle managers (School B, LoP2).

5.6.3 School C

Responses from participants from School C were all positive in viewing that the reforms led to improvements in the school's leadership and learning capacity.

Four participants referred to the identifiable student learning gains the reforms were achieving. Coordinator 2 and the principal both referred to the school leading other schools in reading growth from Years 7 to 9. Coordinator 2 thought that the reforms, **"**have really paid some dividends already in the short term" (School C, Coord 2) and the principal claimed that the school was "topping the whole diocese now in our (literacy) growth. ... The whole process is about building the teachers' capacity" (School C, Principal). Teacher 4 agreed that "it has improved learning outcomes of the students" and Teacher 1 described how the school had succeeded in moving students into higher

achievement bands and concluded that "it's been exponential growth this year" (School C, Teachers 1 & 4).

Five participants identified that the capacity of teachers had been built through collaboration, coaching and mentoring. The principal noted the work of the leaders of pedagogy in collaboratively working with teachers who had previously been thwarted in their progression as teachers and during the reforms, "they started to feel free so they were stepping up" (School C, Principal). Both Leaders of Pedagogy 1 and 2 named the importance of coaching and mentoring along with action research and collaborative planning to develop staff members (School C, LoP1 & LoP2). LoP2 saw that during the reform period teachers began, "working together and with that collective wisdom they're just getting much richer lessons, and with that spirit of collaboration also comes openness of our classrooms" which created a culture where "we're all in this together and that culture, that spirit of you can argue, you can have a robust conversation. I think it just leads to better student outcomes" (School C, LoP2). Teacher 1 agreed with by stating, "now that the staff are not debating amongst themselves, they're actually working together and identifying what the issues are in their classrooms" (School C, Teacher 1).

Improved pedagogy was also identified as a positive impact from the reforms. Teacher 1 noted the importance of whole school approaches to pedagogy so "that good pedagogy (is) starting to happen, because we've got these teaching and learning models" (School C, Teacher 1). Teacher 3 agreed when she stated that the reforms "helped me immensely…to understand my role as a teacher and [for me] to realise the big picture things and how to improve and develop my own pedagogy in the classroom" (School C, Teacher 3). Teacher 2 saw that the capacity of teachers was being built through such things as 'understanding by design' which was "building people's resources within themselves" (School C, Teacher 2) whilst Teacher 4 saw her capacity being built through the work on assessment development (School C, Teacher 4). LoP1 acknowledged this by stating that teachers' conversation around assessment has matured to such a state that "they actually now have the confidence and the zeal to be able to respond" (School C, LoP1).

Six participants identified the impact of the reforms on strengthening the learning culture of the school. Coordinator 4 thought that it was very positive that they were "starting to actually challenge some students and bringing in families and challenge them about their behaviours and things that affect not just their learning, but the learning of others" (School C, Coord 4). Coordinator 5 agreed with the observation

regarding rising expectations. She thought that the reforms had led to students now perceiving the consequences of their actions with an improved appreciation of success and a better attitude to their work and belief in the school (School C, Coord 5). Coordinator 2 supported this view as she saw the reforms as being "very effective and I can see that there is a changing culture in the school and people are energised and there are some really wonderful things going on" (School C, Coord 2). LoP1 saw the culture of leadership forcing positive changes upon the culture of learning (School C, LoP1).

Two teachers also thought that the reforms had led to more consistent school wide approaches. Teacher 2 spoke of school wide processes replacing a range of departmental ones (School C, Teacher 2) whilst Teacher 4 agreed by stating, "When you're teaching across three departments like I have been those three would all do things differently… we've sort of all brought it together and I think that's much better. I find that everyone's on the same page" (School C, Teacher 4).

Participants also mentioned that the reforms were responsible for building the capacity of the heads of departments. The principal stated how excited she was that the heads of departments were now engaged in the contemporary language of education (School C, Principal). LoP1 saw how the heads of departments were "leading their teams a lot more. For (most of the group) their KLA[faculty] meeting time …have moved to a model where most of their meeting time's become more about professional learning and less about administrivia" and that the reforms have made them "more cognisant of their leadership and much more reflective about where they'd like to be next in their journey (School C, LoP1).

Three heads of departments agreed as the project "has given us time as middle managers to be able to reflect on our leadership and how we're going to lead our team forward" (School C Coord 1) and that " it's got us on the path. I think that long-term we'll have not only an effect on all of us as middle managers, but on our staff as well, therefore, on the students" (School C, Coord 3). Coord 5 saw the reforms as being very valuable for the middle managers who have been, "been challenged in our leadership style and we've also been given the opportunity to reflect upon that and grow… it's been a real positive" (School C, Coord 5).

Three participants also identified that the reforms had led to the school having greater engagement with parents and the community. Teacher 2 stated that if the reforms were, "meant to lift up the performance of the students based on the connectedness to the school …it has worked" and has allowed for "greater awareness among the staff about …the partnerships' potential in student learning. It also increased

the visibility of the parents as a force or as a potential tool to increase student performance" (School C, Teacher 2).

5.6.4 School D

Participants from School D highlighted the improved student outcomes evident from the reforms along with improved teacher capacity to utilise literacy strategies. Collaborative and reflective practices were also nominated as important innovations from the reform period.

The principal attributed the reforms to contributing towards improving HSC achievement (Principal, School D). Teachers 1 and 2 identified improved NAPLAN results as a product of the reforms. Teacher 2 observed that "the reading intervention programs showed an 80 to 100 per cent growth in the students who were involved in the first term of this year, and its definitely changed the culture of those students (School D, Teacher 2) whilst Teacher 1 saw increased numbers of students receiving academic awards and believed that "the bar has been raised and NAPLAN results are getting better… to see all those kids get awards (means) something is working (School D, Teacher 1).

Three participants recognised that the capacity of teachers has improved as a result of the reform initiatives. School D's CCO reflected that, "teacher capacity is much improved. The things that are happening in the classroom… is much more innovative (utilising) modern pedagogy, more suited to the kids "(School D, CCO). Teacher 1 noted that the reforms helped "to identify students who have got problems (and) to identify teachers who may have problems. (School D, Teacher 1). Coordinator 3 believed the reforms were particularly useful in building the capacity of beginning teachers, " who are new to a lot of the strategies… and sometimes they need a little bit of guidance as to how to best implement them in the classroom. (School D, Coord 3). One of those beginning teachers agreed stating, "We're getting all this training …and, yeah we're being challenged to step up our game and not be complacent and so I think that's definitely had an impact". (School D, Teacher 5).

A coordinator and a teacher from School D noted that the reforms focus on reflective practices allowed "teachers to have the time to have a dialogue about what is happening in their classroom, what they think that they need to improve on and then to put together the activities to use in class" (School D, Coord 4). Teacher 3 agreed stating, "it really did open my eyes to a lot of different things that I could be doing in the classroom because you do tend to just stay in the same pattern" (School D, Teacher 3).

Six participants recognised that the building of teachers' capacity to use literacy strategies was an important impact of the reforms. LoP1 noted how teachers embraced literacy strategies and that they were "looking at improving these kids' literacy and numeracy and making sure that they have the capacity to learn afterwards" and that the professional learning from 'Literacy the Next Step' led to team teaching with teachers and a leader of pedagogy and "great discussions about what worked well and what didn't work well in those particular classrooms" (School D LoP1). The whole school nature of professional learning regarding the literacy interventions meant that, "nobody was then in a position to say no you can't use it in my class because I don't know what it's about" and the principal concluded that students "are writing better. I think they're reading a little bit better…they're more able to access the curriculum so therefore I think …they will get better results which will help them in the long term (School D, Principal).

Teacher 2 described the impact of the literacy reforms on his capacity to teach when he stated, "I've gone to a whole different level of teaching. What I did first term with my students to what I do now is entirely different and that's because I didn't know how to teach reading, I wasn't taught that at university and so it's definitely changed drastically the way I teach (School D, Teacher 2). Teacher 5 found the emphasis on literacy challenging, "the literacy strategies in the classroom I've implemented and the leader of pedagogy has come in to observe that. So I would say that's been the biggest change for me so far" (School D, Teacher 5). In the eyes of Teacher 3 literacy is, "no longer the English Department's responsibility, literacy is now the home room teacher's responsibility, the year coordinator's responsibility ….it's more widespread" (School D, Teacher 3). Teacher 4 noted how the raising of literacy standards had been raised as a result of the reforms (School D, Teacher 4).

Teachers 3 & 4 noted that the reforms encouraged collaboration between teachers and that this has led teacher 4 to, "Re-examine the way I teach, what I teach and how I teach it and I've been doing a lot of collaborative work, so that is really good as well because you get so much from other people and other professionals" (School D, Teacher 4). Teacher 3 agreed stating that the reforms have "opened up opportunities for people across different departments and areas of parts of the school to communicate about students and to work together more to create strategies that are actually going to help the students and there's been a flow on effect into the classroom as a result of that" (School D, Teacher 3).

Three teachers perceived that the reforms had led to a strengthened learning culture at School D. Teachers 3 and 5 both noted the improvement in student attitude towards their learning and Teacher 1 saw this as part of a greater evolution of culture that needed to continue, he stated "we've got a lot of teachers on board now and I think we've got some students on board now and that just needs to continue, get them all in the net" (School D, Teacher 1).

Some heads of department and others identified areas that they think did not improve during the reform period. LoP1 and the CCO both did not believe that the reforms improved the leadership for learning capacity of the heads of department. Although the CCO thought that the reforms had been useful in developing leadership they "improved the capacity for leadership for learning for members of the leadership team rather than heads of departments…and the heads of departments, I don't know that their focus is - I wouldn't say it's improved. They've always had strong arguments about what they would think would be best for learning within their subject area"(School D, CCO).

Using data to inform learning appeared to be a negative issue for two Coordinators from School D. In spite of the system providing professional learning for coordinators Coordinator 2 was disappointed with his colleague's lack of pedagogical discussions and use of data analysis tools and Coordinator 4 agreed and recounted a heads of departments meeting where, "We were trying to go through RAP [a data tool] and nobody cared…there were very few people in that meeting that seemed to be interested and focussed, and I was very disappointed" (School D, Coord 4).

Two participants also noted that the reforms did not effectively engage parents with some of the workshops being poorly attended (School D, CCO, Teacher 1).

5.6.5 System Leaders

The majority of system leaders did identify improved capacity for leadership and learning in schools as a result of the initiative but a number of system leaders identified areas of concern where capacity was not improved and offered explanations for that lack of improvement. System leaders noted that the reforms had already begun to positively impact of student achievement and the leaders of pedagogy were effective in building the capacity of others to use data more effectively, to engage with parents, to embrace contemporary pedagogy and to build professional capital. They disagreed as to whether the heads of department had improved their capacity and whether all the schools used the resources effectively.

Three system leaders identified improvement in student achievement as a response to the reforms. System Leader 2 described the improvement in student learning gain in literacy from Years 7 to 9 at School D but cautioned that the reforms should take a few years to produce long-term improvement (System Leader 2). System Leader 5 thought there was evidence of improvement in some of the schools with NAPLAN results but he thought that "over the next 12 to 18 months there'd be more evidence of it" (System Leader 5). System Leader 6 believed there was evidence of clear growth in NAPLAN scores and "in a number of cases it's specifically identifiable where it's had a bigger impact on HSC results" (System Leader 6). System Leader 2 highlighted the improved attendance at School B as a credible achievement (System Leader 2).

Three system leaders highlighted the important role of the leaders of pedagogy in building the capacity of teachers and leaders in their school. System Leader 1 acknowledged their "amazing job" and she particularly identified those leaders of pedagogy who avoided creating a myriad of competing projects but rather gave "real synergy around a focus on student learning, student data and collective responsibility for all students and that seems to work" (System Leader 1). System Leader 5 appreciated the "fresh awakening" that the leaders of pedagogy gave their school communities that allowed a "change of thinking…(to) a more sharply focussed pedagogical approach" (System Leader 5). System Leader 1 believed that "the relationships across the leadership teams of the leaders of pedagogy have really built the capacity of everybody on the leadership team" whilst System Leader 5 noted for School C the "huge change to assessment [and] the level of accountability for heads of departments, the structure of how ESL and diverse learning was working in the school to how it is now, the relationships that (the LoPs) built up with the parent community" (System Leader 5).

Improved use of data as a consequence of the reforms was mentioned by two system leaders (System Leaders 2 and 6). System Leader 6 thought that school leaders, "have shown such a targeted and intelligent use of data and that's been mapped through both in terms of NAPLAN and HSC performance where targeted interventions have been well thought through" (System Leader 6).

Three system leaders recognised the improved engagement with parents as a response to the reforms (System Leaders 1, 3 and 4). System Leader 3 noted how this engagement improved over time towards teachers working with parents to enable them to work "more closely with their child, either at home or at school" which was challenging a long held view that "parents of secondary children don't want to be

engaged or involved" in the education of their children (System Leader 3). System Leader 4 agreed by stating at one school there "hadn't been much happening …with the parents… so certainly the reforms must have made an impact there with their community" (System Leader 4). System Leader 1 observed that the more effective schools were "now branching into community and aspects of building community beyond the school I think that's where they'll start to see a greater enrichment to lead learning...they're starting to tap into the parents as the first educators of their child" (System Leader 1).

System Leaders 5 and 6 noted the improved capacity for pedagogical leadership. System Leader 6 observed a "far broader engagement across many schools to embrace a whole school notion of pedagogy" (System Leader 6) whilst System Leader 5 appreciated "the more sharply focussed pedagogical leadership" (System Leader 5). System Leader 6 also affirmed schools for focussing more on ESL pedagogy rather than as an "appendage" but a "more integrated and central part of the school's work" (System Leader 6). However, System Leader 3 thought that "teacher capacity to lead strong literacy, having a really strong understanding of the teaching-learning cycle and the needs of students is something that I would drive home a little bit harder" and that "if I had the time again I would like to have a stronger voice around and focus on ESL pedagogy and literacy" (System Leader 3).

The building of professional capital through practitioner enquiry was also identified. System Leader 6 stated that in terms of building capacity the reforms have got "people into classrooms to see what other people do. As a result, they can see exemplary practice and that's, I think, led to reflection on their own practice" (System Leader 6) whilst System Leader 7 noted that classrooms have become more accessible to others (System Leader 7).

System leaders disagreed as to whether the reforms have built the capacity of heads of departments. Two system leaders believed that the capacity of heads of departments was built during the reform period. System Leader 2 stated that they have "been trained and they've been trained working with their teachers. …and the depth of all heads of departments as far as the use of data's (is now) far more detailed than what it ever has been" (System Leader 2). However System Leader 2 was fearful that School D in particular needed to build the capacity of their heads of department further because otherwise the reform gains would not be sustainable.

System Leader 7 was concerned that there were few examples of "a head of department who really runs their department as a real PLC, and builds the capacity of

teachers within the department" (System Leader 7). System Leader 4 believed after talking with Principal that "the biggest hurdle for them has been the heads of departments … to me, the people whose capacity really needs to be built in the school is the heads of departments" (System Leader 4). System Leader 2 suggested that the introduction of the leaders of pedagogy had inhibited the heads of department to be leaders of learning because they had taken the responsibility and accountability away from this group of leaders (System Leader 2).

System Leader 7 suggested that the contextual responses to the reforms led to dilution of the impact of the reforms whilst System Leader 6 thought it was most successful when there forms were "embed in terms of the school culture but also in terms of teaching practice of the school" but was critical of principals who concentrated more on resource spending than capacity building (System Leader 6).

System Leaders were more negative in their view than other role groups regarding their view of whether the reforms improved capacity for leadership and learning. Table 6.4 sets out the summary of these responses by role groups.

Table 6.4 Summary of Numbers of Positive and Negative Responses

	Principals	CCOs	LoPs	Coordinators	Teachers	System
Improved capacity	10	12	18	21	23	16
Did not improve capacity	0	2	3	5	6	8

5.6.6 Summary

Although the data differed from school to school there were some common themes that emerged from these data. Participants referred to the improved capacity of some heads of departments, teachers and leadership teams as a result of the initiative. They positively viewed the reforms for the opportunities they provided to build teacher and heads of department capacity by trialling new ways, using data to inform learning, collaborative practices and focussing on literacy and numeracy. Participants also mentioned the strengthening of the learning culture through such things as a greater focus on teaching and learning, higher expectations, improved attendance and the adoption of whole school approaches and practices.

Participants from School A, School D and System Leaders provided nearly all the comments that demonstrated that some aspects of the reforms did not improve capacity of the school to lead learning and these comments discussed such things as the lack of leadership for learning amongst heads of departments, the burdensome number

of reforms that restricted progress, the misdirected use of resources away from capacity building and the limited impact of initiatives to engage with parents and the community.

The various perceptions of participants from each of the schools and system leaders have been summarised in the following table, Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 Summary of Participants' Perceptions as to improved capacity as a result of the reforms

Improved Capacity as a result of the reforms	School A	School B	School C	School D	System	Total
Use of innovation	3	1				4
New promotional positions	2					2
Greater collaboration	3	4	5	2		14
Parent engagement	2		3		3	8
HoDs capacity was built	1	5	5		2	13
Data informed processes improved	1	4	1		2	8
Improved student outcomes			4	3	3	10
Improved pedagogy			5		2	7
Improved Literacy and ESL pedagogy				6		6
Strengthened learning culture		6	6	3		15
More consistent school-wide approach			2			2
Greater reflective practices and professional culture		2		1	2	5
Improved focus on teaching and learning		1				1
Overall Teacher Capacity				3	2	5
Comments Sub Total (100)	12	23	31	18	16	100
Capacity did not improve during the reforms	**School A**	**School B**	**School C**	**School D**	**System**	
HODs capacity did not improve	2			3	4	9
LoPs did not have impact on classroom	2	1				3
Implementation lacked focus	2				2	4
Capacity not sustainable	2					2
Poor parent attendance at workshops	2			1		3
Stronger ESL approach required					2	2
Data processes did not improve	1					1
Comments Sub Total (24)	11	1	0	4	8	24

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports and discusses analysis of the data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in the context of the six RSQs for the present study. The RSQs emerged from a review of the literature that was presented in Chapter 2 and that was structured on the key elements of school reform transforming learning through quality teaching, leading learning, parent and community engagement and professional learning, which featured in the *National Partnership on Low SES School Communities: Research Underpinning the Reforms Schools* report (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2010). This report informed the development of the reform initiatives that were the focus of the present study. The first RSQ is discussed below.

6.2 RSQ1: How was leadership of learning experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and in accordance with each of the various leadership roles?

Participants experienced leadership of learning differently in accordance with the way decisions were made about the manner and method of the reform implementation and how leadership of the reforms was influenced in each school. Schools also differed in the leadership development training provided to different groups, with some school leadership teams emphasising development training for teachers just beginning their teaching careers whilst others worked more with their heads of department. Participants also gave descriptions suggesting that some schools experienced greater emphasis on building a learning culture than others. Among the four schools, there was great similarity in the strategic approach of the four leadership teams as they all attempted to adapt the reforms to meet their local needs; however, some teams did this more effectively than others. A discussion of the experience of leadership of learning during the reforms identifying some of the more important elements follows. The first element to be discussed is the distribution of leadership.

6.2.1 Distribution of Leadership

There was differentiation in the data regarding the degree that leadership of the reform initiatives was shared or distributed in each school. The present study found that the schools that experienced the greatest improvement in student outcomes were those where the principal distributed leadership to both leaders of pedagogy and heads of department. In the less successful schools, a lack of confidence in the ability of heads of department by the principal seemed to have led to them not distributing leadership of learning to their heads of department.

The four secondary schools all had a similar leadership structures to lead learning as they were all directed by the same system and each principal was directly supported by a leadership team that was typically composed of an assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, leaders of pedagogy, religious education coordinator and typically a pastoral coordinator and an administrative coordinator. Each school had a middle leadership team that included pastoral leaders and heads of departments. These heads of department were responsible for the key subject areas of learning and led the faculty teams of teachers. The teachers exercised leadership in that they were responsible for the learning that took place in their own classrooms. This pattern of leadership distribution is hierarchal and more similar to Spillane's (2012) division of labour arrangement than to Gronn's (2002) holistic model of distribution. While Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010b) warned about assuming that formal leadership positions equate to distribution of leadership, the present study's participant data gave insights to how individuals experienced distributed leadership within the hierarchal structure and how it varied from school to school.

6.2.1.1 Distribution of Leadership of Learning from System Leaders to Principals

Participants perceived the distribution of leadership from system leaders to principals differently; however, this distribution appeared to be a top-down approach particularly during the first years of the reforms. For example, System Leader 2 saw limited distribution of decision making to principals in the design of the reforms because 'the system was making decisions. My understanding is that the schools didn't have any input at all … it was like imposed … rather than working with them' (System Leader 2).

During the initial stages of the reform process, distribution of leadership for learning was not particularly well enacted from system leaders to school principals and

this was possibly due to the system's need to establish common expectations; however, there was limited evidence of consultation regarding the formulation of these expectations. The need to set whole system expectations for reform implementation was identified in the review of Leithwood (2010) of highly successful systems that had bridged the achievement gap between low and high SES schools by, amongst other measures, 'developing a widely shared set of system beliefs and a vision about student achievement' (p. 250). This is acknowledged by the statement of System Leader 3 that 'at first it was probably a case of everybody … hearing the same message … coming out of the reforms. So there may have been a sense that it was imposed'.

The system's top-down approach was so directed that system leaders did not actively engage principals and other school leaders in decisions regarding the design of the reforms. For example, the lead strategy of employing leaders of pedagogy 'was designed by the (system's) executive director … (but it) should have been debated and created at the local level' (System Leader 1). This 'top-down' decision making limited the distribution of leadership between system and school leaders and built resistance to the reforms from several school leaders. It extended beyond setting initial expectations and system leaders began to impose strategies like 'instructional rounds' and 'word generation' to meet those expectations. System leaders faced further criticism and resistance from school principals. For example, Principal D complained that some initiatives seemed to be hastily put together and imposed upon schools like they were 'almost a Christmas thought of somebody's and suddenly it came back that instructional rounds was the way to go and everyone got a book in a cellophane folder and you were supposed to be implementing instructional rounds' (School D, Principal). Johnson et al. (2016) argued that distributed leadership between systems and schools will only work effectively if systems are responsible for leading and explaining the expectations and purpose of reforms while allowing reform practices to be both co-designed with school leaders and led by school leaders. Leadership with the design and selection of practices does not appear to have happened in the early years of the reforms.

In response to principals' criticism, system leaders began to lessen the top-down imposition of the reforms after the first two years and increasingly allowed schools to design and lead reform initiatives. This altered approach improved the distribution of leadership between system leaders and principals and supports the findings of Fullan et al. (2004a) that systems need to be reflective and willing to learn from feedback and productive conflict.

6.2.1.2 Distribution of Leadership of Learning from Principals

As has been previously noted, creating and sharing a vision and moral purpose for the reforms was the rationale for the system's professional development of the school leadership teams. How successful principals were in adapting and sharing that moral purpose in their schools, whilst distributing the leadership of the reforms to other school leaders, varied from school to school and depended on local factors including the level of trust and confidence they had in their middle leadership team.

6.2.2 Developing a school's shared vision or moral purpose

This study found that the experience of leaders from the four schools confirmed the importance of school leaders sharing and articulating a vision or moral purpose with staff for a reform initiative to succeed.

Participants from Schools B and C spoke positively of their school principals' sharing the vision and moral purpose of the reforms, which is consistent with Leithwood et al. (2004) belief that effective distribution of leadership relies on the school principal sharing vision and purpose with other leaders and staff. How successfully principals shared the vision and purpose of the reforms with staff might explain the improved effectiveness of Schools B and C compared to Schools A and D that did not report this sharing from their school principals. The academic improvement at School B and, to a lesser extent, School C is consistent with the findings of (Day et al., 2009) who reported that sharing values, beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning have a positive impact on student attainment.

Heads of departments and teachers from Schools B, C and D spoke positively about the vision and purpose of the reform. For example, a head of department from School C spoke of the staff 'working together and setting those goals together, and determining the school's direction, it really is about having a collective vision' (School C, Coord 3). A number of teachers referred to the moral purpose of the reforms with Teacher 3 from School C believing they were 'for the greater good of everybody'. This supports the claim by Nanus (1992) that school principals who share the vision or moral purpose of reforms leads to greater teacher commitment and energy. Leithwood et al. (2007) highlighted that leaders not only have to share a vision, they also have to communicate it, which appears not to have happened effectively in School A as one head of department noted that 'the big picture plan was always behind the scene and maybe it wasn't communicated to teachers as much as it should have been' and that they struggled 'to implement something (because) you need to believe in it and before

you believe in it you need to understand exactly why it's happening' (School A, Coordinator 3). This suggests that the vision may not have been shared and instilled beyond the words of the document to influence the classroom, thus failing to create the organisational coherence that Elmore (2000) states is necessary for effective reform.

Although the majority of principals were involved in establishing the vision and purpose of the reforms, the principals of Schools A and D were less successful than their colleagues at Schools B and C were in sharing this information with their staff. For example, a head of department from School D explained that her school does 'have quite a hierarchical structure, and sometimes that impedes that sharing and dissemination of knowledge' (School D, Coordinator 3). Although Leithwood et al. (2004) argued that it is critical for coherence of direction that principals retain responsibility for building a shared vision for their school community, it can be argued that although the principal should retain responsibility for building the vision he or she must communicate it effectively and include others in its design for it to be effectively shared.

The connection between developing and sharing a vision or purpose for learning was examined by Bezzina and Burford (2010) who found that schools reported a clear connection between attention to the moral purpose of their work, shared leadership, teaching and learning practice and student outcomes. The present study supported their finding with participants from the most academically successful school reporting such a connection. As the leader of pedagogy from School B explained, 'If everyone could see that they were working towards a common goal then the change becomes meaningful and important to them…. Establishing that was really important to ensuring the change process happened more smoothly'. This supports the work of Leithwood and Riehl (2003) who found teacher leaders such as leaders of pedagogy had a similar impact on learning as principals did by cultivating a shared vision and gaining team commitment to school goals. The experiences of leadership in the present study highlight the importance of school leaders sharing and articulating a vision or moral purpose with staff for a reform initiative to be successful.

6.2.3 Trust and confidence when distributing leadership

Principals appear to be important drivers of distributed leadership; however, several principals in the present study found numerous difficulties in distributing leadership to some leadership groups due to resistance from them or a lack of trust or confidence in their ability**.**

The principal of School B appeared to be the most successful in creating an environment of mutual trust and sharing authority that Harris (2011a) described as being an important factor in effectively distributing leadership. The principal saw both the leaders of pedagogy and the heads of department as 'critical' players in the reform implementation and considered the heads of department as 'leading the development of learning and programmes addressing the priorities in the school' (School B, Principal).

Principals from Schools A and D were less complimentary about the leadership of learning exhibited by their heads of department. There appeared to be a breakdown of trust between the principals or leaders of pedagogy and the heads of department in Schools A and D. The principal of School A struggled to influence heads of department to engage with the reforms whilst several heads of department thought decisions were being made without consultation as 'this is the way it is; it's a fait accompli' (School A, Coord 2). In School D, the leaders of pedagogy bypassed the heads of department and implemented the reform initiatives directly with teachers. The experience of the four schools supports the findings of Bush and Glover (2012) that the distribution of leadership 'is more likely where there are high levels of trust and shared values' (p. 34). Harris (2011a) and Johnson et al. (2016) argued that principals need to be able to trust and have confidence in their school leaders when they relinquish their power and distribute it to them. The predicament is that the large size and departmental nature of secondary schools mean that principals must share power with others (Mayrowetz, 2008); therefore, principals can be faced with sharing that power with people whom they may not trust. This may explain why the principal and leaders of pedagogy of School A did not distribute responsibility for the reforms to the heads of departments and in School D the leaders of pedagogy bypassed them to work directly with teachers.

The principals and leaders of pedagogy of Schools A and D appear to have believed that their heads of department were resistant to the reforms. This would support the warning of Gurr and Drysdale (2013) that too many heads of department in secondary schools are not exercising leadership and are resistant to change. This was evident in School A with the principal's frustration with the heads of department when he exclaimed, 'You've got to say it three different ways and do it three different ways and demonstrate it another six different ways before you get them to actually take it on board' (School A, Principal). In addition, this statement by Principal A suggests a more delegated than distributed approach where tasks are imposed upon people in the organisation (Harris, 2004) rather than providing opportunities for more autonomous leadership where people are trusted to lead (Chapman et al., 2008).

Not only were heads of department in Schools A and D side-lined from the reform implementation, they were also not professionally developed to the same degree as heads of department in Schools B and C. For example, the principal of School C had observed the leaders of pedagogy developing the leadership of learning of the heads of department and getting them onside with the learning agenda set by the leadership team. She observed the 'amazing growth with the heads of department … everything's (now) about learning talk' (School C, Principal). These different approaches point to the assertion of Gurr and Drysdale (2013) that senior leaders need to support and develop heads of department if they are going to improve the learning culture and student outcomes of secondary schools. The focus of the principals and leaders of pedagogy from Schools B and C on developing their heads of department supports the view of Johnson et al. (2016 p.15) that effective distribution of leadership relies upon 'developing leadership capacity and capability in others and coordinating leadership processes across the school' (p. 15).

However, School D did not focus on supporting and developing their heads of departments. The principal of School D used an inner cabinet of the leadership team to determine reform projects consisting of the principal, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator and the two leaders of pedagogy. The principal noted that the heads of department tended to manage the subject rather than lead learning and this change was 'probably the biggest struggle' (School D, Principal). The heads of department from School D did not appear to have received much leadership development and the leadership team by-passed them to work with volunteer teachers as it was perceived that they were unwilling to 'take on more stuff for teaching and learning' (School D, LoP 2). This reluctance to involve the heads of department may be explained by the assertion of Timperley (2005 p.23) that 'increasing the distribution of leadership is only desirable if the quality of the leadership activities contributes to assisting teachers to provide more effective instruction to their students' (p. 23). The principal and his leadership team appeared not to have the confidence that the heads of department were up to the task. This judgment supports the perspective of Dinham (2007b) who believed that heads of department can make a difference if they have the capability and aptitude to be leaders.

Therefore, as noted previously, several principals in the present study found some difficulty in distributing leadership to various leadership groups due to resistance from them or a lack of trust or confidence in their ability. This finding underlines the warnings provided in the literature by Gurr and Drysdale (2013) and Harris (2011a) that if principals have an unbridled focus on distributing leadership they may run into

trouble unless it is matched with a focus on leadership development and a substantial level of reciprocal trust.

6.2.4 Distribution of Leadership of learning to and from the Leaders of Pedagogy

When leaders of pedagogy were supported by their principal, leadership team, heads of departments and teachers they had a greater chance of building the capacity of individuals to lead learning, which helped create a collective learning culture that led to improved student outcomes.

Leaders of pedagogy were highly regarded by their principals (Principals of Schools A, B and C) who trusted them (School B, Principal), who got to know their staff (School A, Principal) and in turn were trusted by teachers (School C, Principal) and were seen by many participants as being highly effective. According to Aguilar (2013) such confidence, trust and high regard are required characteristics for instructional coaching to be successful in a school setting. Several studies have demonstrated principal support as being crucial for coaching effectiveness (Fullan & Knight, 2011; Saphier & West, 2009), with this precondition being largely met in the four schools. In addition, Aguilar (2013) stated that the school culture must be open to growth and staff must be willing to work with the instructional coach and together as a learning community. There was less evidence of this occurring at School A with heads of department and senior teachers resistant to the changes emanating from the reforms.

In comparison to the other three schools, the leaders of pedagogy of School B appear to have had greater support from their leadership teams, heads of departments and teachers. The leaders of pedagogy of School A appear to have experienced the least support with only the principal and possibly the leadership team expressing or providing support to them. Given the evidence in terms of the difference in student learning between School B and School A there is possibly some relationship between the level of support leaders of pedagogy received, their own capacity and improved student outcomes. This possibility cannot be confirmed in the literature beyond some evidence that effective coaching is linked to improved teacher practices (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Garet et al., 2001); however, its impact on learning has not yet been confirmed by a solid body of evidence (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Galey, 2016). It would be a valuable exercise to conduct further research in this area to ascertain what links exist between the capacity and acceptance of instructional coaches and improved student outcomes.

There is strong evidence in the literature that instructional coaches such as leaders of pedagogy have an important role in building instructional capacity of teachers and leading organisational changes that improve professional capacity of teacher and this study confirms the pivotal work of the leaders of pedagogy in building both professional capital and a learning culture. This supports the notions of (Galey, 2016) who found that instructional coaches have a cognitive, organizational and reform role and (Fullan & Knight, 2011) who perceived them as important drivers of capacity building, teamwork, pedagogy, and systemic reform. Evidence from this study also supported (Saphier & West, 2009)'s claim that they have the potential to be key agents to de-privatise the classroom and readjust unhealthy norms of teacher isolation and autonomy.

Participants identified their work building the capacity of others (individually and collectively) via leadership development, building a learning culture, instructional coaching, using data to inform teaching and learning and strategic planning for school improvement. Therefore, the present study demonstrated that instructional coaches such as leaders of pedagogy were important leaders in building the capacity of individual teachers and leaders and collectively as a staff to improve student outcomes.

Leaders of pedagogy in Schools B and C appeared to have received greater affirmation and recognition from participants for building their school's capacity for leadership of learning and the student achievement profiles of each school suggested that there might be some relationship between their efficacy and improvement in student outcomes during and immediately after the reform period.

Turnover of leadership personnel limited the ability of some schools to lead the reforms effectively. The principal of School A provided his leaders of pedagogy with more reform responsibilities than the other schools; however, the two leaders of pedagogy were both promoted during the reforms and were replaced. Reynolds, Clarke, Harris, and James (2006) reported that an inadvertent consequence of developing leaders in low SES schools is that they will be more likely to be employed by high SES schools or to the system, thus causing destabilisation of reform initiatives. High leadership turnover often leads to decreased teacher commitment and disrupts the school's collective efficacy and the effect can be magnified in low SES schools as they are less able to attract experienced and capable leaders (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2012). Indeed, the replacement of the leaders of pedagogy limited the capability of the leadership team of School A to build leadership of learning. Teacher 3 was critical of

the lack of continuity, stating that 'there's been four different LOPs in the school and four different LOP's approaches' (School A).

Copland (2003) noted a similar issue when studying the San Francisco Bay Area School Reform Collaborative and advised that school reformers need to share the vision and leadership of reforms to limit the effect of leadership turnover. The evidence presented did not show that the vision or leadership was shared to any great extent by the leaders of School A and this may have precipitated the difficulties faced by the leadership team in taking the reforms forward in that school. This appears to underscore Copland's (2003)'s advice to share the vision and leadership beyond a few individuals to ensure that reform initiatives can sustain the loss of key staff.

In the present study, all schools involved attempted to focus school-wide practices on teaching and learning, develop of teachers' use of data to inform learning and raise expectations of students and teachers. However, participants from School B appeared to be the most positive in their perception of progress whereas there was disagreement in Schools A and D about the success of the reform's implementation. The data appears to confirm Hallinger and Heck (2010) finding that secondary schools that experience improvements in learning outcomes are characterised by having stronger cultures of learning with school-wide practices and higher expectations. This suggests that School B benefitted from effective instructional coaches who had success in building a stronger learning culture, which is likely to have influenced the increase in student outcomes during and immediately after the reform initiative.

Although the leaders of pedagogy were expected to directly support teachers in the classroom they struggled to do so. School B's LoP2 acknowledged that measures to observe classroom teaching such as instructional rounds 'really challenged people … particularly the experienced staff who were, some of them, expert teachers and they felt like they were being checked in on and they weren't comfortable with it at all'. This issue was raised by Lord et al. (2008) who found that school norms regarding privacy of practice and lack of leadership support meant that coaches failed to provide the 'hard feedback' required to facilitate improvement in instruction.

Instructional rounds had to be abandoned in School A because of teacher and heads of department resistance to the scheme and leaders of pedagogy did not observe classroom teaching at that school after the first year of the reforms. This lack of classroom support by instructional coaches has also been noted in the literature by Coggins et al. (2003) and Atteberry et al. (2008) who discovered that coaches spent only a small portion of their time working directly with teachers. Leaders of pedagogy in

other schools were somewhat more successful than School A in working directly in the classroom with teachers; however, overall, their engagement was limited and they tended to do more work with teachers on programming and assessment design than classroom observation and feedback. This appears to support recent studies of instructional coaches in action that reveal that coaches seldom engage in observing and modelling pedagogical practices and instead focus on assisting teachers with programming units of work and providing professional development (Atteberry et al., 2008; Fullan & Knight, 2011; Neumerski, 2013).

Therefore, it appears that leaders of pedagogy from School B and, to a lesser extent, School C were more successful than their counterparts in Schools A and D in gaining support for the reforms and building a strong, learning culture. One way they gained support was by mediating with teachers and adapting the reforms to suit teachers. In School B, they adjusted instructional rounds to focus on less difficult teaching strategies to allow teachers to gain confidence in this new strategy. This mediation role of the leaders of pedagogy was highlighted by Galey (2016) who observed that instructional coaches perform an influential reform role in system policy implementation as brokers, mediators and interpreters of policy and coaches do this by adapting, modifying and in some cases 'diluting' or 'filtering' system policies and programmes to meet the realities of the local school context and classroom teaching. Conversely, it appeared that the leaders of pedagogy from School A did not mediate or broker with teachers on a variety of the system initiatives that later had to be abandoned because of heads of department and teacher resistance (School A, Coordinator 2 & LoP 1). Once more, this suggests that the greater success the leaders of pedagogy of School B had in building a learning culture supports the research findings of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2015) who identified a relationship between learning culture and growth in student literacy and numeracy outcomes.

The present study into how leadership was experienced during the reform initiative endorses the scholarly literature that the effectiveness of instructional coaches to both build leadership of learning and strengthen learning culture was dependent on the support of their principal, leadership team and heads of departments.

6.2.5 Distribution of Leadership of Learning to Heads of Department

The level of involvement of the heads of department in the leadership of the reform implementation was a salient difference between the schools in the way leadership of learning was distributed and was an important issue in the success or

otherwise of the implementation of the reforms. The present study confirmed the views of authors such as Sammons et al. (1997), Harris (2004), Dinham (2007b), Gurr and Drysdale (2013) and Leithwood (2016) who all reported the importance of the heads of departments involvement in learning as an important driver of secondary school improvement.

The interview data indicated that heads of department in Schools B and C were more involved in the decision-making processes and had greater responsibility for enacting the reforms than in Schools A and D. One head of department from School C commented on the collaborative nature of the leadership when she observed that 'working together and setting those goals together, and determining the school's direction, it really is about having a collective vision … the key to achieving things long term' (School C, Coordinator 3), whilst in contrast a head of department from School A commented that 'I wasn't treated much different to any other teacher. We felt alienated to some extent in the sense that our feedback wasn't requested'.

The heads of department of Schools B and C were more involved in the leadership and execution of the reform process and, therefore, had greater opportunity to influence classroom learning in a positive way. This was supported by System Leader 4 who believed that the improved student outcomes in Schools B and C were because their heads of department worked well with the leaders of pedagogy in addressing the needs of their faculty's classrooms. The improved learning outcomes of School B and the greater involvement of their heads of department in the leadership of learning points to Leithwood (2016) proposition that through their closer proximity to classroom practice heads of department have greater potential to influence learning than principals do. This is because the heads of department work with teachers and subsequently they have proximity to students' direct experiences in the classroom. System Leader explained that 'you've got all these layers (of leadership between the principal and a teacher) but who's the leader in your classroom? Your KLA coordinator![head of department]' (System Leader 2). Because the performance of the head of department coordinator was perceived by some leaders in Schools A and D as being that of an administrator rather than a leader of learning, it is possible that these heads of department had limited exposure to classroom activity beyond their own.

The proximity of heads of department to students in the classroom varied and was more evident in School B, somewhat evident in School C and less evident in Schools A and D. Leithwood (2016) stated that teacher resistance to heads of department observing and supervising their teaching was a significant barrier to reform,

which might explain the lack of evidence of heads of department working with teachers on implementing reform initiatives in their classes in Schools A and D. This could also be explained by the fact that the leaders of pedagogy in Schools A and D worked directly with teachers rather than with or through the various heads of department meaning they were removed from working closely with classroom teachers. However, this was not well supported by the evidence that indicated the heads of departments were more administrators of the faculty than leaders of learning. In contrast, participants from Schools B and C reported engagement of heads of department who were active during the reforms and their leadership included participation and supervision of classroom activities. This experience contrasts with the findings of Jarvis (2008); Wise and Bennett (2003) who stated that teachers tend to prefer heads of department to administer their team managing paperwork and programming rather than supervise them in the classroom because they do not wish to be counselled on their performance.

Perceptions differed from school to school regarding the role of the heads of department even though system leaders had created a common position description for all heads of department. Gurr and Drysdale (2013) argued that the leadership of heads of department is heavily dependent on how their roles were constructed; however, it appears that the way their roles were perceived by themselves and others was more important than the actual words of a position description. Heads of department from Schools B and C were perceived as leaders of learning whilst heads of department from Schools A and D neither saw themselves as leaders of learning nor were seen by their colleagues as such; rather they were perceived as administrators of a subject. During the final year of the reforms, LoP 1 from School A spoke of the challenge in refocusing the heads of department towards reflection and collaboration rather than merely administration. Gurr and Drysdale (2013) reported that principals and other members of leadership teams expect heads of department to exert more leadership for staff supervision than heads of department believe they should. The present study confirmed Gurr and Drysdale's (2013) findings with a number of leaders from across the four schools and the system arguing that heads of department needed to show more leadership of learning to fulfill their stated role.

The distribution of leadership to heads of department included sharing the implementation of whole school approaches. Leadership teams from Schools B and C engaged their heads of department with implementing whole school approaches based on a shared vision. Leaders of pedagogy from School B worked with heads of department and teachers to implement a school wide vision of learning and LoP2 from

this school reflected that heads of department have 'been empowered by the low SES NP agenda and they've taken on projects or just having someone to talk pedagogy with has been a positive experience for them' (School B, LoP 2). Participants from School A expressed some frustration with the lack of unity within the college to the reform goals. Similarly, the frustration expressed by heads of department (School A, Coordinators 1 and 2) and the criticism of them by members of the leadership team suggest that School A's capacity to improve and build upon the achievement of students was limited by the lack of capacity of their middle level leaders to be leaders of learning. School B's ability to share values, beliefs and attitudes towards whole school practices most likely assisted them in improving student outcomes. This is supported by Gu, Sammons, and Mehta (2008) who found that shared values, beliefs and teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning have a positive impact on student attainment and that whole school approaches that enjoy consensus amongst teachers and leaders also improve learning.

The regard that principals held for their heads of department was also important and, as mentioned previously, may have affected principals' decisions to distribute leadership to them. Leithwood (2016) suggested that heads of department in partnership with secondary school principals are 'well-situated to provide leadership [of learning that will] make powerful contributions to secondary school improvement' (p.136). The principals of Schools B and C valued the contribution of their heads of department more than the principals of Schools A and D did. The principal of School B saw the role of the heads of department as 'pretty critical' whilst, in contrast, the principal of School A believed that some of his heads of department misrepresented the whole school messages about the reforms to teachers.

In the present study, the focus on the leadership development of heads of department differed widely from school to school. Leaders from Schools B and C focussed on developing the leadership capacity of their heads of department whilst at the same time sharing the role of leadership of learning with them. The leaders of pedagogy of School D admitted that they bypassed these middle leaders and worked directly with teachers rather than involving and developing their heads of department. Furthermore, no head of department from Schools A or D mentioned leadership development in their focus group. This lack of development underscores the recommendation of Gurr and Drysdale (2013) for senior leadership to be more proactive in supporting the leadership development of heads of department and noted that many heads of department had little leadership development prior to taking on their role.

In summary, the heads of department of School B and, to a lesser extent, School C were more valued by their principals, more developed and more involved in the life of the classroom than in Schools A and D. Of the four schools, heads of department from School B had greater influence over their colleague's classroom teaching, which would allow them to create a sense of professional community and capital that Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) advocated for sustainable improvement in learning outcomes. Printy (2008) found that heads of department are crucial for teachers' participation in professional communities of practice and the Head of department resistance to that concept in School A might help explain why those communities of practice were abandoned during the first years of the reform. Highfield (2012) determined that heads of department who set goals and high expectations, effectively managed resources and created a positive learning environment for students and teachers improved student achievement particularly at the final stage of secondary school and this finding was largely supported by the data obtained from the present study. School B had the highest academic growth in the final stage of students' schooling and the study noted that heads of department from school B were involved in using data to inform teaching and learning and they supported reform initiatives. Other leaders from School B affirmed both the high expectations of heads of department and their positive engagement in learning. Highfield's (2012) other finding regarding the management of resources was not mentioned by participants.

Given the evidence in terms of the highly capable, valued, developed and involved nature of the heads of department from School B, and the fact that their student learning outcomes improved during and immediately after the reforms, there appears to be a relationship between heads of department who work closely with classroom teachers and improved student outcomes. The data also suggested that this relationship from a leadership perspective is best developed through building the capacity of such middle leaders and valuing their contribution.

6.2.6 Distribution of Leadership of Learning to Teachers

Teachers in the present study recognised that the reform initiatives supported them to lead learning with other colleagues and within the classroom. This supports the view of Berg, Carver, and Mangin (2014) who believed that teachers lead when they interact with colleagues regarding the quality of instruction.

Johnson et al. (2016) suggested that 'although teachers have always been considered leaders within their classrooms, a distributed leadership perspective

considers that teachers will undertake broader leadership roles in both formal and informal capacities' (p. 17). In many respects, teachers in the present study exerted broader leadership through assessment reform, ESL pedagogy, implementing new whole school practices, programming and contemporary pedagogy. Teachers from Schools B, C and D were positive towards the collaborative nature of the reforms.

6.2.7 Major Finding regarding the distribution of leadership

Leaders from School B distributed leadership more effectively to the heads of departments than the other schools did because their heads of department were much more involved in the leadership of initiatives. They were also successful in engaging teachers in the reform initiative. This sharing of leadership positioned the reform activity and decision making closer to the classroom because the heads of department and teachers were both closely involved in the reforms.

Leithwood (2016) argued that the most powerful influence on learning occurs at the classroom level; however, leadership at the departmental level by heads of departments is likely to have more influence on students than whole school leadership. Ideally, leadership is tightly coupled between the principal and the heads of department so that whole school policies can influence the numerous classrooms located in a secondary school. Galey (2016) noted the importance of instructional coaches in mediating between principals and heads of departments to tighten the coupling as well as their leadership work also being positioned close to the work of teachers.

The major finding for RSQ1 is that leadership in secondary schools is best shared with leaders of learning such as heads of department who are positioned to work closely with classroom teachers**.** Furthermore this relationship is best developed through building the capacity of heads of department and school leaders valuing their contribution. This finding supports Silins and Mulford's (2003, 2009, 2010) assertion that student outcomes are more likely to improve if leadership is effectively distributed throughout the school community as well as Hallinger and Heck (2010)'s study that reported that collaborative school leadership (i.e. leadership broadened beyond the principal) can lead to improved literacy and numeracy scores. Furthermore, Leithwood (2016) reported,

> compelling evidence of several types demonstrates a strong association between student performance and the proximity to students' direct experiences of the work carried out at different organizational levels. Work carried out at the

department level is likely to have more influence on the direct experiences and performance of students than work carried out at the school level. (p. 121)

This study appears to confirm Leithwood (2016)'s belief that through their proximity to the learning heads of department have great opportunity to influence the learning and the leadership of learning from the heads of department in School B appears to be a salient reason for their successful implementation of the reform initiatives.

6.2.8 The Impact of Learning Culture

It was also evident from the data collected during the present study that each school commenced the reforms with different degrees of learning culture. These differences in learning culture along with the distribution of leadership to heads of department appear to have been a major influence on the ability of schools to improve student outcomes during and immediately after the reform period.

Principals and leaders of pedagogy in all four schools attempted to strengthen their learning culture via whole school approaches to areas such as literacy, numeracy, ESL and assessment; however, it appears that because leadership was distributed differently, some schools were more successful than others because their leaders collaborated more than others did. The research literature supports the idea that leaders of pedagogy and heads of department working together with the principal can build the learning culture of secondary schools. Saphier and West (2009) believed that instructional coaches (i.e. leaders of pedagogy) working with principals can be the fulcrums for building capacity for school improvement. The collaboration that existed between leaders of pedagogy and heads of department in Schools B and C meant that both heads of department and teachers reported capacity building in whole school practices whereas in Schools A and D, which had limited collaboration, participants spoke more about the lack of engagement of heads of department in building the learning culture in these schools. These different school experiences support the findings of Harris (2001) and Dinham (2007a) who emphasised that heads of department have an important role in developing a learning climate and spawning sustained improvement in a secondary school .

Not only were the leaders of School B effective in establishing whole school practices they also had high expectations for students and staff. Their success mirrors several of the findings of Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2016) who reported that academically successful high schools had stronger cultures of learning with distinct structures and

practices that distinguished them from less effective schools and that these structures and practices included regular opportunities for formal collaboration, shared goals centred on common high expectations, structured opportunities for distributed leadership to teachers and deliberate supports to help students engage and achieve with their academic studies. Leaders from School B may not have distributed leadership fully to teachers; however, they appear to have adopted the other characteristics and structures of a high performing secondary school.

Jackson (2000) conceptualised school improvement as a journey and participants acknowledged this concept by describing at different times their own school's journey. Participants acknowledge that School B began the reforms at a higher starting point than School C did (School B, LoP 2; School C, Principal), with their academic profiles (Appendix L) supporting that assertion. The capacity for leadership for learning at School B was already quite evident prior to the commencement of the reform with better academic results and a stronger learning culture than the other schools. This might explain how the sharing of leadership to heads of department was, by itself, not enough to greatly improve student outcomes in School C; however, the greater sharing of leadership and a stronger learning culture meant that School B's student outcomes improved more than the student outcomes of the three other schools. This finding is similar to the San Francisco Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, which found that schools without a strong evidenced-based learning culture failed to engage effectively with school reforms (Jaquith & McLaughlin, 2010). Therefore, when principals share leadership with leaders of pedagogy and heads of department it appears to build learning culture; however, the pre-existing learning culture may explain why some schools in the present study were able to successfully build learning outcomes more than others.

These findings for RSQ1 particularly underline the importance of a distributed model of leadership in the school to tighten what is normally a loosely coupled system where top-down reforms lose traction in the many layers of authority between the system policy makers including the principal, leadership team, heads of department and classroom practitioners (Weick, 1976). Printy (2008) found that heads of department have an important role in brokering opportunities and Galey (2016) came to a similar conclusion about the role of instructional coaches such as leaders of pedagogy. Both brokered and interpreted reform policy and in doing so adapted, filtered, modified and diluted programmes and procedures to meet the everyday realities of the local school and faculty contexts.

The role of the instructional coach and head of department as brokers between these leadership layers is recognised in the present study and will be considered again in the discussion about the change management required to implement the reforms, which will be part of the focus for the next questions considered.

6.2.9 Summary of Findings for RSQ1

A number of the findings for RSQ1 appear connected and they centre on distributing leadership to capable, valued, trusted and professionally developed leaders who are positioned close to classroom activities to lead whole school reform initiatives effectively.

The major finding for RSQ1 was that:

(i) Leadership in secondary schools is best shared with leaders of learning such as heads of department who are positioned to work closely with classroom teachers**.** Furthermore this relationship is best developed through building the capacity of heads of department and school leaders valuing their contribution. Other findings for RSQ1 include:

(ii) School leaders benefit from sharing and articulating a vision or moral purpose for a reform initiative with their school community.

(iii) Principals appear to be important drivers of distributed leadership; however, several principals in the present study found it difficult to distribute leadership to various leadership groups due to resistance from them or a lack of trust or confidence in their ability. This finding pointed to the importance of trust in distributing leadership.

(iv) Instructional coaches such as leaders of pedagogy were important leaders for building the capacity of individual teachers and leaders and collectively as a staff to improve student outcomes.

(v) The effectiveness of instructional coaches to build leadership of learning and strengthen learning culture was dependent on the support of the principal, leadership team and heads of departments.

(vi) When principals share leadership with leaders of pedagogy and heads of department it appears to build learning culture; however, the pre-existing learning culture might explain why some schools in the study were able to build more successful learning outcomes than others.

6.3 RSQ2: What barriers to the reforms did the leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required to implement the *Low SES NP* reforms?

School leaders in each school faced a similar set of barriers to the reform initiative; however, the way they managed the reforms differed from school to school and these differences shed light on why some schools were more successful than others in building school capacity to lead learning and improve student outcomes.

Bryk (2014) cautioned that reforms often fail because they are given insufficient time to show results and strategies are prematurely abandoned. This might have occurred in School A when teachers and coordinators resisted much of the work of the leaders of pedagogy during the first few years of the reforms and initiatives such as instructional rounds, PLCs and the mentoring of faculty staff were either abandoned or severely altered into more palatable alternatives that moved away from raising expectations of teachers and improving pedagogy. Heads of department from School A saw the reforms 'as being imposed, probably not with a level of relational trust. People saw it as an inspectoral approach as opposed to a problem of practice' (School A, LoP 1), which is congruous with Barber (2009) finding that when teachers perceive that their principal or other leadership team members embrace an external top-down reform agenda that is not supported by the teachers, then teacher alienation and feelings of disempowerment will emerge. Coord 2 from School A stated that 'many KLA coordinators (HoDs) felt alienated in a sense, by the manner in which it was carried out. … in the sense that our feedback wasn't requested'. Reform was successfully carried out in School B where layers of leadership including the principal to the leaders of pedagogy and heads of department embraced the initiatives. The principal of School B saw his role was to 'to trust them (leaders of pedagogy) and empower them to use the data, use the directions of the leadership team to implement the opportunities that the reform agenda affords us'.

Relational trust appears to be an important factor for schools when managing implementation of the reforms. Participants in the present study spoke about relational trust referring to the leaders of pedagogy having credibility with staff and therefore being trusted to take risks or principals allowing others to lead. They mentioned positive relationships, competence as 'good operators' and empowering others. When they referred to a lack of trust they referred to inspectorial impositions being placed on others. This appears to support Bryk and Schneider's (2003) belief that relational trust is

built through interpersonal social exchanges that take place in a group setting, which emphasise respectful relationships and leaders' personal regard for others, their competence, integrity and moral purpose.

The lack of staff ownership of reforms at School A was raised by a number of participants as being an issue. LoP1 was concerned that staff lacked 'real ownership of them (the reforms)' (School A). Heads of department (Coordinators 2 and 3) criticised the implementation process for not including them in the decision making, which Coordinator 2 believed created negativity, 'I think people tend to get their backs up and they tend to look at the negative rather than the positive…, it's just been this is the way it is; it's a fait accompli'. School A's lack of success in implementing the reform agenda may stem from Rowan et al. (2004a)'s conclusion that the reform agenda needs to be 'owned' by both the leadership of the school and the school community itself if it is to be successful. Similarly, Wahlstrom et al. (2010) reported that the knowledge of the local practitioners needs to be valued in the planning and implementation stages, with it being questionable as to whether this occurred in School A.

The lack of relational trust and reform ownership felt by teachers and leaders in School A was not experienced as much in the other schools. The principals of Schools B and C thought that the leaders of pedagogy had 'great credibility with staff' (School B, Principal) and they 'had the capacity to win people over and to be trusted and to go hands on with others, at point of need' (School C, Principal) but a teacher observed that the implementation seemed to be "the LoPs versus the school" (School C, Teacher 1). The experiences of teachers and leaders during the reform initiative suggest the finding that the building of relational trust between the principal, instructional coaches, heads of departments and teachers was an important tool of capacity building.

Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) concluded from previous reform initiatives that reforms must focus on classroom pedagogy and professional capacity to be successful in building teacher capacity and student outcomes. This conclusion could help explain why School A's student outcomes reduced during and immediately after the reforms because they abandoned key reforms that focussed on pedagogy (instructional rounds) and building professional capacity (i.e. PLCs). The evidence from participants at the other three schools point towards these schools modifying their programmes to reduce resistance and managing changes via consultation.

An invitational approach asking teachers to be involved in the reforms and empowering teachers to modify the reforms to suit their requests appear to be factors for successful reform. Leaders of pedagogy from Schools B and D sought volunteers for a

number of their initiatives rather than imposing them on all staff. Allowing teachers to volunteer and modify the reforms to suit their own perceived needs is in accord with Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011)'s view that capacity building should be forged by and with teachers in their own contexts, rather than as something conveyed by system leaders as a one-size-fits-all solution for top-down implementation. However, Timperley et al. (2007) countered this argument by claiming that '(teacher) volunteering is neither a necessary condition for, nor a guarantee of, positive outcomes for students' (p. 105). It would be of interest to explore the long-term effects of seeking volunteers for such reform programmes as leaders attempt to build capacity beyond the volunteers to other staff members.

School A's heads of department or teachers did not cite successful adaptations or consultations with staff but rather spoke about the rapid and demanding nature of the implementation. The research of Mulford and Silins (2011) about low SES Australian schools found that principals need to create a climate of trust where staff are valued and empowered with opportunities for collaborative decision making to improve student outcomes. Evidence from participants of School A suggest that this climate of trust was not as evident as in the other schools, which may partly explain its decline in student achievement during and immediately after the reforms.

School A's experience also supports Hargreaves and Shirley (2011) caution that an overly rapid pace of reform implementation that lacks consultation is highly problematic. The evidence suggests there was greater consultation with heads of department and teachers in School B and leaders of pedagogy at School B were praised for their communication whilst at School A, leaders of pedagogy were criticised for a lack of communication and consultation. These various experiences lead to the second finding of RSQ2 that reform appeared to be more successful when it was negotiated with teachers and heads of departments, thus empowering them to co-construct the implementation**.** Taking into consideration what has previously been stated regarding decision-making and the design of the reforms, this finding could also include system reform being more successful when system leaders negotiate with principals, which empowers them to co-construct the design of the reforms.

This finding regarding implementation co-construction suggests a possible relationship between effectively managing change and broadly distributing school leadership. Schools A and D did not distribute leadership of learning effectively to heads of department because their principals did not trust them to lead. This supports the view of (Harris, 2003)that well distributed leadership is characterised by high levels

of relational trust. When leaders of pedagogy from School B and D spoke of trust, they spoke of their principals empowering them and having confidence in them to lead semi-autonomously. Participants from School B reported high levels of trust and teamwork. Documents and perceptions of participants identified that School B also experienced a well-distributed model of leadership after a new principal was appointed. Participants from other schools did not experience the same level of leadership distribution and reported less levels of trust, particularly for participants from School A. When participants from School A spoke about an apparent lack of trust, they spoke negatively of being judged, of practices being 'inspectorial' and of initiatives being 'done to them'. Comparing the experiences and student outcomes of Schools A and B supports Silins and Mulford's (2003) conclusions that improved student outcomes are more attainable when leadership is distributed and they also support Hallinger and Heck's (2010) finding that when leaders work together to build the school's capacity for academic improvement they can improve student outcomes. This supports the finding that a broadly distributed model of leadership appears to build capacity to improve student outcomes if established in a context of relational trust and teamwork.

These findings underline the importance of a distributed model of leadership in the school. Not only does the model lead to improvements in student outcomes it is more effective in managing the changes required for successful reform if it is characterised by relational trust.

Another finding was that system imposed reforms are more likely to succeed when they are adapted by school leaders to meet the local context. The local context was influenced by such factors as the existing capacity of teachers or middle leaders to lead learning and their openness to change their practices, the nature of secondary schooling with its departmentalised structure and more autonomy from the system leadership and the particular learning needs of its students. System imposed reforms such as instructional rounds were abandoned in School A because of teacher and heads of department resistance; however, they were successfully modified in School B to accommodate the concerns that teachers had about them. Another system imposed reform strategy, Word Generation, failed to work successfully at any school because its American elementary school background was perceived not to match the needs of the four Australian secondary schools in the present study.

System leaders learnt during the reform process that top down reforms imposed on schools created resistance from principals who criticised the reforms for not suiting their community's needs. Although system leaders stated the importance of school

leaders exercising autonomy there was limited evidence of that occurring in the first years of the reform and no system leader claimed that the move towards schools having increasing autonomy for reform implementation was a planned process. Resistance from principals appears to have been the force that led to greater autonomy as system leaders gave way to school leaders fashioning reform implementation away from a 'one size fits all approach'. This experience challenges the view of Hopkins (2007) that effective system reform is a consequence of system leaders re-balancing top down reforms with bottom up reforms after the top down reforms have created a coherent focus on teaching and learning. Rather it suggests that such a re-balance can occur through school leadership rather than system leadership.

Three of the four principals in the present study spoke about 'filtering' or 'adapting' the system reforms and their actions support the findings of Mulford et al. (2008) who recognised that effective leaders of low SES schools tend to act more independently than their system directives. This finding also supports the study of Leithwood et al. (2008) who claimed that when leaders respond effectively to the local context they positively influence staff motivation and commitment. Leaders of pedagogy were able to do this in School B and to a lesser extent in Schools C and D. It is also probable that this finding is associated with the second finding that reform appeared to be more successful when it was negotiated with teachers and heads of departments, thus empowering them to co-construct the reform implementation as the negotiation process tended to deal with local contextual issues.

System leaders learnt that they needed to allow school leaders to exercise increasing autonomy to define and be accountable for the implementation of the reforms. They also learnt that they needed to involve school leaders more in the decision-making processes surrounding the broad design of the reforms. System leaders acknowledged that "the original work…was very much a sheep dip... It needed some more individual work within the school's context" (System Leader 6) and that, "one of the great learnings with the lead strategy …(i.e. creating leaders of pedagogy)….should have been debated and created at the local level in terms of that local level context" (System Leader 1). Barber (2009) noted that top-down decision making can lead to alienation and disempowerment but in this case it led to resistance and opposition by Principals which may been averted if they had been consulted prior to the announcement of the system's strategies. This experience leads to the finding that system leaders should engage and consult with school leaders regarding the design of a system reform.

6.3.1 Summary of Findings for RSQ2

The main findings for RSQ2 include:

(i)   Building of relational trust between the principal, instructional coaches, heads of departments and teachers was an important tool of capacity building.

(ii)   Reform appeared to be more successful when it was negotiated with teachers and heads of departments, thus empowering them to co-construct reform implementation.

(iii)   A broadly distributed model of leadership appears to build capacity to improve student outcomes if established in a context of relational trust and teamwork.

(iv)   System imposed reforms are more likely to succeed when they are adapted by school leaders to meet the local context.

(v)   System leaders should engage and consult with school leaders regarding the design of a system reform.

6.4 RSQ3: How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school?

Teachers and leaders of pedagogy in the four schools emphasised different elements of teacher quality with most focus on initiatives to improve assessment, literacy, numeracy and student engagement.

All schools had plans and commentary on literacy, numeracy and ESL initiatives, and showed some evidence of improvement in literacy outcomes in NAPLAN during and immediately after the reform period. In particular, leaders of pedagogy in School C emphasised improving student assessment to raise expectations for students (School C, CCO) whilst the leaders of pedagogy from School D particularly emphasised literacy and used these approaches to shape instructional rounds and professional learning. The improvement of Schools B and D in literacy outcomes beyond the national average validates the need to have clear school wide learning goals consistent with the findings of Mulford and Silins (2011) and to focus on teacher professional learning that improves the teaching of literacy and numeracy which was a finding of Busatto (2004).

The system's five-day intensive programme (*Literacy the Next Step*) aimed at building the capacity of leaders and teachers to address student literacy needs was reported positively by all schools and particularly by the schools who improved their literacy scores more than others (Schools B and D). These data suggests the first finding for RSQ3 that there is a evidence of a relationship existing between student outcomes and leaders of learning building capacity by using whole school literacy approaches to plan and support professional development for teachers.

In keeping with the findings of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2016b) that high-quality teaching is the greatest in-school influence on student engagement and outcomes, the present study found that participants from School B reported more than others their attempts to improve pedagogy by challenging the traditional culture of teaching by focussing on student engagement. For the leaders of School B, changing teacher practice was seen to be the most critical part of the reforms with 'new approaches to teaching and ways of getting kids interested that were just turned off by chalk and talk' (School B, Ex-Principal) and their work on TILT and instructional rounds was focussed on student centred learning. School B's growth in student outcomes support the findings of Hattie (2009) who noted that student engagement is a key driver of growth in student outcomes. These perceptions suggest the second finding that instructional coaches and principals who promote a student

centred approach to pedagogy appeared to be effective in building capacity to improve student outcomes.

Groups of teachers from all four schools were trained in the use of data and there is evidence that teachers from School B began to modify their teaching of literacy to personalise student learning by 'focussing particularly on reading and writing, focussing on analysis of data, putting a face to the data, kids' faces to it … It actually saw growth with the students and the teacher's confidence as well in delivering literacy strategies so it was positive' (School B, LoP 1). This is aligned to the findings of the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2015) that identified that schools who had high growth in students' literacy and numeracy achievements typically had teachers regularly use data for enquiry and self evaluation to improve teaching and to evaluate the learning needs of their students. This regular use of data began to emerge in the schools during the reform period, with participants from School B being particularly positive towards the progress teachers had made with using data. This effective use of data might help explain School B's profile of improving literacy and numeracy achievement during and immediately after the reforms.

There was some variance in the reported progress of leaders using data to inform teaching and learning. Heads of department spoke about their up-skilling with the use of NAPLAN and HSC data to improve teaching and learning; however, leaders of pedagogy in Schools A and D expressed doubt that this was occurring effectively.

In the present study, leaders of pedagogy emphasised the use of data for learning rather than for accountability. Coordinators in School C could 'see that data is actually about asking questions on where to as opposed to … were very good or were not very good' (School C, LOP 1, Interview). This use of data is acknowledged in the scholarly literature with Louis et al. (2010a) reporting that using data for learning rather than accountability allowed the leadership team to build relational trust and collaboration so that teachers saw data informed discussions as beneficial.

The experiences from different schools suggest that the leaders of pedagogy from School B appeared to have led teachers and heads of department to use data more effectively than the other three schools because they adopted a whole of school approach with significant professional development of teachers and heads of department. Their improvement in student outcomes supports the findings of the NSW Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2014) study, which found that high value added schools built a learning culture school through leaders encouraging a whole

school perspective and supporting teachers' professional learning in the use of data to support learning.

This suggests the third finding for RSQ3 that there is a relationship between leaders of learning who built the capacity of teachers to improve student outcomes by promoting the use of data to improve teaching and learning at the whole school level.

6.4.1 Summary of Findings for RSQ3

The following actions by leaders of learning may be associated with improvements in building capacity to improve student learning:

(i)   Using whole school literacy approaches to plan and support professional development for teachers**.**

(ii)   Promoting a student centred approach to pedagogy.

(iii)   Promoting the use of data to improve teaching and learning at the whole school level.

6.5 RSQ4: How was 'professional learning' built in each secondary school?

System leaders promoted professional learning to schools via the agency of school-based leaders of pedagogy whom they trained to use models of coaching and mentoring. System leaders promoted collaborative inquiry to the leaders of pedagogy via action research, PLCs and instructional rounds; however, they allowed school leadership teams to shape the way these practices would work in each school setting. The data demonstrates that leaders from Schools B and C were more successful in the planning and delivery of professional learning and their success sheds some light on our understanding of what school leaders must do to enact effective reform in their schools.

Documentation and commentary evidence from Schools B and C demonstrate a well planned and staged approach to professional learning that purposively focussed on the professional learning of heads of department before focussing on teacher development. By the end of the third year of the reform, Principal B was satisfied that the leadership capacity of the heads of departments had been built through the leaders of pedagogy working with the heads of department to 'give them more skills as leaders of and learning and how to gain the trust of their colleagues and go into classrooms to help their teachers' (School B, CCO). The principal of School C adopted a similar approach of 'developing people through collaborative planning, helping them understand what is good learning and then developing your middle managers' (School C, Principal). This focus on heads of department supports the findings of Guskey and Yoon (2009) that principals of effective low SES schools look to heads of department as an 'engine for change' (p. 88). School A appears to have had a different approach as their heads of department were treated 'as much the same role as a teacher in implementing the reforms' (School A, Coordinator 2) and Coordinator 3 from School D believed the expertise of the heads of department was not being 'tapped into as effectively as it could be'. To build the capacity of schools to lead learning, Gurr and Drysdale (2013) called for senior school leaders to promote and support professional learning for middle level leaders such as heads of department, which would focus them more effectively on elements of leadership for learning such as pedagogy, curriculum and understanding the learning needs of students. This variance could explain why schools such as School B were more successful in implementing the reforms than other schools were. This leads to the finding that when school and system leaders prioritise the capacity building of heads of department to lead professional learning it leads to greater reform engagement across the school community.

School C had greater success in establishing collaborative communities of practice than other schools, which could be because of the different levels of engagement that heads of department from each school had in the design and practice of these collaborative communities. Printy (2008) reported that subject faculty leadership was a key factor in determining the quality of teachers' participation and their engagement in collaborative communities of practice. The importance of this finding underlined the role heads of department have in 'shaping the agenda for learning, brokering knowledge and learning opportunities, and motivating teachers for learning work' which was posited by Printy (2008, pp. 214-215). This might help explain the success of leaders of School C in establishing collaborative structures because the leaders of pedagogy and the principal enjoyed the support of their heads of department in establishing these structures.

Conversely, School A and School D's lack of collaborative structures could be due to the lack of participation of their heads of department in the leadership of the reforms. In the case of Schools A and D, their PLCs collapsed when the leaders of pedagogy stopped leading them and unsuccessfully encouraged teachers to continue themselves. This is interesting because Printy (2008) reported that teachers tend to understand what good teaching looks like from their teacher colleagues rather than their heads of department or principals; however, in Schools A and D there was insufficient interest from teachers and heads of department in such a collegial enterprise. This might have occurred possibly because they were not involved in the original designing of the PLCs and involvement in decision making as has been shown as an important element of a successful PLC through the research of Hord & Sommers, 2008; Little, 2012). Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) cited research that PLCs are often viewed more favourably by school leaders than they are by teachers. In the present study, this was found to be the case, for example, School A's documentation that was written by the school leaders referred to collaborative communities, yet teachers did not refer to them in the focus groups.

Some positive features of the PLCs were discovered during the present study; however, few participants directly spoke of them as being successful and rewarding, although a number described how the reforms encouraged greater collaboration between teachers (School D, Teachers 3 and 4). LoP 2 from School C stated that during the reforms teachers began 'working together and with that collective wisdom they're just getting much richer lessons, and with that spirit of collaboration also comes openness of our classrooms'. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) asked for reconsideration of PLCs to

make them more grounded and owned by the participants rather than being used to implement 'outsiders' agendas' and to orientate them more towards being professional capital. Heads of department potentially have an important role to act as the mediatory between the principal, instructional coaches and teachers to influence and promote collegial and collaborative professional learning activities such as PLCs. However, with the exception of School C and possibly the TILT teams of School B, heads of department did not appear to play an active role in influencing and promoting collaborative professional learning activities in the present study.

Therefore, another finding for RSQ4 is that for reform implementation to be successful heads of department and teachers need to be involved in the planning for and decision making within collaborative initiatives.

6.5.1 Summary of Findings for RSQ4

The following actions by leaders of learning regarding professional learning could lead to improvements in building capacity to improve student learning:

(i)   prioritising the capacity building of heads of department to lead professional learning leads to greater reform engagement across the school community**.**

(ii)   heads of department and teachers need to be involved in the planning for and decision-making within collaborative initiatives.

6.6 RSQ5: How was 'parent and community engagement' built in each secondary school?

Even though research studies over the past three decades have indicated that parental involvement positively influences academic achievement (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012) there is limited evidence that school leaders of the four secondary schools made concerted attempts to improve the level of parent involvement in school decision making or that they worked to build parents' expectations for their children's academic achievement.

Of the four schools, School C reported the most engagement with parents. However, parent survey results from all four schools strongly endorsed the view that parents believed they were being consulted and involved in decision-making. This strong endorsement may have blunted the impetus of school leaders to improve parent involvement in decision making because schools in this area took limited action. For example, School A reported each year using the same script in its Annual Report to the School Community that it prided 'itself on the effective lines of communication between parents and the College. …The distinct lack of expressed dissatisfaction in any form of communication indicates clearly parent confidence in the College and its administration' (School A, 2012, p 19; 2013, Section 10 and 2014 ASRC, Section 10). LoP 1 from School A described the need to restructure events away from being information sharing to more consultative forums; however, there was no evidence that this had occurred.

This lack of involvement by parents in school decision making supports the findings of Johnson et al. (2016) and Povey et al. (2016) which found minimal evidence of demonstrating parental leadership in schools, particularly in secondary schools, because of the growing independence of adolescent students and the larger and more departmentalised nature of secondary schooling making parental involvement in their children's schooling more difficult than in primary schooling. Povey et al (2016) noted that principals may espouse the advantages of parent engagement but according to the leaders of parent organisations one in four fail to act effectively on parent engagement. In the present study, only one principal (School C) made any reference to parent and community engagement and this may partly explain the lack of engagement as Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) suggested that the principal is key to forming effective engagement with parents and establishing two-way communication.

This lack of action was possibly due to a belief that there was no imperative to do so in light of positive feedback from parents from the Parent and Community

Engagement survey; however, it could also be connected to the secondary school culture that Hill and Tyson (2009) and Johnson et al. (2016) refer to that inhibits parental involvement due to the scale and departmental nature of secondary schools. It is noted that no school leader chose to repeat the parent survey that was made available to parents in 2014.

All schools attempted to focus on parent engagement with learning rather than merely participation in school activities; however, the secondary context of adolescent students and the less direct nature of parenting meant that initiatives were offered away from the classroom at night or, in some cases, they were held in a vacant space during the day. Schools attempted to strengthen the engagement of parents in their children's learning in a range of different ways including such elements as eLearning support, literacy and numeracy workshops and parent briefings on homework, reporting and the HSC. Some were more successful than others and low attendance to these voluntary sessions was noted by the leaders of pedagogy at School A and the curriculum coordinator at School D. This lack of engagement does not support the findings of Hill and Tyson (2009) who reported that voluntary sessions should lead to greater parent involvement with their child's learning. System Leader 4 had the impression that parent engagement was in its early stages at School D; however, she believed community events like the literacy workshop she witnessed were making a difference.

There was limited evidence that school leaders worked to build parents' expectations about their child's learning with the exception that parents from School C were taken on a tour of the local TAFE and the Australian Catholic University campus with a view to showing them the possibilities of tertiary education for their children (School C, 2013 SSNP Report Empowering Learners). This limited focus is of concern considering that the act of building parental expectations for achievement and education has been identified through the meta-analyses of Jeynes (2007, 2012) and Hill and Tyson (2009) as an important way for parental influence to improve student outcomes. However, in this study the school whose student outcomes improved the most over the reform period (School B) appeared to be less actively involved in parent engagement than most of the other schools.

This is not to say that schools did not attempt to engage more actively with their parents but it is important to note that Povey et al. (2016) found that principals of low SES schools have much less success with parent engagement strategies than their high SES counterparts. School leaders did look for ways to engage parents with learning through things such as literacy and numeracy workshops and parent forums but they had

limited responses from parents. This challenges the findings of Benner, Boyle and Sadler (2015) who found that that it was more effective to engage low SES parents in school based activities focussed on their child's learning rather than raising parental expectations because of their limited social capital.

It is difficult to determine from the collected data whether parent engagement was taken seriously by school leaders because their overall attempts to engage with parents appear minimal in comparison to the activity undertaken for other reform ventures. Their lack of activity may be related to Povey et al. (2016)'s finding that secondary school principals had lower expectations for parent involvement in school life and communicate less with the parent body than primary school principals. The limited engagement could also have been possibly due to that the culture of secondary schools, with adolescent students and a departmentalised structure, inhibiting parental engagement but there is little in the data beyond some recognition that teachers may not have perceived the importance of parental engagement prior to the reform period (School C, Principal). Teddlie and Stringfield (1993), Harris and Goodhall (2007) and Povey et al. (2016) noted that parental involvement may not be encouraged by some leaders in low SES schools but in this study the survey data supports the view that parents felt welcomed and valued in the schools (Appendix J). As was mentioned previously, it is possible that school leaders may have read the positive parent and community survey data and felt it was unnecessary to focus on what they perceived as a strength of the school. There is a level of uncertainty about the explanation and so the finding is limited to the following: school leaders did not focus great attention on parental engagement despite the importance placed on this by the research literature and the system's reform agenda**.**

6.7 RSQ6: To what extent do participants identify improved student and teacher capacity for leadership as a result of the initiative?

As was presented in the previous chapter, participants largely identified improved capacity for leadership of learning as a result of the reforms with 100 positive comments (81%) and only 24 (19%) comments from participants who mentioned various shortcomings about the reform's outcomes. Participants referred to the improved capacity of some KLA coordinators, teachers and leadership teams as a result of the initiative. They positively viewed the reforms for the opportunities they provided to build teacher and heads of department capacity by trialling new techniques, using data to inform learning, collaborative practices and focussing on literacy and numeracy. Participants also mentioned the strengthening of the learning culture through such things as a greater focus on teaching and learning, higher expectations, improved attendance and the adoption of whole school approaches and practices.

The present study presents a more positive teacher response to system driven reform than the findings of Rowan, Camburn, Barnes, and Cross (2004b) and Schmoker (1999) who were concerned with the lack of progress of high school reform in the 1990s. This may be because the designers of the National Partnerships for Smarter Schools had attempted to mitigate local resistance to the reforms by adopting some of the learnings from previous reform endeavours in Northern America and the UK. The learning profiles from Chapter 4 revealed that three of the four schools improved literacy, numeracy or their HSC achievements to some degree and this study supports the findings of a number of researchers (e.g. Hopkins, 2013; Leithwood et al., 1999; Matthews, 2009; Muijs et al., 2004; Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000; Sammons et al., 1997) that schools, even in disadvantaged areas, can positively impact on student academic outcomes.

Participants from Schools B and C particularly mentioned the capacity building of the heads of department, the strengthened learning culture, greater collaboration between teachers and, particularly in the case of School B, better use of data to inform teaching and learning. There were fewer positive comments from participants of Schools A and D and although a few mentioned collaboration (School A) they mentioned other things that Schools B and C did not mention such as innovation (School A) and literacy pedagogy (School D). Participants from schools A and D reported that their heads of department capacity to lead learning had not improved as a result of the reforms. One system leader believed that, after talking with Principal D, 'the biggest hurdle for them has been the KLA coordinators … to me, the people whose

capacity really needs to be built in the school is the KLA coordinators' (System Leader 4) and without that capacity building the gains from the reforms would not be sustainable.

The evidence of the participants on their views regarding the capacity of heads of department and the achievement data regarding student learning outcomes both support the major finding of this chapter that leadership is best shared with leaders of learning such as heads of department particularly when they are professionally valued, developed and positioned to work closely with classroom teachers. Furthermore, it supports the finding of RSQ4 (i) that prioritising the capacity building of heads of department to lead professional learning leads to greater reform engagement.

The evidence of the participants identifying a strengthened learning culture and greater collaborative practices along with the achievement data regarding student learning outcomes support the activities undertaken by the leaders of Schools B, C and D to strengthen the culture of their schools by raising expectations and establishing whole school approaches. The importance of whole school approaches supports the findings of Hunt and King (2015) who also found that such approaches were necessary for school improvement and the improved outcomes and engaged heads of department of School B appeared to confirm the view of Leask and Terrell (2014) that heads of department have an important role to implement whole school policies if they are to impact upon the classroom. The school leaders' actions are supported by evidence from the study of NSW schools that greatly added value to their literacy and numeracy scores. Among the six practices identified were effective collaboration among staff, setting whole school goals, setting high expectations for student achievement and creating a environment that promotes learning and student engagement (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2015). Similarly, Hopkins et al. (2011)'s review of effective systems confirmed that successful schools and systems are those 'whose leadership has high expectations, an unrelenting focus on the quality of learning and teaching [and has created a learning culture] that ensures that students consistently undertake challenging learning tasks' (p. 272). Therefore, the present study confirms the position that leaders strengthen the learning culture of the school when they provide opportunities for staff to collaborate that contributes in building the collective capacity of schools to lead learning.

The NSW HVA study also identified the use of explicit and effective teaching strategies, which was mentioned by a number of participants from School D as a positive feature of capacity building at their school. School D focused strongly on

explicit literacy skill development and this became a major project for their professional learning. School D adopted the approach of a highly focused form of professional learning regarding literacy that aimed to develop what Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, and Mackay (2014) described as a 'common practice out of the integration of curriculum, teaching, and learning' (p. 272).

However, a number of participants questioned how common and sustainable their approach was because heads of department were not involved in the programme and parents complained that some teachers were not supporting the literacy interventions in the classroom. Nevertheless, of the four selected schools, School D showed the greatest student gain for both reading and numeracy during 2012–2014 in the midst of the reforms. The learning gain in reading was substantially above the average for Australian schools. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority named School D in 2014 and 2015 as one of the substantially high gain schools for reading in NSW. These outcomes support the finding that a school wide focus on explicit teaching strategies for literacy is effective in improving student literacy outcomes.

6.7.1 Summary of Findings for RSQ6

The summary of findings for this RSQ includes:

(i) This study supports the findings of a number of researchers (e.g. Hopkins, 2013; Leithwood et al., 1999; Matthews, 2009; Muijs et al., 2004; Newmann et al., 2000; Sammons et al., 1997) that schools, even in disadvantaged areas, can positively impact on student academic outcomes.

(ii) The data collected for RSQ6 supports the major finding of this chapter that leadership is best shared with leaders of learning such as heads of department who are professionally valued, developed and positioned to work closely with classroom teachers. Furthermore, it supports the finding of RSQ4 (i) that prioritises the capacity building of heads of department to lead professional learning that results in greater reform engagement

(iii) The achievement data confirmed the notion that when leaders strengthened the learning culture of the school and provided opportunities for staff to collaborate effectively they built the collective capacity of schools to lead learning.

(iv) A school wide focus on explicit teaching strategies for literacy is effective in improving student literacy outcomes.

Chapter 7 Recommendations

This chapter presents a review of the research findings and the recommendations from the present study. The findings are discussed in association with the major research question and the six research sub-questions.

The major research question was, 'How did the experiences of teachers and leaders engaged in a system driven reform for low SES Catholic secondary schools contribute to an understanding of the important elements of capacity building to improve student outcomes?' The analysis of the experiences of these educators led to the study's findings that suggest that successful capacity building for school improvement requires leadership distribution from the principal to those positioned closer to the work of classroom teachers. This was especially true for heads of departments, who could work and enjoy reciprocal trust with instructional coaches and principals, to build the learning culture of the school via improving teacher quality, professional learning and also parent and community engagement.

The majority of the research on distributive leadership has been focused on the theoretical and empirical nature of the construct (e.g. Bennett et al., 2003; Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2007; Robinson, 2008; Spillane, 2012); however, it is unclear to what extent distributive leadership is relevant in terms of student learning (Robinson, 2008). The findings of the present study are significant because heads of departments are directly positioned to work with teachers and in classrooms, with this recommended distribution of leadership of learning within secondary schools potentially leading to improved student outcomes.

This finding builds upon a relatively sparse field of literature to provide a better understanding of the potential of heads of departments to lead learning and how they can build capacity for greater professional capital in schools. Furthermore, the findings endorse previous school improvement literature that has identified the potential of instructional coaches (in the present study, the leaders of pedagogy) to act as reform leaders to build the capacity of teachers and assist in strengthening the learning culture of schools as reported by Fullan and Knight (2011); (Galey, 2016).

The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of educators in different low socio-economic Catholic secondary schools involved in a system driven reform agenda to discover how their experiences help us understand the important elements of capacity building for improved student outcomes. The majority of research findings presented in the previous chapter point to important inter-related elements of capacity building and leadership that lead to school improvement as evidenced through

improved student outcomes. Although most relevant to low SES schools it would appear that a number of these elements would benefit other schools as well.

7.1 Review of the Major Findings

The findings from the present study are derived from a review of the scholarly literature, analysis of relevant documentation and the rich descriptions provided by the system and school leaders as well as teachers who participated in the interviews and focus groups. The following discussion reflects a synthesis of the findings.

7.1.1 Leadership Distribution

The present study's findings supported the consensus within the literature that successful reform implementation relies upon leaders both articulating and sharing a vision or moral purpose of the work (Bezzina, 2007; Fullan, 2003, 2010b) and negotiating with those who must carry out the work the manner and method in which it could be done as reported by Hargreaves and Shirley (2011); Mulford and Silins (2011). The study demonstrated that a critical element of building capacity for improving student outcomes was the empowering of leaders who work closely with classroom teachers such as heads of departments and leaders of pedagogy. This finding corroborates the recent findings of Leithwood (2016) that highlighted the great potential of heads of departments to influence learning. Similarly, the findings support the empowerment of instructional coaches (e.g. leaders of pedagogy) to build leadership of learning and create a learning culture that will lead to improved student outcomes. This finding supports the studies of Galey (2016) and Coggins et al. (2003) who both deem that instructional coaches have the potential to improve teaching practices and build learning culture.

Although the study found leadership distribution to leaders of pedagogy and heads of department to be a positive force, the findings did support the caution provided by a number of authors that distribution to capable well-developed leaders was necessary for it to be effective (Dinham, 2007b; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Harris, 2011a; Timperley, 2005). The findings also confirmed that view of Bryk and Schneider (2003) that reciprocal trust between principals, heads of department and teachers was an important tool for capacity building and reform implementation.

7.1.2 School Learning Culture

The present study established that the school learning culture was an important element for driving improvement in student outcomes. However, it did not discover that these collaborative practices and leadership distribution to heads of department were by themselves or in partnership the key to school improvement. The different experiences of Schools B and C to Schools A and D suggests that learning culture is a crucial foundation that should be developed before greater collaboration and leadership distribution to the heads of department will be effective. This highlights the importance of high expectations of leaders and teachers and whole school practices in student learning to drive improvement in classrooms, and also the pivotal role of heads of department in implementing these high expectations and whole school practices.

7.1.3 Quality Teaching

School leaders built capacity for quality teaching and improved student outcomes via whole school practices that promoted literacy, a student centred approach to pedagogy and the effective use of data to improve teaching and learning by leadership teams, heads of departments and classroom teachers.

7.1.4 Professional Learning

The present study identified that heads of departments were important in establishing collaborative structures for professional learning and that their involvement in the planning and decision making of collaborative initiatives such as PLCs for whole staff and departmental professional learning was an important condition for successful implementation of such initiatives. Furthermore, the study established that school leaders who prioritised the professional development of heads of departments were more successful in improving student outcomes than school leaders who prioritised classroom teachers for professional development.

7.1.5 Parent and Community Engagement

The finding regarding how school leaders built capacity for parent and community engagement was somewhat discouraging due to the limited evidence that school leaders made concerted attempts to improve the level of parent involvement in school decision making or that they worked to build parents' expectations for their children's academic achievement.

This finding is not surprising when we acknowledge that traditionally the secondary school culture does not encourage extensive parental engagement with their adolescent child's school as compared to the primary school culture, a point made through the research of Barr and Saltmarsh (2014); Johnson et al. (2016). This is in spite of the evidence of Jeynes (2012) that the association between parental engagement and student outcomes is stronger for secondary students than it is for primary students. The problem appears to be that although the potential for gain is strong the difficulty of successfully implementing reform is even stronger. Povey et al. (2016) found that principals of low SES schools have much less success with parent engagement strategies than their high SES counterparts and they found evidence of a reluctance of school leaders of secondary low SES schools to engage in such reforms possibly because of their low expectations to their success. In this study school leaders did look for ways to engage parents with learning through things such as literacy and numeracy workshops and parent forums but they had poor attendance from parents. In this study the school whose student outcomes improved the most over the reform period was less actively involved in parent engagement than most of the other schools and so it is difficult to make any strong conclusion in this area. This poor level of engagement in secondary schools is in the face of consistent evidence that such engagement could benefit schools and lead to improved student outcomes (Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016; Harris & Goodall, 2007; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Jeynes, 2012).

7.1.6 Extent to which participants identified improved capacity

The findings about the extent that participants identified improved student and teacher capacity for learning because of the reform initiative were overwhelmingly positive. As presented in the previous chapter, participants largely identified improved capacity for leadership of learning as a result of the reforms with over 84% of comments identifying improved capacity. The benefits of the reforms in improving the capacity of some heads of departments, teachers and leadership teams were widely acknowledged. Participants valued and identified the importance of the reform opportunities for teachers and leaders to trial new techniques, to use data to inform learning, and to collaborate and focus on literacy and numeracy. This positive experience contrasts with the findings of Schmoker (1999) and Rowan, Camburn, Barnes, and Cross (2004) who reported that reforms in secondary schools were more likely to fail than succeed due to school-based resistance from teachers.

These findings will be of interest to system and school leaders who are implementing reforms to build a school's capacity for leadership of learning. From these findings, a number of recommendations on system and school policy and practices have been created.

7.2 Recommendations arising from the findings

These recommendations are primarily directed to system and school leaders serving low SES communities; however, many if not all recommendations have some currency for leaders of other secondary schools.

7.2.1 Leadership of Learning

Successful reform implementation relies upon both system leaders and principals articulating a shared vision or moral purpose of the work and negotiating with those who must carry out the work. This leads to the recommendation that **system leaders adopt and document a change process for school reform that prescribes the identification and articulation of the moral purpose of a reform and establishes protocols for negotiation and communication with those who will be involved in the work (Recommendation 1).**

The finding that an important element of building capacity for improving student outcomes was the empowering of leaders who work closely with classroom teachers such as heads of departments and leaders of pedagogy led to a number of recommendations. It is recommended that **system leaders and principals distribute greater leadership of learning to heads of departments and review school procedures and leadership structures to allow greater responsibility for their leadership of learning (Recommendation 2).** To this end, it is recommended that **system leaders review the position descriptions of heads of departments to ensure that their responsibilities reflect important elements of leadership for learning such as student centred pedagogy, curriculum development, teacher development and supervision, data analysis and student literacy development (Recommendation 3).** Furthermore, **system leaders need to provide professional development for heads of departments that will support these aforementioned elements of leadership for learning (Recommendation 4).**

To address the caution noted in the present study regarding the lack of capacity of some heads of departments, it is recommended that **accountability measures be strengthened via contract renewal processes so that heads of departments who are**

reluctant or unable to exercise or develop leadership of learning are performance managed into roles more suited to their interests and capacity (Recommendation 5). To further address this, it is recommended that **school and/or system leaders strengthen recruitment and selection processes for heads of departments by making elements of leadership for learning such as understanding of student centred pedagogy, curriculum development, teacher development and supervision, data analysis and student literacy development important criteria (Recommendation 6).**

The present study has confirmed the important role that instructional coaches such as leaders of pedagogy can play in building the capacity of teachers and leaders to be more effective in their roles. It is noted that all the schools involved in the present study attempted to retain at least one of their leaders of pedagogy after the reform concluded. **The employment of at least one leader of pedagogy to each low SES secondary school is recommended and they should be positioned on the school's senior leadership team and given responsibility for leading the school's teaching and learning (Recommendation 7). System leaders should support leaders of pedagogy with professional learning and networking whereby leaders of pedagogy meet regularly with their peers in other schools for professional development and learning (Recommendation 8).**

7.2.2 School Learning Culture

The findings highlighted the importance of high expectations and whole school practices to drive improvement and strengthen the learning culture of a school. This may be realised through the following recommendations. **Networks of principals and other school leaders need to be established so that they may learn about how leaders from other schools have raised expectations and instituted whole school practices that have positively impacted upon learning (Recommendation 9**).

Noting the importance of heads of departments in building a school's learning culture, it is further recommended that **school leaders introduce an internal system of cyclical review of secondary faculties to assess the level of faculty expectations and adoption of whole school policies that complement and inform any external review of schools conducted by the system (Recommendation 10).**

7.2.3 Managing Change

The present study confirmed that reciprocal trust among principals, leaders of pedagogy and heads of departments was an important tool for capacity building and reform implementation. It is therefore recommended that **system leaders include strategies to strengthen relational trust as an important element of all leadership development programmes for school leaders (Recommendation 11**).

The study also confirmed that system imposed reforms are more likely to succeed when they are adapted by school leaders to meet the local context. The local context is influenced by such factors as the existing capacity of teachers or middle leaders to lead learning and their openness to change their practices, the nature of secondary schooling with its departmentalised structure and greater autonomy from system leadership and the particular learning needs of students. Therefore, it is recommended that **all system reform policies and processes for improving learning eschew a 'one-size-fits-all' position in favour of allowing school leaders to shape reform to meet their context initiatives (Recommendation 12).**

System leaders also learnt that they need to engage and consult with school leaders regarding the design of a system reform. Therefore it is recommended that **systems leaders consult and create a change management policy that includes provision for consultation with school leaders regarding change practices that will affect schools (Recommendation 13)**.

7.2.4 Teacher Quality

The present study identified that school leaders built capacity for quality teaching and improved student outcomes via whole school practices that promoted literacy, a student centred approach to pedagogy and the effective use of data to improve teaching and learning by leadership teams, heads of departments and classroom teachers. For these whole school practices to occur, it is recommended that **system leaders work with leaders of pedagogy to design and present school-based professional development that supports principals, heads of departments and teachers in implementing whole school practices in literacy, pedagogy and the use of data to improve the quality of classroom instruction (Recommendation 14).** Furthermore, it is recommended that **progress in implementing these whole school approaches to teaching and learning be monitored via faculty and school review processes (Recommendation 15).**

7.2.5 Professional Learning

The study's findings identified that heads of departments were important in establishing collaborative structures for professional learning. It is recommended that **system and/or school policies for collaborative learning strategies such as PLCs stipulate that these need to be designed at the school level via a representative partnership of the leadership team (including leaders of pedagogy), middle management (including heads of department) and classroom teachers (Recommendation 16).**

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that school leaders who prioritised the professional development of heads of departments were more successful in improving student outcomes and that these heads of departments were vital to classroom teachers adopting new initiatives. In addition to Recommendation 3, it is suggested that the **professional learning policy of schools include provision for heads of departments to be included in the same professional development that members of their faculty are requested to complete so that they can lead and support classroom teachers in reform implementation (Recommendation 17).**

7.2.6 Parent and Community Engagement

There was limited evidence that school leaders made concerted attempts to improve the level of parental involvement in school decision making or that they worked to build parents' expectations for their children's academic achievement. Therefore, **it is recommended that when designing reforms for low SES schools consideration be given to gaining the voice of the parent community to gain their engagement (Recommendation 18).** In support of this it is further recommended that **research evidence and effective practices regarding parent and community engagement be included in system leadership programmes (Recommendation 19).** It is further recommended that **school leaders gauge parent community engagement via annual surveys and strategically plan to foster parental involvement in decision making and provide support in building parent educational and occupational aspirations for their children (Recommendation 20).**

7.3 Recommendations for future Study

Findings from the present study suggest that leadership distribution to heads of departments might lead to improved student outcomes. Further research of the impact of such distribution is required beyond this case study of four schools, with greater confidence in these findings provided by quantitative research (Recommendation 21).

Further research of the work and outcomes of instructional coaches is recommended to ascertain what links exist between the capacity of instructional coaches and improved student outcomes (Recommendation 22).

It would be valuable to explore the longer-term effects of seeking volunteers for reform programmes as leaders attempt to build capacity beyond volunteers to other staff members (Recommendation 23).

Assessment of the long-term and sustainable effects of the reforms by tracking and presenting the learning profiles of each of the schools during the four-year period after the reforms is important (Recommendation 24).

This project produces further evidence that the impact of middle leadership is important in the secondary school system and provides further ground to test and examine the practices that make the most difference to student outcomes at the department level. Further research to assist school and system leaders in providing effective models of recruitment and professional support for heads of departments would be valuable (Recommendation 25).

It is also recommended that further research be conducted into the relationship between secondary school cultures and parent engagement (Recommendation 26).

7.4 Limitations of the Research

The most striking limitation of this work is its reliance on qualitative data from interviews and focus groups, which were collected on a single day for each school. This was balanced by the document study; however, the design methodology has not allowed for further in-depth investigation at school and departmental levels to observe, test and probe some of the findings that have been reported. The interview and focus groups were conducted at the end of the third year of the four-year reform programme whilst the documents were typically collected at the conclusion of the reform period. The early collection of interview and focus group data were necessary because in the fourth year I was to take up a system leadership role that might have compromised the data collected owing to an unequal power relationship. The interview and focus group data collection was therefore undertaken before I took up the system role.

In addition, because I was working as a principal in another region of the diocese it is recognised that the interviews with leaders of pedagogy, curriculum coordinators and focus groups of coordinators and teachers involved the possible perception by participants of an unequal power relationship between myself and these participants that may have affected what individual participants revealed. Importantly, the early collection of data did not allow participants the opportunity to reflect upon the full four-year reform period when answering questions. It is also important to acknowledge that although I have not worked in any of the schools studied, I am familiar with a number of colleagues who have leadership positions in the selected low SES Catholic secondary schools and was mindful of this as a possible source of bias affecting the data.

The study was limited to four Catholic systemic schools of a single Catholic diocese in NSW. Consequently, no claims can be made about its applicability to other educational jurisdictions.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

There is a need for increased research that identifies the teacher and leadership practices that make a difference to student academic outcomes. The present study has explored the relationship between leadership and capacity building and has found that leadership needs to be positioned as close to the work of classroom teachers as possible if it is build their capacity to improve student outcomes. It has identified that in order to build teacher capacity it is important to distributing leadership of learning to heads of departments. It is important that these heads of department be professionally developed and that they embrace their leadership role with classroom teachers to motivate and support them to improve student outcomes. The study has confirmed the difficulty of reforming secondary schools but it has found that it is possible to do this with leadership that is trusted by teachers and is shared to heads of department who can work with classroom teachers to build their capacity through improvements to quality teaching and professional learning. It has also found that parent engagement in low SES secondary schools is a particularly difficult area to reform.

The study affirms the leadership of the leaders of pedagogy who brought about effective change in the majority of cases and this was particularly the case when they built trust with heads of department and developed them to be better leaders of learning. It is heartening that at the cessation of the reform's funding, leaders from each school

sought their own financing of these positions to either retain their leaders of pedagogy or replace them if they had been promoted to senior positions.

This conclusion takes us back to the introduction of this thesis, the moral imperative for the project. After more than three decades of various Australian government policies designed to make educational outcomes more equitable, material and social disadvantage remains an important but limiting feature of student achievement in Australia. Students and staff of the four schools studied gained from their involvement in the *Low SES NP* reforms and one school's success in particular highlighted a possible way forward for both low SES schools and other schools to improve the educational outcomes of students in the future.

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Appendices

For the sake of understanding the Appendices A, B & C, the sub-questions that guide this investigation are listed below:

1. How has leadership of learning been experienced during the reform initiative in each secondary school and according to the various leadership roles?

2. What barriers to the reforms did leaders encounter and how did they manage the change required to implement the Low SES NP Reforms?

3. How was 'quality teaching' built in each secondary school?

4. How was 'professional learning' built in each secondary school?

5. How was 'parent and community engagement' built in each secondary school?

6. To what extent do participants identify improved student and teacher capacity for learning as a result of the initiative?

Appendix A: Semi Structured Interview Schedule and mapping to RSQs

Semi Structured Interview Protocol

Interviews with Principals, Leaders of Pedagogy and Curriculum Coordinators.

Introductory Protocol

Thank you for your agreeing to participate.. To facilitate our note-taking the meeting will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed to text. After the interview you will receive a copy of your interview responses to verify them. At all times the generated data will be stored securely and all information will remain confidential. As was explained when you gave consent to participate, your involvement is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. This interview should last no longer than forty-five minutes. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

You have been selected because of your involvement in the Low SES National Partnerships reforms. Your participation in this research will help to inform understandings about building capacity for the leadership of learning. Our study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, we are trying to learn more about how school systems and schools can work most effectively to implement reforms that will assist in the leadership of learning in disadvantaged schools. Lessons may have been learned in schools that will assist others in future implementations of reforms.

Warm Up Questions

How long have you been in your present position?

How long have you been at this school?

No	Question	Link to Sub Questions
1	*Please describe the way in which the SSNP reforms operated in this school.*	*all*
2	*Who exercised leadership in their implementation?*	*1*
3	*How did they do this?* *Prompt: Did they experience resistance from individuals and how did they manage this resistance?*	*1, 2*
4	*Have you seen any change in the school's capacity to improve learning which you believe are due to the initiatives?*	*3,4,5,6*
5	*What was the change?*	*3,4,5,6*
6	*Why did the change occur?*	*3, 4, 5,6*
7	*Do you believe that the school's leadership capacity to improve learning has changed as a consequence of the initiatives?*	*3,4,5 6*
8	*What was the change?*	*1,2,3, 4, 5*
9	*Why did it occur?*	*4, 5*
10	*What role did the local system office play in the initiatives?*	*3,6*
11	*Did the local system office contribute in any way to the building of capacity for leading learning in the school?*	*3,6*
12	*In what way?*	*3*
13	*All in all, what would you consider to have been the most successful aspect of the initiative in terms of building capacity for leading learning in the school?*	*3,4,5,6*
14	*The least successful?*	*5,6*
15	*Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss?*	*all*

Appendix B: Semi Structured Interview Schedule for System Leaders and mapping to RSQs

Semi Structured Interview Protocol

Interviews with Regional Consultants, National Partnership Team Leaders and Head of Secondary Curriculum

Introductory Protocol

Thank you for your agreeing to participate. To facilitate our note-taking the meeting will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed to text. After the interview you will receive a copy of your interview responses to verify them. At all times the generated data will be stored securely and all information will remain confidential. As was explained when you gave consent to participate, your involvement is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. This interview should last no longer than forty-five minutes. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

You have been selected because of your involvement in the National Partnerships for Smarter Schools reforms. This study is particularly interested in the implementation of the Low SES National Partnership reforms. Your participation in this research will help to inform understandings about building capacity for the leadership of learning. This study does not aim to evaluate the Low SES National Partnerships for Smarter Schools reforms. Rather, we are trying to learn more about how school systems and schools can work most effectively to implement reforms that will assist in the leadership of learning in Low SES schools. Lessons may have been learned in schools that will assist others in future implementations of reforms.

Warm Up Questions

How long have you been in your present position?

What is your role with the National Partnerships for Smarter Schools

No.	Question	Link to RSQ
1	*Please describe the way in which the SSNP for Low SES reforms operated in this system of schools.*	*all*
2	*Who exercised responsibility in their implementation? Prompts: At the local system level? At the secondary school level?*	*1*
3	*How did system leaders manage the change required to implement these reforms? Did they experience resistance from schools or individuals and how did they manage this resistance.*	*2*
4	*How did you think school leaders managed the changes required to implement these reforms? Did they experience resistance from individuals and how did they manage this resistance*	*2*
5	*Have you seen any change in the secondary schools' capacity to improve learning?*	*3,4,5*
	[prompts] What was the change? How did the change occur? Did it happen in all schools or only some? What were the reasons why it occurred in some schools but not others?	*3,4,5*
6	*Do you believe that schools' leadership capacity to improve learning has changed as a consequence of the initiatives?*	*3,4,5,6*
	[prompts]What has been the change? Why did it occur?	*3,4,5,6*
7	*Could you describe to me successful aspects of how the local system worked with secondary schools building capacity for leading learning in Catholic secondary schools in the system?*	*3,4,5,6*
8	*Could you describe to me less successful aspects of how schools were building capacity for leading learning in Catholic secondary schools in the system?*	*3,4,5,6*
9	*What factors either promoted or inhibited this building of capacity for leading learning in different schools ?*	*3,4,5,6*
10	*Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss?*	*all*

Appendix C: Focus Group Schedule for Coordinators and Teachers

Focus Group Protocol – Head of Departments, Subject Teachers

Introduction

Thank you for your agreeing to participate.. To facilitate our note-taking the meeting will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and later transcribed to text. At all times the generated data will be stored securely and all information will remain confidential. As was explained when you gave consent to participate, your involvement is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. This interview should last no longer than forty-five minutes. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you in order to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.

You have been selected because of your involvement in the Low SES National Partnerships reforms. Your participation in this research will help to inform understandings about building capacity for the leadership of learning. This study does not aim to evaluate the Low SES National Partnerships for Smarter Schools reforms. Rather, I am trying to learn more about how school systems and schools can work most effectively to implement reforms that will assist in the leadership of learning in low SES schools. Lessons may have been learned in schools that will assist others in future implementations of reforms.

Focus Group Questions	Link to RSQ
Warm Up: Briefly introduce yourself explaining your present role at the school, what you teach and how long you have been employed here.	
1. Can you explain your role in relation to the Low SES National Partnership Reforms?	all
2. How has the school managed the implementation of these reforms?	1,2

3. Reflecting on the last few years with the National Partnership, what have you or your subject team learnt about improving the school?	3,4,5,6
4. If you had your time again to implement these reforms what would you repeat and what would you do differently?	3,4,5,6
5. To what extent do you think the reforms are making a difference to improve student learning at this school?	3,4,5,6
6. If you were asked, what commendations or advice would you give to the local system office about the way they supported and directed you during the implementation of these reforms?	2,3,4,5,6
7. Is there any other aspect of the initiative you would like to discuss?	all
Member Check: Let me identify some key points and then I would like to find out how each of you feel about them by checking with each member. At this point I am looking for a brief concluding answer from each of you for these questions. Firstly, were the changes required to implement the Low SES NP Reforms managed effectively? Secondly, how have these reforms assisted you to lead learning? And lastly, please describe the working relationship between the local system office and your school during the implementation of these reforms?	all

Closing Statement

As we come to a close, I need to remind each of you that the audio recording will be transcribed, you will be assigned false names for the purpose of transcript and data analysis so that you remain anonymous, and then the recording will be destroyed. We ask you to refrain from discussing the comments of group members and that you respect the right of each member to remain anonymous.. Are there any questions I can answer? Thankyou for your contribution to this project. Your involvement and support are a significant asset to the success of this project.

Closing Remarks

Thankyou for participating today and supporting this research project.

Appendix D: Consent Letter for Interviewees

CONSENT FORM for INTERVIEWEES

Project Title:	**Building Capacity for Leading of Learning in Disadvantaged Catholic Secondary Schools**
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Scott Eacott
Student Researcher:	Michael Blowes
Student's Degree:	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 one-on-one semi structured interview which will not exceed 45 minutes and will be conducted at the school at a convenient time. The meeting will be recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed to text. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time without any adverse consequences. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

SIGNATURE ....   DATE ....

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the Consent Form and return it to Student Researcher, Michael Blowes, via email 8806590FS@myacu.edu.au by Monday November 22, 2013.

In appreciation of your consideration of this project,

Michael Blowes
Student Researcher

Appendix E: Hierarchy Charts and Frequency Tables for each Theme

Summary tables are set out for each theme setting out coding frequencies for sub-categories and categories. These categories are visually represented as well for each theme using hierarchy charts produced by NVivo for Mac 11. The hierarchy charts illustrate the various frequencies of coded categories through the relative size of rectangles for each category i.e. the larger the rectangle the higher the frequency of coded responses. NVivo use 'nodes' as places to store coding and they can be aggregated to become parent nodes (categories) which then be aggregated to become themes.

(i)   Leading Learning

Nvivo Nodes – Leading Learning Key: THEME Grandparent Node CATEGORY Parent Node: Sub- CATEGORY Child Node:	Aggregate number of coding references
NODES\\LEADING LEARNING	1790
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes	506
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of LOP	153
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of middle leaders	59
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of middle leaders\driving role of KLACs	15
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of middle leaders\involvement of KLACs in learning	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of middle leaders\Planning with KLACS	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system	67
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system	62
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\administrative role of system	35
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\administrative role of system\appointment of LOPs with Principal	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\administrative role of system\managing funding	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\administrative role of system\managing the accoutabilities	12

Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\administrative role of system\providing direction	15
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\support role of system	27
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\support role of system\act as critical friend	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\support role of system\curriculum support	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\support role of system\providing support	16
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of system\lead learning role of system\support role of system\support principals	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of the CCO	36
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of the LT	62
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of the Principal	77
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\role of the Principal\performance management	8
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership	51
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\demarcation issues	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\LOPs partnership with Principal	14
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\LOPs' autonomy shared with Principal & CEO	1

Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\shared vision	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\Teamwork between LT and LOPS	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\working as a team	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\leadership roles and modes\shared form of leadership\working with the LOPs	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture	189
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising expectations	51
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising expectations\improving student attendance	14
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising expectations\raised expectations for staff	7
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising expectations\Raising expectations for students	28
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising expectations\Raising expectations for students\raised expectations of students	8
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\raising learning's profile	18
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\resourcing extra student services	22
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\resourcing extra student services\careers advice for students	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\resourcing extra student services\homework support	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\resourcing extra student services\reimagined the library to be a centre of learning	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\use of data to lead t & l	51
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\use of data to lead t & l\use of data to plan for improved outcomes	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\learning culture\whole school approach	27

to t & l	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change	903
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms	106
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\HSC success influences reforms	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\KLAC Resistance	18
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms	30
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\communication issues	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\fear of change	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\feeling devalued	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\lack of consultation	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\lack of ownership of reforms	12
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\ownership of reforms\staff are open and used to change	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\resistance from well established staff members	9
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\resistance to CEO mandates	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\barriers to reforms\staff resistance	34
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform	152
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\communication to staff about the reforms	39
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the	6

reform\communication to staff about the reforms\explaining to staff the reforms	
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\communication to staff about the reforms\lack of understanding of the reforms	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features	75
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\being away from the classroom	23
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\difficulties of the timetable	12
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\poor PD experiences	13
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\poor planning	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\poorly designed reforms did not build capacity	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\project mentality was a drawback	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\project mentality was a drawback\too faddish	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\design features\start up issues	7
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\increasing demands on staff	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\pace of the reforms	16
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\too many changes	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the	2

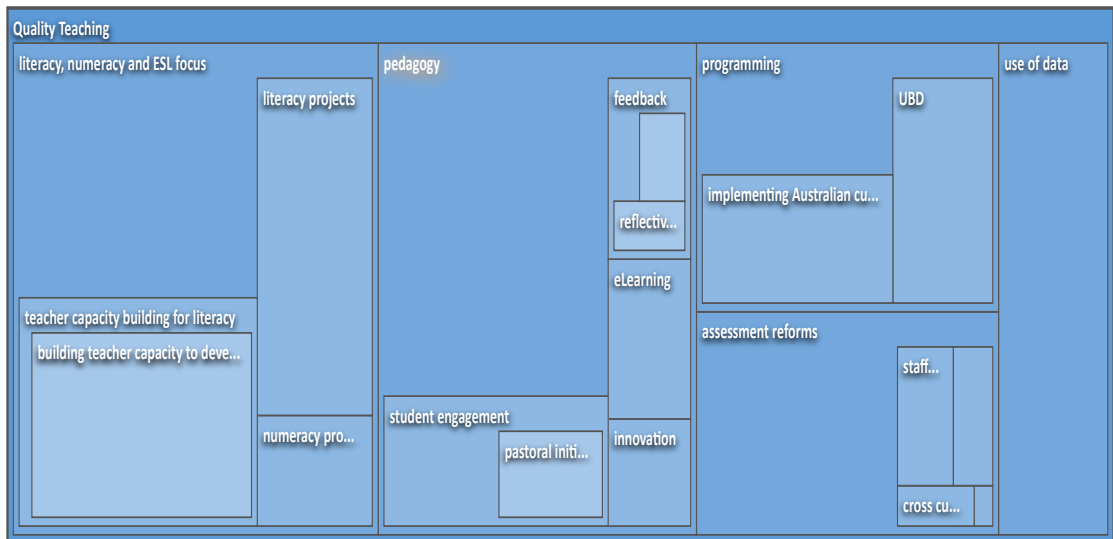|	
reform\too many surveys	
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\demands of the reform\too much administrative accountability	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\moral imperative of reforms	24
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\moral imperative of reforms\for the sake of students	15
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\moral imperative of reforms\LOP as a model of life-long learning	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\moral imperative of reforms\passion and belief	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\moral imperative of reforms\staff embraced professional development	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change	153
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\avoided implementing contentious reforms	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\importance of additional time to support change	29
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\incremental change	26
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\keeping things simple	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\learnt from mistakes as part of the reform journey	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\reforms adapted to meet local context	36
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\reforms adapted to meet local context\adapting the reforms to suit the local context	23
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\reforms adapted to meet local context\good fit with school	1

charism	
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\reforms adapted to meet local context\LOPs knowing and adapting to the school's context	9
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff	40
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff\avoided using KLACs	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff\careful selection of staff	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff\used RE to drive change	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff\using volunteers (or early adaptors)	12
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising staff\utilising young staff	11
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\planned approach to change\utilising the national curriculum for change	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change	197
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo	26
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\being positive and promoting the benefits	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\building a professional culture	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\building up evidence to support reform	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to	4

manage change\challenging the status quo\challenging people sensitively	
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\performance management	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\reflective processes	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\challenging the status quo\using data to drive change	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\leadership stability	25
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\leadership stability\frequent turnover of LOPs	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\leadership stability\lack of good quality LOPs	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\leadership stability\leadership changes	19
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach	70
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\affirming staff	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\building credibility and trust	19
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\consultation, shared vision	16
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\LOP establishing good relationships	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\staff had some ownership of reforms	7

Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\supportive role of LOPs	6
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\relational approach\team approach	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\role of LOPs to enact reform	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\role of LOPs to enact reform\LOPS received PD on change management	2
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\role of Principal to achieve reform	14
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\system approach to change	56
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\system approach to change\relationship with secondary schools	5
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\system approach to change\System's role evolved over time	21
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\role of leaders to manage change\system approach to change\top down approach of system	29
Nodes\\Leading Learning\Managing Change\sensitive to local context	49
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context	29
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach	192
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\planning	16
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\resourcing	28
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\resourcing\providing extra time	24
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\resourcing\staff were paid for extra work	2

Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context\high starting point of the school	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context\learning what's not working and finding solutions	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context\low starting point of school before reforms	12
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context\meeting the needs of the school	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\responding to context\projects were chosen to get results	3
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership	98
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership\strategic leadership of LT	10
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership\strategic leadership of LT\LOPs concentrated on what they were confident in leading	1
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership\strategic leadership of system	12
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership\strategic leadership of system\CEO's strategic planning came too late for schools	4
Nodes\\Leading Learning\strategic approach\strategic leadership\strategic role of the Principal	11

(ii)   Quality Teaching

Nvivo Nodes – Quality Teaching Key: THEME Grandparent Node CATEGORY Parent Node: SUB – CATEGORY Child Node:	Aggregate number of coding references
NODES\\QUALITY TEACHING	537
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\assessment reforms	67
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\assessment reforms\cross curricula projects	4
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\assessment reforms\improving feedback to students	1
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\assessment reforms\project based learning	7
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\assessment reforms\staff development on assessment	10
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus	179
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus\literacy projects	44
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus\numeracy program	14
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus\teacher capacity building for literacy	62
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus\teacher capacity building for literacy\building teacher capacity to develop student literacy	60
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\literacy, numeracy and ESL focus\teacher capacity building for literacy\building teacher capacity to develop student literacy\building capacity of practitioners for ESL	23
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy	156
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\eLearning	15
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\feedback	17

Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\feedback\LOP providing feedback to teachers	7
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\feedback\reflective practice	6
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\innovation	10
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\student engagement	33
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\student engagement\pastoral initiatives	16
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\pedagogy\student engagement\pastoral initiatives\building a bridge between pastoral and learning	6
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\programming	81
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\programming\implementing Australian curriculum	30
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\programming\UBD	28
Nodes\\Quality Teaching\use of data	54
Nodes\\ Quality Teaching\use of data\ teacher analysis of student results	20
Nodes\\ Quality Teaching\use of data\teacher PD using data	18

(iii)   Professional Learning
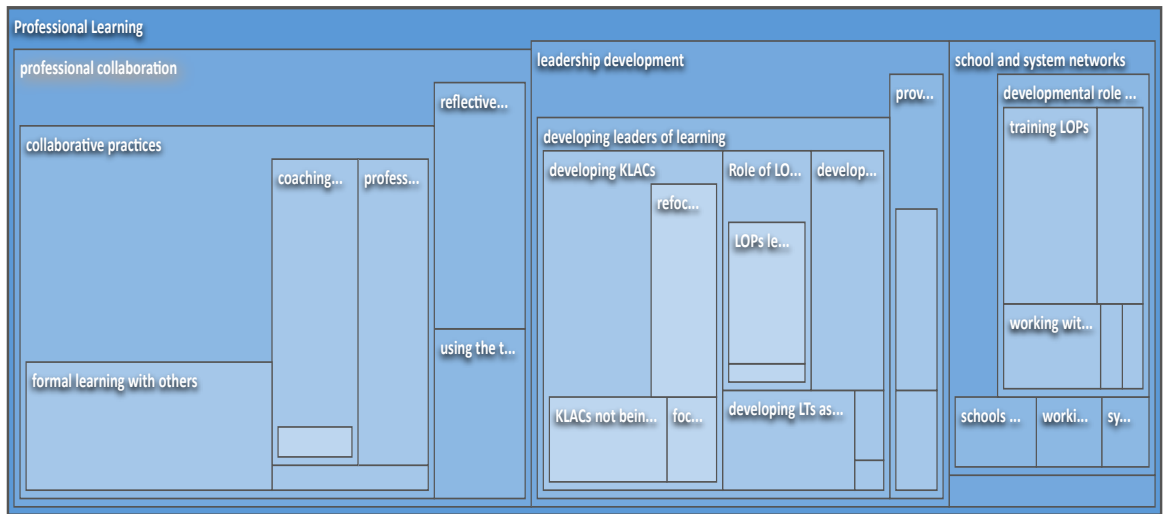

Nvivo Nodes – Quality Teaching Key: THEME Grandparent Node CATEGORY Parent Node: SUB – CATEGORY Child Node:	Aggregate number of coding references
NODES\\PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	394
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration	178
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices	131
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices\coaching and mentoring	26
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices\coaching and mentoring\using outside experts	3
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices\formal learning with others	31
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices\professional learning communities	21
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\collaborative practices\team teaching	4
Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\reflective growth PD	19

Nodes\\Professional Learning\professional collaboration\using the teacher standards	13
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks	67
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL	43
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL\explaining the reforms	2
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL\improved capacity of the system	2
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL\Regional Networking	10
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL\training LOPs	20
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\developmental role of system to lead PL\working with the LOPs	9
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\schools working with other schools	5
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\system working with teachers	3
Nodes\\Professional Learning\school and system networks\working with Primary School	4
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development	146
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning	114
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing KLACs	60
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing KLACs\focussing on KLAC leadership skills	5
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing KLACs\KLACs not being valued	12
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing KLACs\refocussing KLACs on learning	17
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing LTs as Leaders of Learning	13
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of	2

learning\developing Pastoral Coords to be LOL	
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing Principals to be LOL	1
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\developing teachers to be leaders	17
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\Role of LOPs to develop leadership in others	21
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\Role of LOPs to develop leadership in others\developing LOPs as Leaders of Learning	2
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\developing leaders of learning\Role of LOPs to develop leadership in others\LOPs leading others	15
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\providing leadership opportunities	19
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\providing leadership opportunities\providing new leadership opportunities	5
Nodes\\Professional Learning\leadership development\providing leadership opportunities\providing opportunities for staff	9

(iv)   Parent and Community Engagement

Nvivo Nodes – Parent and Community Engagement Key: THEME Grandparent Node CATEGORY Parent Node: Child Node:	Aggregate number of coding references
NODES\\PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	154
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\developing a partnership between home and school	44
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\developing a partnership between home and school\consultative decision making with parents	32
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\developing a partnership between home and school\consultative decision making with parents\gaining parental voice	2
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\developing a partnership	12

between home and school\educators recognising the role of family in education	
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison	40
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\collaborating beyond the school	7
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\collaborating beyond the school\bridge to university	3
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\communicating with parents	5
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\community building with families and school	12
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\community liaison officers	10
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\personalising support	6
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\personalising support\cultural values understood and built upon	2
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\liaison\personalising support\providing wellbeing support	3
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\parental engagement in learning	56
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\parental engagement in learning\eLearning Support	2
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\parental engagement in learning\literacy and numeracy workshops for parents	14
Nodes\\Parent and Community Engagement\parental engagement in learning\parent workshops on hw, assessment, reporting and HSC	16

(v)   Extent that participants identified improved capacity

Nvivo Nodes – Extent to which participants identified improved capacity Key: THEME Grandparent Node CATEGORY Parent Node: SUB – CATEGORY Child Node:	Aggregate number of coding references
NODES\\IMPROVED CAPACITY	799
Nodes\\Improved capacity\capacity for improved professional learning	40
Nodes\\Improved capacity\capacity for improved professional learning\greater collaboration	19
Nodes\\Improved capacity\capacity for improved professional learning\greater reflective practice	12
Nodes\\Improved capacity\capacity for improved professional learning\professional learning communities	3

Nodes\\Improved capacity\capacity for improved professional learning\Professional learning has been prioritised	5
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching	64
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved ESL support	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved literacy	14
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved student outcomes	14
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved student receptiveness for learning	17
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved student receptiveness for learning\greater student engagement	4
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved student receptiveness for learning\improved student attendance	6
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved student receptiveness for learning\improved student attitude to learning	7
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity for Quality Teaching\improved use of data	16
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning	222
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning	46
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\clear direction for going forward	2
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\greater focus on t & l	14
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved	3

capacity for school culture to influence learning\greater shared vision	
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\higher expectations	9
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\improved the school's culture	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\improved whole school approach across KLACs	14
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved capacity for school culture to influence learning\opportunities to work with other schools	1
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders	46
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders\improved leadership of KLACS	22
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders\improved leadership of learning by LT	9
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders\new leadership opportunities	7
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning	78
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\better knowledge of students	10
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\challenged teachers to try new ways	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\improved assessment	10
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\improved ESL pedagogy	9

Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\improved lol by teachers	20
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\improved pedagogy	19
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\improved skills in program development	5
Nodes\\Improved capacity\improved capacity to build family and community relationships	20
Nodes\\Improved capacity\improved capacity to build family and community relationships\parent and community engagement	19
Nodes\\ Improved capacity?	41
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders\LOPs would not visit the classroom	4
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\reforms not suited to secondary education	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved teacher capacity to lead learning\limited impact on teachers	2
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\reform agenda too congested	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\sustainability	24
Nodes\\Improved capacity\Capacity to Lead Learning\improved LOL by leaders\Capacity of KLACs has NOT improved	3
Nodes\\Improved capacity\positive view (unambiguously)	**174**
Nodes\\Improved capacity\negative view (unambiguously)	**30**

Appendix F: Ethics Approval Documentation from ACU

Dear Applicant,

Principal Investigator: Dr Scott Eacott
Student Researcher: Mr Michael Blowes
Ethics Register Number: 2013 246N
Project Title: Building Capacity for Leading Learning in Disadvantaged Catholic Secondary Schools:
A Case Study
Risk Level: Low Risk 2
Date Approved: 04/11/2013
Ethics Clearance End Date: 31/12/2013

This email is to advise that your application has been reviewed by the Australian Catholic University's
Human Research Ethics Committee and confirmed as meeting the requirements of the National
Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

This project has been awarded ethical clearance until 31/12/2013. In order to comply with the
National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, progress reports are to be submitted on
an annual basis. If an extension of time is required researchers must submit a progress report.

Whilst the data collection of your project has received ethical clearance, the decision and authority to
commence may be dependent on factors beyond the remit of the ethics review process. The Chief
Investigator is responsible for ensuring that appropriate permission letters are obtained, if relevant,
and a copy forwarded to ACU HREC before any data collection can occur at the specified
organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to ACU HREC before data collection commences
is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian
Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

If you require a formal approval certificate, please respond via reply email and one will be issued.

Decisions related to low risk ethical review are subject to ratification at the next available Committee
meeting. You will only be contacted again in relation to this matter if the Committee raises any
additional questions or concerns.

Researchers who fail to submit an appropriate progress report may have their ethical clearance
revoked and/or the ethical clearances of other projects suspended. When your project has been
completed please complete and submit a progress/final report form and advise us by email at your
earliest convenience. The information researchers provide on the security of records, compliance
with approval consent procedures and documentation and responses to special conditions is
reported to the NHMRC on an annual basis. In accordance with NHMRC the ACU HREC may
undertake annual audits of any projects considered to be of more than low risk.

It is the Principal Investigators / Supervisors responsibility to ensure that:

1.   All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC with 72 hours.

2.   Any changes to the protocol must be approved by the HREC by submitting a Modification Form prior to the research commencing or continuing.

3.   All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Letter and consent form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee.

For progress and/or final reports, please complete and submit a Progress /
Final Report form:
www.acu.edu.au/465013

For modifications to your project, please complete and submit a Modification form:
www.acu.edu.au/465013

Researchers must immediately report to HREC any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol eg: changes to protocols or unforeseen circumstances or adverse effects on participants.

Please do not hesitate to contact the office if you have any queries.

Kind regards,
Kylie Pashley

Ethics Officer | Research Services
Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Australian Catholic University

THIS IS AN AUTOMATICALLY GENERATED RESEARCHMASTER EMAIL

Appendix G: Consent Form for Schools

ACU
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

ACU|education

CONSENT FORM for INTERVIEWEES

Project Title:	**Building Capacity for Leading of Learning in Disadvantaged Catholic Secondary Schools.**
Principal Investigator	**Associate Professor Scott Eacott**
Student Researcher:	**Michael Blowes**
Student's Degree:	**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 one-on-one semi structured interview which will not exceed 45 minutes and will be conducted at the school at a convenient time. The meeting will be recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed to text. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time without any adverse consequences. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ....

SIGNATURE .... DATE ....

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the Consent Form and return it to Student Researcher, Michael Blowes, via email 8806590FS@myacu.edu.au by Monday October 21, 2013.

In appreciation of your consideration of this project,

Michael Blowes
Student Researcher

Appendix H: Consent Form for Participants

CONSENT FORM for INTERVIEWEES

Project Title:	**Building Capacity for Leading of Learning in**
	Disadvantaged Catholic Secondary Scho›ols
Principal Investigator	Associate Professor Scott Eacott
Student Researcher:	Michael Blowes
Student's Degree:	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 one-on-one semi structured interview which will not exceed 45 minutes and will be conducted at the school at a convenient time. The meeting will be recorded using a digital recorder and later transcribed to text. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time without any adverse consequences. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ....

SIGNATURE ....   DATE ....

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the Consent Form and return it to Student Researcher, Michael Blowes, via email 8806590FS@myacu.edu.au by Monday October 21, 2013.

In appreciation of your consideration of this project,

Michael Blowes
Student Researcher

Appendix I: Role Description of Head of Department

Head of Department KLA Coordinator

KLA COORDINATOR

GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING ANNUAL ROLE DESCRIPTIONS IN SYSTEMIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

CORE ROLE PURPOSE

As a member of the Leadership Team the KLA Coordinator shares responsibility for leadership of the school's vision, mission and strategic priorities and contributes to the life and management of the school. The KLA Coordinator is delegated responsibility by the Principal for the coordination and supervision of a particular Key Learning Area. The KLA Coordinator leads the designated KLA Team with a focus on the annual School Review and Improvement agenda to enhance outcomes for students.

ROLE EXPECTATIONS

1.0 Exercises Religious Leadership in the implementation of the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school by:

1.1 Providing leadership with the Executive Team to enhance the Catholic life and culture of the school within the evangelising Mission of the Church;

1.2 Taking a leadership role in the integration of Catholic values in individual KLA programs and related classroom practices;

1.3 Supporting the prayer, liturgical and sacramental life of the school and promoting social justice initiatives and community service;

1.4 Ensuring that curriculum policies and procedures have a clear social justice foundation;

1.5 Supporting and promoting the school's pastoral care policy.

1.6 Continuing to develop understandings of the role and purpose of the contemporary Catholic school and capabilities in Religious Leadership.

2.0 Exercises Leadership for Learning in developing policy, programs and pedagogies that enhance outcomes for students by:

2.1 Promoting and giving leadership to initiatives based on the foundation statements of the *Learning Framework* which support the development of a learning culture and an environment conducive to learning;

2.2 Developing, evaluating and revising KLA policies and practices which comply with school, CEO, BOS and government legislative requirements and guidelines;

2.3 Facilitating the ongoing development of contemporary pedagogy which is informed by evidence- based approaches and the skilled use of data;

2.4 Ensuring compliance with BOS and Australian Government requirements for syllabus interpretation and implementation, programming, assessment, reporting and evaluation in the particular KLA;

2.5 Ensuring requirements relating to scope and sequence, assessment and the appropriate HSC and School Certificate regulations for each course are met by the school;

2.6 Ensuring that relevant cross curriculum perspectives, particularly literacy, numeracy and the diverse needs of learners are integrated into the planning and delivery of the KLA;

2.7 Contributing to improved teaching and learning in the KLA by modelling contemporary pedagogy and reflective classroom practices and by facilitating staff professional development in the required teaching skills and content knowledge;

2.8 Assisting teachers within the KLA with positive student management strategies where relevant;

2.9 Liaising with and supporting Year Coordinators with identified students where necessary;

2.10 Facilitating the development of ICT related initiatives in the KLA.

3.0 Exercises Human Resources Leadership in support of employment and workplace related processes by:

3.1 Promoting and supporting the spirit, values and principles of *Workplace Realities in the Catholic School* and related practices;

3.2 Taking responsibility for the induction, mentoring, performance management and overall leadership of the KLA Team;

3.3 Acting as Supervisor for New Scheme Teachers in the KLA and supporting the implementation of processes related to the NSW Institute of Teachers;

3.4 Identifying and encouraging staff with leadership potential and taking initiatives, including delegation, to further develop this leadership;

3.5 Leading the PPPR process with nominated teachers, including support for professional development goals and integrated career path planning;

3.6 Engaging in forward planning to identify staffing needs and participating in employment processes where required;

3.7 Promoting teacher professionalism and encouraging positive staff morale by contributing to and initiating processes for team building.

4.0 Exercises Strategic Leadership in implementing the school's *Strategic Leadership and Management Cycle* and the *School Review and Improvement* process by:

4.1 Collaborating with the Executive Team in developing a culture of continual improvement and in the development and implementation of school improvement initiatives;

4.2 Developing, implementing and evaluating relevant aspects of the Annual Development Plan;

4.3 Ensuring the inclusion of the school's vision, mission and strategic priorities and goals in KLA related policies and documentation;

4.4 Promoting and supporting the role and involvement of parents and Pastors in the life and practices of the school;

4.5 Promoting the image of the school in the community.

5.0 Exercises Organisational Leadership to support the effective and efficient administration of the school by:

5.1 Overtly supporting and implementing school and system policies;

5.2 Establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication and follow-up processes that support the information needs of the Executive Team, colleagues, parents and students;

5.3 Taking responsibility for budget, resources and record keeping requirements within areas of responsibility;

5.4 Giving practical support to the work of the Subject teachers, Year Coordinators and the Executive Team;

5.5 Ensuring adherence to legislative requirements relating to the KLA;

5.6 Providing sound leadership to and administration of the KLA.

6.0 The Personal Dimensions of Leadership are exercised in the development of relationships and community by:

6.1 Giving personal witness to the teachings of the Gospel and to Catholic values in personal interactions and in carrying out the day to day duties of the position.

6.2 Contributing to the development of an environment that is welcoming, hospitable, life-giving and just;

6.3 Facilitating collaborative processes that build relationships, and promote shared commitment, partnership and a sense of achievement;

6.4 Facilitating dialogue with and the appropriate involvement of all groups of stakeholders in decision– making processes;

6.5 Assisting in the creation of a safe school where students are not judged on the basis of gender, race or academic ability;

6.5 Providing practical support for the school's pastoral care of students, staff and families;

6.6 Continuing to develop personal, professional and leadership capabilities across the six Foundations.

Appendix J: Parent and Community Engagement Survey Statements

The Family-School Partnerships Framework identifies seven dimensions as guidelines for planning partnership activities. 20 statements were constructed based on the seven dimensions of the framework and the additional religious dimension. The dimensions and corresponding number of statements are:

A. communicating (3 statements A1, A2 and A3);

B. connecting learning at home and at school (4 statements B4, B5, B6 and B7);

C. building community and identity (2 statements C8 and C9);

D. recognising the role of the family (3 statements D10, D11 and D12);

E. consultative decision-making (2 statements D13, D14);

F. collaborating beyond the school (2 statements F15 and F16)'

G. participating (2 statements G17 and G18).

H. connecting home, parish and the school (2 statements H19, H20)

Sydney Parent and Community Engagement Survey

Key dimensions of family-school partnerships	Statement	This is a school where...
Communicating	A1	communication between school and home is active, personal and frequent
Communicating	A2	families feel welcome and valued
Communicating	A3	there are opportunities for schools and families to exchange information and learn about each other
Connecting Learning at Home and at School	B4	school life connects to what students experience in their home and in their community
Connecting Learning at Home and at School	B5	families are well-informed about and understand their child's progress
Connecting Learning at Home and at School	B6	teachers have high but realistic expectations of children
Connecting Learning at Home and at School	B7	parents have high but realistic expectations of children
Building Community and Identity	C8	cultural diversity is acknowledged, promoted and celebrated
Building Community and Identity	C9	parents can come together and engage in programs that will help develop their skills in supporting their child's learning
Recognising the Role of the Family	D10	parents know they are the first educators of their children and that this role continues throughout their time at school
Recognising the Role of the Family	D11	a parent's role is acknowledged and supported
Recognising the Role of the Family	D12	parents take up opportunities to be engaged in their children's learning
Consultative Decision-making	E13	the Principal, teachers and staff talk with families when there are important decisions to make about what goes on in the school community
Consultative Decision-making	E14	parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan
Collaborating Beyond the School	F15	resources from the broader community are used to support student learning
Collaborating Beyond the School	F16	there are effective links with the broader community to support the well-being of families and students
Participating	G17	parents' skills are used and/or developed to support school programs and learning at home
Participating	G18	parents value and support the work of teachers
Connecting Home, Parish and School	H19	parents, school and parish share responsibility for students' religious education
Connecting Home, Parish and School	H20	parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

Summary of Results

School A had 40 parents participating. Parents strongly endorsed the following statements about School A:

A2   families feel welcomed and valued

D10   parents know they are the first educators of their children and that this role continues throughout their time at school

H20   parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

There was least parent agreement with the following statements about School A:

B5   families are well-informed about and understand their child's progress

C9   parents can come together and engage in programs that will help develop their skills in supporting their child's learning

E14   parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan

School B had 705 parents participating. Parents strongly endorsed the following statements about School B:

D10   parents know they are the first educators of their children and that this role continues throughout their time at school

H19   parents, school and parish share responsibility for students' religious education

H20   parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

There was least parent agreement with the following statements about School B:

C9   parents can come together and engage in programs that will help develop their skills in supporting their child's learning

E14   parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan

G17   parents' skills are used and/or developed to support school programs and learning at home

School C had 32 parents participating. Parents strongly endorsed the following statements about School C:

A2   families feel welcomed and valued

C8   cultural diversity is acknowledged, promoted and celebrated

H20   parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

There was least parent agreement with the following statements about School C:

E14 parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan

F16 there are effective links with the broader community to support the well-being of families and students

G17 parents' skills are used and/or developed to support school programs and learning at home

School D had 66 parents participating. Parents strongly endorsed the following statements about School D:

A2 families feel welcomed and valued

C8 cultural diversity is acknowledged, promoted and celebrated

H20 parents understand the religious purpose and values of the school

There was least parent agreement with the following statements about School D:

E14 parents are involved in the development of the school's Annual Improvement Plan

F16 there are effective links with the broader community to support the well-being of families and students

G17 parents' skills are used and/or developed to support school programs and learning at home

Appendix K: Roles and Responsibilities of the Reform Implementation in each School

      The following tables outline who was responsible for and what years the various initiatives were commenced e.g. (2011-). If they were finished before 2015 the year of conclusion was also recorded e.g. (- 2014).

School A Leadership Roles and Responsibilities from the 2011-2015 AIPs

Key: LT = Leadership Team, AP = Assistant Principal, PCC = Pastoral Care Coord, eL C = eLearning Coord

Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators
Individual Education Plans	2011-					
NAPLAN Training (SMART)/(DASA)	2011-					
RAP Analysis	2011-	2011-				
Curriculum Reforms		2011-				
UbD and Programming	2013-2014					
Literacy Initiatives	2011-					
Numeracy Initiatives	2011-					
ESL Initiatives	2011-					
Instructional Rounds	2011-2012					
Pedagogy	2011-2014					
eLearning	2011-					2011 – eLC
Developing PLCs	2011-2014					
Pastoral Care Strategies				2011 PCC		
HoDs Leadership Formation	2011					
Student Engagement	2011-	2011-				
Parent Initiatives	2011-2014					
Liaise with Universities	2012					
Assessment Reform	2011-2014					
Attendance						
H/W & Tutorial Clubs	2011-					
Staff Goal Setting and Performance Review	2011-			2011 – AP		
Strategic Leadership			2011-			
Strategic resourcing including Recruitment			2011-			
Networking with schools			2011-			

School B Leadership Roles and Responsibilities from the 2011-2015 AIPs

Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators
Individual Education Plans	2012	2012				2011-2014 Literacy and Numeracy Coords
NAPLAN Training (SMART)/(DASA)	2013					2011
RAP Analysis		2013				
Curriculum Reforms						
UbD and Programming	2013-2014					2014 HoDs
Literacy Initiatives	2012	2012				Literacy Coord
Numeracy Initiatives						Numeracy Coord
ESL Initiatives	2012					
Instructional Rounds	2012					
Pedagogy	2012-2014		2013			
eLearning			2014			
Developing PLCs	2012					
Leadership Formation for HoDs	2012					
Pastoral Care Strategies	2012			2012 AP		
Student Engagement		2012-2014		2012 AP		
Parent Initiatives	2012-2014		2012			
Liaise with Universities						
Assessment Reform	2013					
Attendance				2011 AP		
H/W & Tutorial Clubs	2012					
Staff Goal Setting and Performance Review			2012			
Strategic Leadership			2012		2012	
Strategic resourcing including Recruitment			2012			
Networking with other schools						
Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators

School C Leadership Roles and Responsibilities from the 2011-2015 AIPs

Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators
Individual Education Plans	2011-					2011- DLC
NAPLAN Training (SMART)/(DASA)			2011-			
RAP & HSC Analysis	2014					
Curriculum Reforms		2011-				
UbD and Programming	2013-					
Literacy Initiatives	2012-					
Numeracy Initiatives						
ESL Initiatives	2011-					
Instructional Rounds						
Pedagogy	2011-					
eLearning						
Developing PLCs						
Leadership Formation for HoDs		2012				
Pastoral Care Strategies		2012		PCO 2011-14		
Student Engagement		2012				
Parent Initiatives	2013-		2011-			
Liaise with Universities						
Assessment Reform	2011-					
Attendance						
H/W & Tutorial Clubs						
Staff Goal Setting, Teacher Standards & Performance Review	2013		2011-	AP 2011-	2014	
Strategic Leadership		2012-	2011-			
Resourcing Initiatives including recruitment			2011			
Networking with others						
Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators

School D Leadership Roles and Responsibilities from the 2011-2015 AIPs

Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators
Individual Education Plans	2011-			2011- PCC		2011- ESL teacher
NAPLAN Training (SMART)/(DASA)	2011-					
RAP & HSC Analysis						
Curriculum Reforms						
UbD and Programming		2011-				2011-HoDs
Literacy Initiatives	2011-					
Numeracy Initiatives	2011-					2014 - Maths
ESL Initiatives	2011-					
Instructional Rounds						
Pedagogy						
eLearning						
Developing PLCs						
Leadership Formation for KLACs						
Pastoral Care Strategies				2011- PCC		
Student Engagement	2012-					2011- Learn to Learn Coord
Parent Initiatives	2012-		2012-			2011-Learning Support Tchr
Liaise with Universities						
Assessment Reform						2014 - teachers
Attendance				2012 PCC		
H/W & Tutorial Clubs						
Staff Goal Setting, Teacher Standards & Performance Review			2011-			
Strategic Leadership			2011-		2011-	
Resourcing Initiatives including recruitment			2011-			
Networking with other schools	2012-					
Reform Initiatives in the AIPs	Leaders of Pedagogy	Curriculum Coordinator	Principal	Other LT Members	Shared LT	Coordinators

APPENDIX L: School Profiles

The following information describes the academic and community profile of each low socio-economic Catholic secondary schools being studied. These profiles will provide information on the main features of each school, the academic achievements of students, their attendance rates and the perceptions of parents to the nature of the family-school partnership that existed at the beginning of the reforms. This information is presented to give context and assist in understanding the perceptions recorded and presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

Main Features of each School Site

School A

School A is an urban 7-12 boys' comprehensive Catholic College founded by a Catholic order of religious brothers. The College's enrolment grew from 1,090 students at the August 2011 census to 1,171 students as at the August 2014 census. Of these students 1079 have a language background other than English. In 2009 the school had an index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) score of 983 compared to the national average of 1000 when it was nominated for the Low SES NP the following year. (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012)

School A enjoys a high retention rate with 97% of the students who completed Year 10 in 2012 graduating from Year 12 in 2014 (School A, ASRC, 2014). This was an improvement from the 85% retention rate reported from Year 10, 2009 graduating in Year 12, 2011. (School A, ASRC, 2011).

Graduating students from School A have a high matriculation rate with 79% of the Year 12, 2014 offered university placement. (School A, ASRC, 2014). This compares with a matriculation rate of 52.5% for Year 12 students across the state of NSW in 2014 (CESE, 2015). This was an improvement on the 70% of the Year 12, 2011 class who reported that they were offered university placement (School A, ASRC, 2011).

Other languages spoken at home include Vietnamese, Spanish, Italian and Arabic. Ninety-five per cent of the student population comes from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB). Students live in one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged Local Government Areas (LGAs) in New South Wales, evidenced by statistics relating to employment, education, housing, ethnicity and crime. (School A, ASRC, 2011).

School A employs a Vietnamese Liaison Officer who provides a linguistic service and opportunities for parents to raise concerns and contribute to their child's education. (School A, ASRC 2011)

School B

School B is a co-educational comprehensive 7-12 college located in one of the most disadvantaged urban Local Government Areas in New South Wales. It was founded in 1995 following the amalgamation of three local Catholic secondary schools.

The College's enrolment is relatively stable with over 1250 students. In 2014, 1160 of those students had a language background other than English. The school had an index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) score of 986 when it was nominated for the National Partnerships in 2010 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012). Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2012, 89% completed Year 12 in 2014. Graduating students from School A have a high matriculation rate with 73% of the Year 12, 2014 offered university placement. (School B, ASRC, 2014). This compares with a matriculation rate of 52.5% for Year 12 students across the state of NSW in 2014 (CESE, 2015).

School C

School C is a 7-12 comprehensive college for girls located in an urban area less than seven kilometres distance from School A. It was founded by an order of religious sisters to provide quality education for young women in this disadvantaged local area. Over 920 students were enrolled in 2014 and of these, 820 have a language background other than English. The school had an index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) score of 976 when it was nominated for the National Partnerships in 2010 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012).

Students attending this College come from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities with 20.5% born overseas. Other languages spoken at home include Vietnamese, Arabic, Greek and Maori. In 2014 the College continued the employment of Arabic and Vietnamese Liaison Officers to build links with families through English, citizenship and healthy lifestyle classes. (School C, ASRC, 2014)

Of the students who completed Year 10 in 2012, 91.7% completed Year 12 in 2014. This was slightly lower than the 93% of the 2009 Year 10 cohort who continued onto graduate from Year 12 in 2011 (School B, ASRC, 2014). Year 12, 2014 graduates from School C achieved a high matriculation rate with 83% of the class reporting that they were offered university placement. (School C, ASRC, 2014). This was higher then the 70% who were offered university placement in 2011(School C, ASRC, 2011).

The 2014 Annual School Report to the Community states that there "is a vibrant mix of teachers from those who have been at the College since its inception to those who are in the beginning years of their careers" (School C, ASRC, 2014).

School D

School D is a co-educational comprehensive 7–12 school located in one of the most disadvantaged urban local government areas of NSW. School D is located less than 13 kilometres distance from School B. The school had an index of community socio-educational advantage (ICSEA) score of 965 when it was nominated for the National Partnerships in 2010 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012)

Student enrolment levels at School D exceeded 1000 students in 2011 and total enrolments continued to remain steady over the four-year period of the reforms to 2014. There were slightly more males enrolled than females. Students come from over seventy countries throughout the world and approximately 94% of the students have a Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE).

Approximately 84% of the 2009 Year 10 cohort continued onto graduation from Year 12, 2011. This improved slightly with 85% of the 2012 Year 10 Cohort graduating two years later in Year 12, 2014. 63% matriculated to university from the graduating class of 2014 and this was higher than the 60 % of students who matriculated to university from the graduating class of 2011.

Academic Profile of each School Site

This study will present the academic profile of each school achieved over a period of years in order to characterise their achievements in external assessments that are common to all schools in NSW.

Academic achievement data will include literacy and numeracy tests in Years 7 & 9 as well as Higher School Certificate data from Year 12. The data will be presented through a series of tables and figures. Each school's profile will be described through the following:

(i)   A table showing the school's reading, writing and numeracy results in Years 7 & 9 compared to statistically similar schools from 2008-2015

(ii)   A figure representing percentage rises in student gain from Year 7 to Year 9 for reading and numeracy during four different time intervals: 2008-2010; 2009-2011; 2012-2014 and 2013-2015

(iii)   A figure showing the school's trend of learning growth for Year 12 students compared to their Year 9 reading, writing and numeracy results for Year 12 students graduating in 2014-2015 and Year 10 literacy, numeracy, history, geography, civics and mathematics results for Year 12 students graduating in

2011-2013. An overall trend of learning growth will be presented from 2011-2015.

(iv)   A figure showing the school's competitiveness for the results of Year 12 students compared to other students in NSW Catholic schools. This trend will be presented from 2011-2015.

The source and nature of this set of data will now be described and the formation of the tables and figures will be explained.

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)

Achievement data for reading, writing and numeracy has been derived from NAPLAN – the National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy. NAPLAN is a series of annual literacy and numeracy tests for all Australian school students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The purpose of presenting literacy and numeracy achievement data from NAPLAN for each school is to assist in presenting the different academic profiles of each school and show, relative to other similar schools, how effective the school was in raising the literacy and numeracy skills of its students.

The source for the NAPLAN data were the *My School* website which profiles the statistical and contextual information of approximately 10,000 Australian schools and campuses. Users can compare schools with statistically similar schools nationwide. Statistical information includes comparisons of the average student performance in literacy and numeracy in a school with those of students in other schools including schools that share similar student populations. Attendance, enrolment and financial information are also provided (Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016). At the time of this study the *My School* website provided data from 2008-2015 which allowed for the presentation of trends in the data before, during and after the National Partnership for Low SES School Reform process was experienced by the four schools.

NAPLAN results are reported on *My School* website for each school in scores and bands with a score range from 0 to 1000 points (Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016).The NAPLAN data will be presented with a series of tables and figures derived from data from the *My School* website to provide a visual representation of comparative performance between the school and a group of

statistically similar schools. The way these statistically similar schools are collated will now be described.

Statistically Similar Schools

Similar schools are collated using the *Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)* which was created by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to

"enable meaningful comparisons of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test achievement by students in schools across Australia… A school's ICSEA value is used to select a group of up to 60 schools with students from statistically similar backgrounds. Schools with students who have similar levels of educational advantage will have similar ICSEA values, even though schools in their group can be located in other parts of Australia and may have different facilities and resources. *(Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016).*

ACARA identifies these as '*similar schools'.*   An average NAPLAN result is calculated for these 60 schools to enable comparison with the selected school's own NAPLAN results.

Comparisons of NAPLAN data for the four schools with similar schools

Comparisons of the four selected schools' NAPLAN literacy and numeracy results with the results of statistically similar schools will contribute to the academic profile of each school because it will identify each school's performance relative to similar schools.

These comparisons will be made with a set of tables which will present a comparison of average reading, writing and numeracy scores for each of the four schools compared to the averages of statistically similar schools from 2008-2015.

The tables include rows for each type of test (e.g. Year 7 Reading) and columns for each year (e.g. 2011) and are coloured if the school's average score is above or below the statistically similar schools' average score. If the cell is blank the school's average is close to the average of the similar schools. If the square is coloured light green it is above the average of the similar schools. If it is coloured dark green it is substantially above. If the square is coloured pink the school's average is below that of the similar schools and if it is coloured red it is substantially below.

The *My School* website compares the average school scores using standard deviations from the overall score. The website's glossary defined standard deviation and their use by stating that it is,

the average amount by which scores in a test differ from the overall average score…If a selected school's mean is 'above' and 'below' the comparison school's mean by more than half (>0.5) of one standard deviation, the difference is deemed to be 'substantial' for the purposes of the *My School* website. The terms above and below represent a difference of between one fifth and one half (between 0.2 and 0.5) of a standard deviation in magnitude (Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016).

This information has been illustrated in Table 1 which also serves as a key for tables for each school

Table 1 NAPLAN School Scores being compared to scores of similar schools.

Colour   Key

Colour	Key
	The school's average is close to the score of similar schools (between 0.0 and 0.2 of one standard deviation)
	The schools average is above the average of similar schools (between 0.2 and 0.5 of one standard deviation)
	The schools average is substantially above the average of similar schools (greater than 0.5 of one standard deviation)
	The schools average is below the average of similar schools (between 0.2 and 0.5 of one standard deviation)
	The schools average is substantially below the average of similar schools (greater than 0.5 of one standard deviation)

Comparisons of student gain before, during and after the reform process

Each school's academic profile will include a figure presenting the percentage of 'student gain' over time. 'Student gain' is the difference in the same students' achievement levels between two testing years in the same test domain within a school (Australian Curriculum Assessment Reporting Authority, 2016). Students are tested for NAPLAN in Years 3,5,7 and 9. For the purposes of describing the context of each school student gain between Year 7 and the data two years later when students are assessed again in 9 will be presented. This presentation is limited to reading and numeracy as the writing task changed from a narrative task to a persuasive task in 2010 and so comparisons cannot be reliably made. The data will be presented in five different time periods to illustrate student gain in schools before the reforms began in 2011 and during and after the reform process finished in 2014. The five different time periods will be:

(i)   Year 7, 2008 and Year 9, 2010 (before the Low SES reforms)

(ii)   Year 7, 2009 and Year 9, 2011 (before the Low SES reforms)

(iii)   Year 7, 2011 and Year 9, 2013 (first 2 years of the Low SES reforms)

(iv)   Year 7, 2012 and Year 9, 2014 during the Low SES reforms)

(v)   Year 7, 2013 and Year 9, 2015 (during and after the Low SES reforms)

The reading gain at each school will be compared to the Year 7 to Year 9 learning gain for reading and writing for students across all Australian schools. The data

will be presented in a set of figures for each school showing the percentage increases for each time period for both the school and all Australian schools.

Higher School Certificate Learning Gain and Competitiveness

The Higher School Certificate (HSC) is the exit credential for students attending secondary schools in NSW. An analysis of the results of students in over 126 Catholic secondary schools participating in the HSC is undertaken each year. The project is conducted under the auspices of the Catholic Education Commission (NSW) as the coordinating body, and with the cooperation of the NSW Board of Studies. This analysis includes measures of learning gain and overall competitiveness with students from other schools (DeCourcy, 2005).

Learning gain is calculation through a multi level analysis that considers the Year 9 NAPLAN scores of students with those that they receive three years later in the HSC. Previous to 2014 the analysis calculated the learning gain from the now disbanded NSW Year 10 School Certificate Examinations in English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography and Civics. The analysis determines if students performed to expectation based on the results of other students enrolled in catholic schools across the state. For this study a graph will be presented for each school showing the trend data of learning gain from 2011-2015.

Competitiveness is another measure which will be presented for each school. It is an aggregate for schools calculated through students' scores known as Tertiary Entrance Scores (TES) which are used by the University Admissions Centre (UAC) to determine the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) for students applying for an undergraduate university placement. Aggregate scores for each school are compared to other catholic secondary schools in NSW to gauge how 'competitive' the overall school results were in a particular year compared to other NSW Catholic secondary schools. Competitiveness is measured in standard deviation points above or below the mean for all catholic schools in NSW. A five-year trend line is also presented.

Two graphs will be presented for each school as one figure: the left hand graph will show the average learning gain for students at the school over a period from 2011-2015; the right hand graph will show the competitiveness of students TES scores compared with students from other Catholic schools. For both graphs the results will be measured in standard deviation points from the mean of the group of NSW Catholic students. A five year trend line is also presented.

Summary of the Academic Profile.

In the presentation that follows each school will feature with,

(i)   A table showing the school's NAPLAN reading, writing and numeracy results in Years 7 & 9 compared to statistically similar schools from 2008-2015

(ii)   A figure representing percentage rises in student gain from Year 7 to Year 9 for NAPLAN reading and numeracy during four different time intervals: 2008-2010; 2009-2011; 2012-2014 and 2013-2015

(iii)   A figure showing two graphs: firstly, the left-hand graph showing the school's learning growth for Year 12 H.S.C. students compared to their Year 9 reading, writing and numeracy results (from 2011-2013 Year 10 results were used from the School Certificate Examinations rather than Year 9 NAPLAN scores). The blue line notes the year-to-year achievement. The overall trend is presented from 2011-2015 through a red broken line; secondly, the right-graph showing the school's competitiveness for the results of Year 12 students compared to other students in NSW Catholic schools sitting for the H.S.C. using a blue line to note the year to year achievement. The overall trend will be presented from 2011-2015 through a red broken line.

School A

The academic profile of School A follows. It shows above average numeracy results, a rising trend in student gain between Years 7 & 9 in reading and numeracy but a declining trend for Year 12 learning gain and competitiveness.

Comparison of NAPLAN averages compared with Similar Schools

Students from School A has achieved particularly well in numeracy in both Years 7 & 9. Numeracy comprises over 85% of the assessment events in which School A has been above the average of similar schools. It enjoyed particularly strong numeracy results in Year 9 during 2008, 2009 and 2011. Writing and reading results did not enjoy above average during or after the reforms period. The reform period years are shaded in yellow on this and the following tables. Table 2 presents the results from 2008-2015.

Table 2: School A NAPLAN's averages compared with similar schools

School A	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Yr. 7 Reading								
Yr 7 Writing		Above						
Yr 7 Numeracy	Substantially Above				Above	Above	Above	
Yr 9 Reading	Above							
Yr 9 Writing					Above			
Yr 9 Numeracy	Substantially Above	Substantially Above		Substantially Above	Above	Above	Above	Above

Note: Reforms years are highlighted in yellow – refer to previous table for the key

Learning Gain of Students from Year 7 to Year 9

The learning gain of students in School A for reading and numeracy increased during the NPSS reforms and this gain stabilised after the reforms period ended. This learning gain is presented in Figure 1
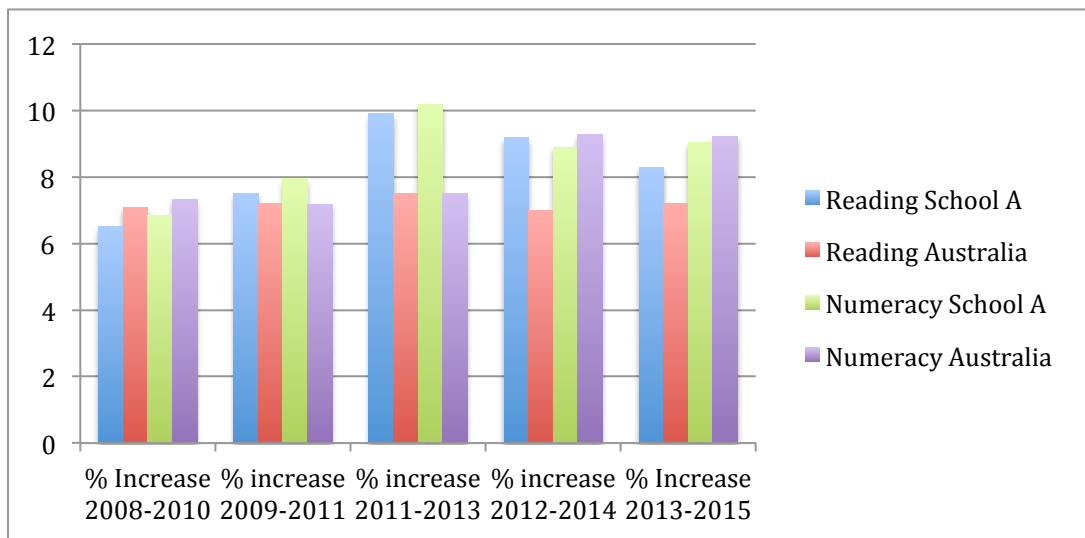

Figure 1 School A NAPLAN Learning Gain compared with all Australian school

Year 12 Learning Gain and Competitiveness with other Catholic schools

Figure 2 presents data from the HSC results of students at School A. The learning gain of students from School A completing the HSC declined from 2011-2015. The five-year trend data shows that it declined from 0.8 points of a standard deviation in

2011 to 0.1 points of a standard deviation in 2015. The competitiveness of students at School A also declined during this same period from 0.4 points to -0.2 points.
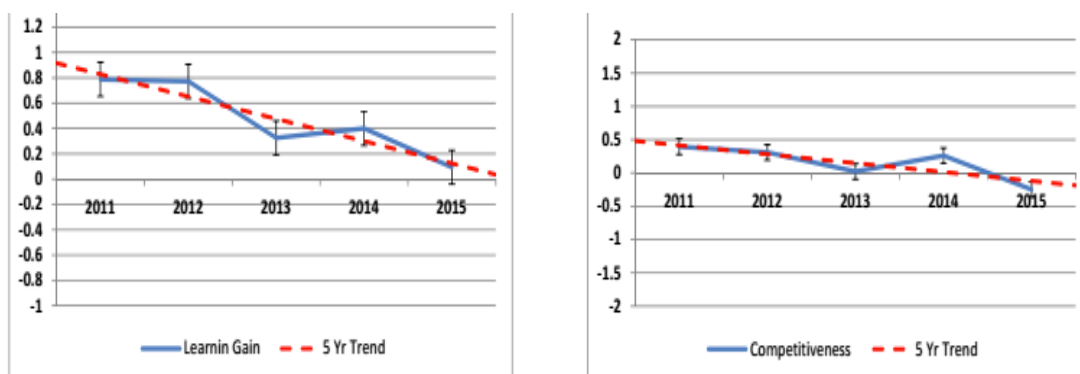

Figure 2 School A HSC Results from 2011 to 2015 - Learning Gain and Competitiveness measured through z scores indicating how many standard deviations an element is from the mean.

Summary

The data suggests that School A did not improve its NAPLAN or HSC results during or immediately after the reform period. NAPLAN learning gains from Years 7 to 9 outpaced the average national gain for the first few years of the reform but this slowed to such a state that School A's numeracy gain dipped below the average national gain from 2013-2015. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools and learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12, declined during and immediately after the reform period.

School B

The academic profile of School B follows. It shows above average literacy and numeracy results, a declining trend in student gain between Years 7 & 9 in reading and numeracy and a rising trend for Year 12 learning gain and competitiveness.

Comparison of NAPLAN averages compared with Similar Schools

Students from School B have achieved above average with 54.17% of assessment events from 2008-2015 achieving beyond the average of similar schools. School B achieved substantially above average for writing in Years 9 in 2012, 2013 and 2015. Table 3 presents the results from 2008-2015 and illustrates the typically above average nature of achievement during and immediately after the reform period.

Table 3: School B NAPLAN 2008-2015

Note: Reform years are highlighted in yellow – refer to Table 1 for the key

School B	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Yr 7 Reading							Below	
Yr 7 Writing		Above		Above	Above	Substantially Above	Above	Above
Yr 7 Numeracy				Above	Above	Above		
Yr 9 Reading				Above	Above	Above		Above
Yr 9 Writing	Above	Above	Above	Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above	Above	Substantially Above
Yr 9 Numeracy	Above		Above	Substantially Above		Above	Above	Above

Learning Gain of Students from Year 7 to Year 9

The learning gain of students in School B for reading improved during the course of the reforms and remained constant at just under 10% after the reforms well above the average learning gain of all Australian schools. The learning gain of students in numeracy remained relatively stable before, during and after the NPSS reforms and has remained well above the above the average learning gain of all Australian schools. This learning gain is presented in Figure 3. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) analysed national data and identified schools with substantially above average gain in each year's NAPLAN results. In 2015 School B was named as a school which had substantial learning gain for reading along with 33 other secondary schools in NSW.
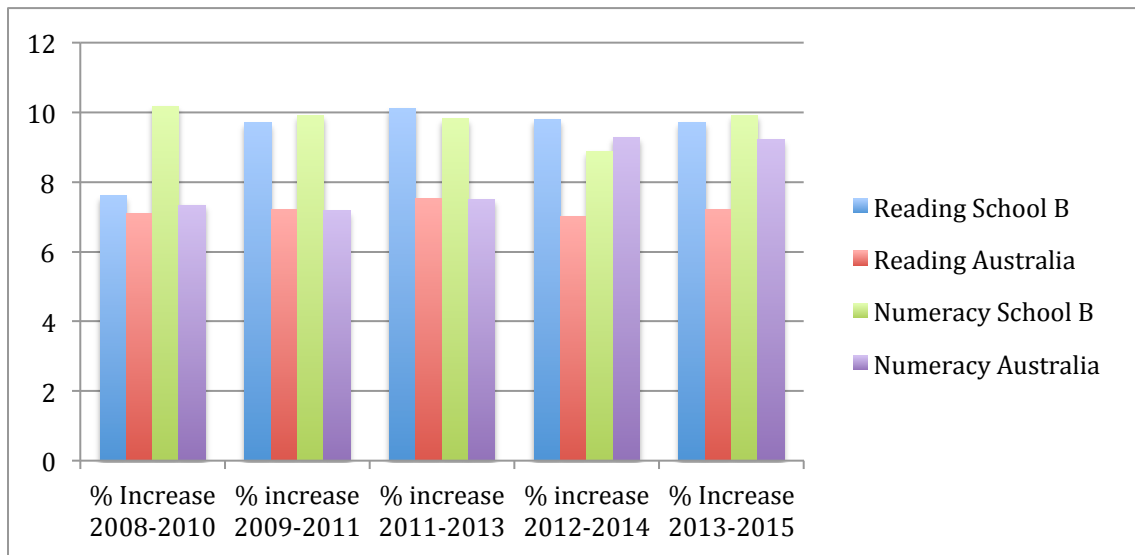
Figure 3 School B Learning Gain NAPLAN 2008-2015 compared with all Australian schools

Year 12 Learning Gain and Competitiveness with other Catholic schools

The learning gain of students completing the HSC increased from 2011-2015. The trend data shows that it increased from 0.1 points of a standard deviation in 2011 to 0.4 points of a standard deviation in 2015. Students of School B achieve consistently above the average of students at other Catholic schools in NSW. The competitiveness of students at School B was relatively stable during this same period around 0.5 SD points above the mean from 2011 to 2015. Figure 4 presents data from the HSC results of students at School B.
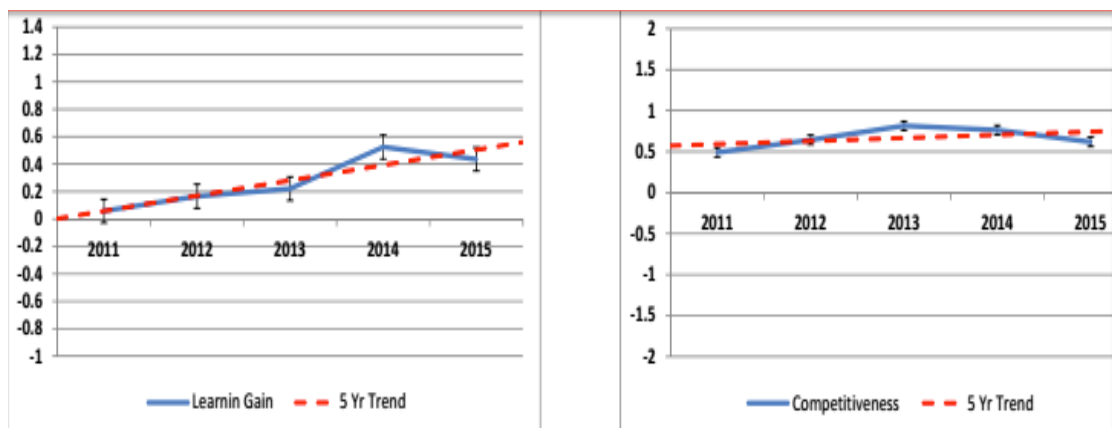

Figure 4 School B HSC 2011-2015 - Learning Gain and Competitiveness measured through z scores indicating how many standard deviations an element is from the mean.

Summary

The data suggests that School B improved its NAPLAN and HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN learning gains from Years 7 to 9 numeracy outpaced the

average national gain before, during and after the reform period. Learning gains in reading accelerated in the first years of the reform period and remained above the national average. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools and learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12, improved during the reform period.

School C

The academic profile of School C follows. It shows above average writing results, a rising trend in student gain between Years 7 & 9 in numeracy and to a lesser extent reading. There is a falling trend for Year 12 learning gain whilst competitiveness remains stable near the average for Catholic schools during the period 2011- 2015

Comparison of NAPLAN averages compared with Similar Schools

Students from School C have achieved particularly well in writing in both Years 7 & 9. It enjoyed particularly strong writing results in the period during and immediately after the reform period, particularly in the years 2013-2015.Table 4 presents the results from 2008-2015.

Table 4 School C NAPLAN 2008-2015

School C	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Yr 7 Reading								
Yr 7 Writing	Above	Above	Above	Above	Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above
Yr 7 Numeracy								Above
Yr 9 Reading		Above						Above
Yr 9 Writing	Above	Above	Above	Above	Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above
Yr 9 Numeracy		Above						

The learning gain of students in School C increased during the intervals between 2008 and 2014. The learning gain of students in reading was below the national average before the reforms began but exceeded the national average during and after the reform period. The learning gain of students with numeracy remained relatively stable during the NPSS reforms but this gain declined after the reforms period ended and failed to match the national average learning gain (2012-2014; 2013-2015). The learning gain from students attending School C learning gain is presented in Figure 5.
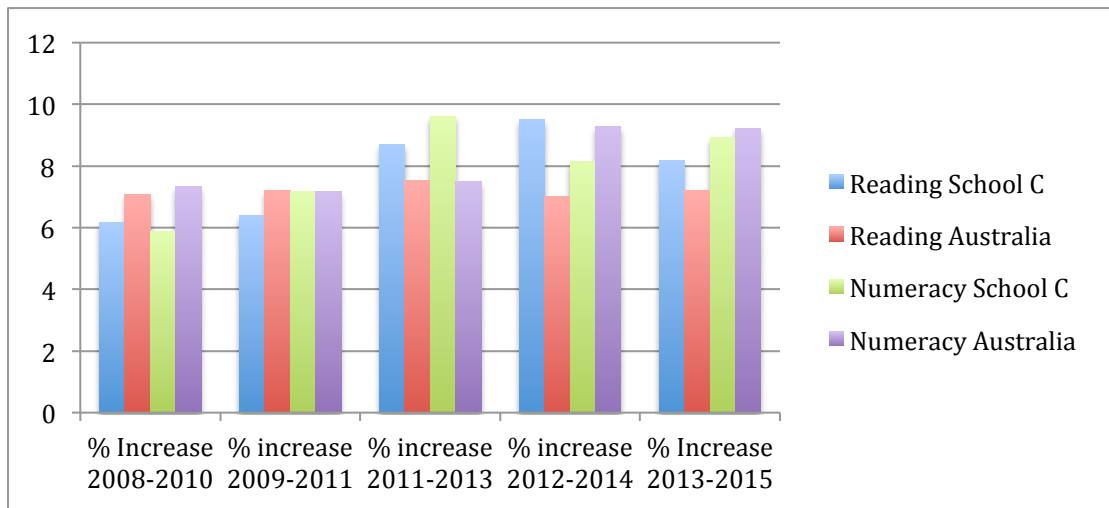
Figure 5: School C Learning Gain NAPLAN 2008-2015 compared with all Australian schools

Year 12 Learning Gain and Competitiveness with other Catholic schools

The learning gain of students completing the HSC declined from 2011-2015. The trend data shows that it declined from 0.1 points of a standard deviation in 2011 to -0.2 points of a standard deviation in 2015 after a highpoint of 0.3 points in 2013. The competitiveness of students at School B was relatively stable during this same period around the mean of other Catholic schools from 2011 to 2015. Figure 6 presents these data.

Figure 6 School C HSC Data 2011-2015 - Learning Gain and Competitiveness measured through z scores indicating how many standard deviations an element is from the mean.

Summary

The data suggests that School C improved its NAPLAN but not its HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN reading gains from Years 7 to 9 reading lagged behind the average national gain before the reforms but during and after the reform period it has outpaced the average national gain. Learning gains in numeracy lagged

behind the national average before during and after the reform period. HSC results, measured both by competitiveness with other schools remained relatively stable whilst learning gain from Year 9 to Year 12 declined slightly during the reform period.

School D

The academic profile of School D follows. It shows above average Year 7 and 9 writing results after 2011 Student gains in reading and numeracy were both high during the reform period. There is a rising trend for Year 12 learning gain whilst competitiveness has dropped slightly towards the average for Catholic schools during the period 2011- 2015.

Comparison of NAPLAN averages compared with Similar Schools

School D has achieved above average in writing in both Years 7 & 9 since the reforms began in 2011. It enjoyed substantially above average writing results in Year 9 during the period during 2013-2014. Table 5 presents the results from 2008-2015.

Table 5 School D NAPLAN 2008-2015

School D	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Yr 7 Reading								
Yr 7 Writing				Above	Above	Above	Above	Above
Yr 7 Numeracy								
Yr 9 Reading	Below							
Yr 9 Writing				Above	Above	Substantially Above	Substantially Above	Above
Yr 9 Numeracy							Above	

Of the four selected schools, School D has shown the greatest student gain for both reading and numeracy during 2012-2014 in the midst of the reforms (11.87% reading, 11.23% increase numeracy). The learning gain declined in 2013-2015 but still remained higher than before the commencement of the reforms. This is presented in Figure 7. The learning gain in reading has been substantially above the average for Australian schools. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) named School D in 2014 and 2015 as one of the substantially high gain schools for reading. In 2014 School D was one of 23 secondary schools in NSW named for substantially above average learning gain. In 2015 it was one of 34 secondary schools named in NSW for the same achievement.
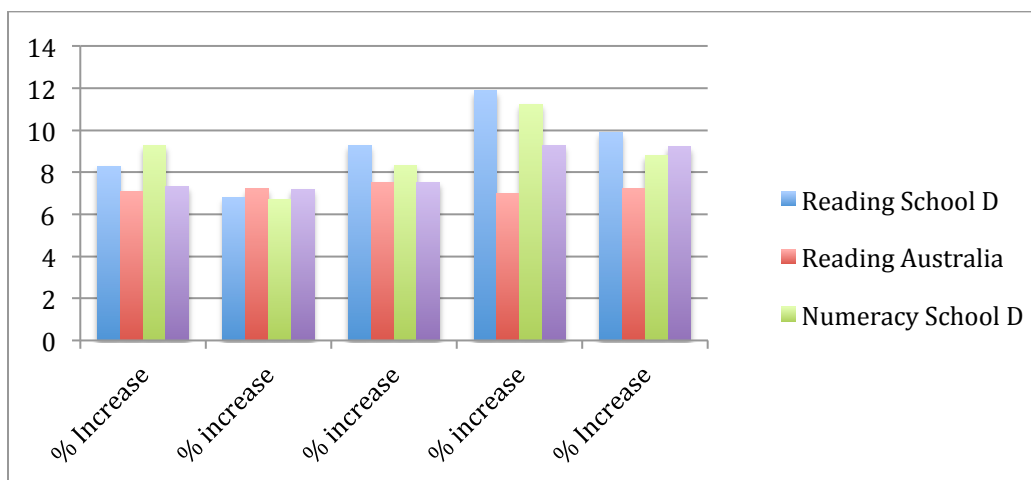
Figure 7 School D Student Gain NAPLAN 2008-2015 compared with all Australian schools

Year 12 Learning Gain and Competitiveness with other Catholic schools

The learning gain of students sitting for the HSC increased from 2011-2015. The trend data shows that it increased from 0.3 points of a standard deviation in 2011 to 0.5 points of a standard deviation in 2015 after a low point of -0.1 points in 2013. The competitiveness of students at School B dropped slightly from 0.5 points to being around the mean by 2015. Figure 8 presents these data.
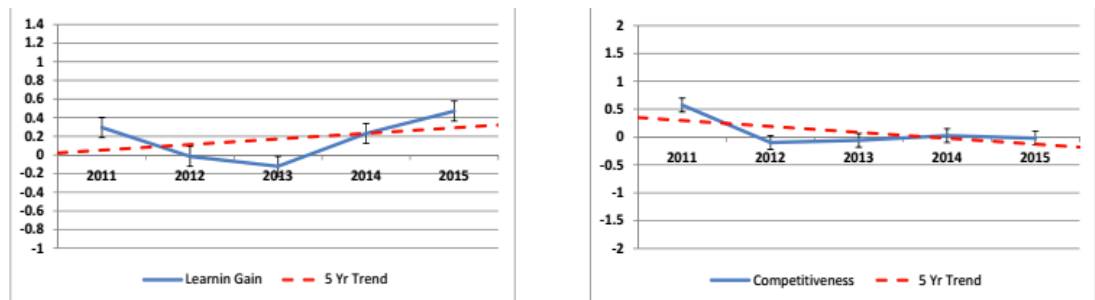

Figure 8 School D HSC 2011-2015. - Learning Gain and Competitiveness measured through z scores indicating how many standard deviations an element is from the mean.

Summary

The data suggests that School D improved its NAPLAN and HSC results during the reform period. NAPLAN Writing achievement has been above average during and after the reform period. NAPLAN reading gains from Years 7 to 9 reading and numeracy gains has outpaced the average national gain. HSC results, measured by competitiveness with other schools, experienced a slight decline but learning gain from years 9 to 12 has improved in the latter years of the reform program.

Summary of Academic Profiles

The academic standing of each selected school has been introduced based on NAPLAN and HSC results. The following was presented:

i)   each of the four school's average NAPLAN literacy and numeracy scores were compared to the average of their group of statistically similar schools during the period 2008-2015;

ii) the average learning gain of each selected school from Year 7 to 9 in NAPLAN's reading and numeracy was compared to the average learning gain of all Australian school for five cohorts commencing in 2008 and completing in 2015;

iii) the average learning gain of the selected schools from Year 9 to Year 12 students sitting for the HSC was compared to the average learning gain of all catholic secondary schools in NSW during the years 2011-2015 and

iv) the average competitiveness of students from the selected schools was compared to the average competitiveness of all catholic secondary schools in NSW during the years 2011-2015.

This presentation demonstrates that each school has a distinctive academic profile. In summary the data suggests that:

- School A's academic achievement in NAPLAN and the HSC declined over the reform period.

- School B's academic achievement in NAPLAN and the HSC improved during the reform period

- School C improved literacy but not numeracy outcomes during the reform period. HSC results did not improve.

- School D improved its NAPLAN results and its learning gain from the HSC over the reform period.

Next to be presented will be attendance data.

Student Attendance Data for each school

National and international research substantiates a link between attendance and student achievement (Hancock, Shepherd, Lawrence, & Zubrick, 2013). For reporting purposes school systems in Australia measure attendance rates throughout the first semester (terms 1 and 2) as this is the time period specified for data collection in National Education Agreements between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. The attendance rate is defined as the number of actual full time equivalent 'student days attended' over the time period as a percentage of the total number of possible student days attended over the time period (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016a). The attendance data for each of the four case sites were obtained from their Annual School Reports to the Community. Attendance data for all NSW government secondary schools was included for comparison(Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2016a)

Figure 9 sets out the student attendance rates in percentages for all schools during the four years of the reforms. Also included is the attendance rate for all NSW Government secondary schools during the same period
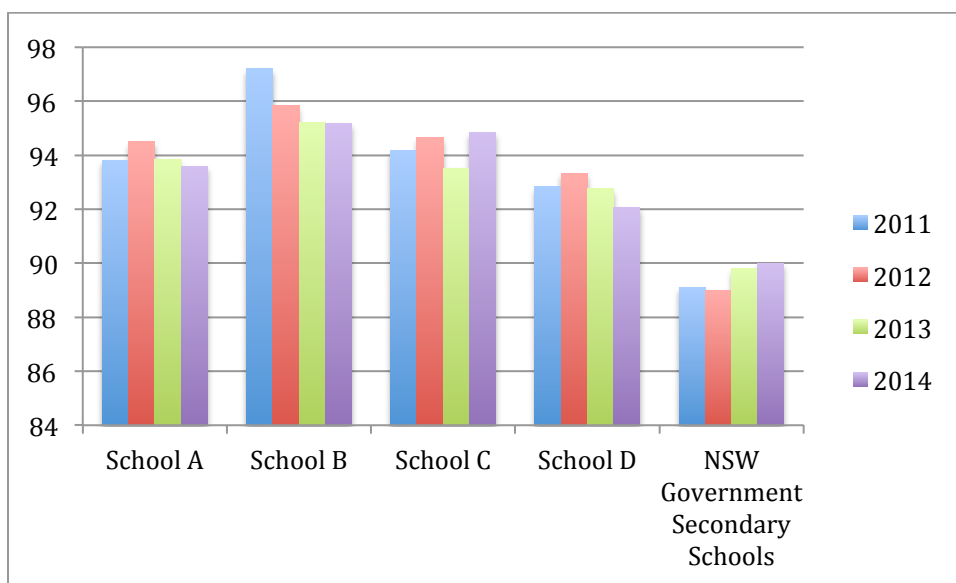

Figure 9 Percentage of Student School Attendance from 2011-2014 of Schools A-D compared with NSW Government Secondary Schools

Figure 9 illustrates that:

   i)   The student attendance rates at each of the four Catholic schools exceed the average attendance rates at NSW Government secondary schools.

ii)   The student attendance rate of School A remained steady during the reform period

iii) The student attendance rate at School B was the highest of the 4 case sites peaking in 2011 but settling back to 95% in 2014

iv)   The student attendance rate at School C improved during the reform period

v)   The student attendance rate at School D declined during the reform period

Summary

Academic, attendance and parent engagement profiles were presented for each school in this chapter. In summary the data suggests that:

- School A's academic achievement in NAPLAN and the HSC declined over the reform period. Its attendance pattern was above the state average for government secondary schools and was stable.

- School B's academic achievement in NAPLAN and the HSC improved during the reform period. Its attendance pattern was well above the state average for government secondary schools but declined from a high starting point during the reform period.

- School C improved literacy but not numeracy outcomes during the reform period. HSC results did not improve. Its attendance pattern was above the state average for secondary government schools and was stable.

- School D improved its NAPLAN results and its learning gain from the HSC over the reform period. Its attendance pattern was above the state average for secondary government schools but declined during the reform period.

All four schools made families feel welcomed and valued and that parents understood the religious purpose and values of the school. Parents were less agreeable to the view that their school engaged them in programs that would help them support their child's learning or that they were involved in the school's strategic planning.

It is hoped that these data along with the document study will assist in making meaning from the extensive perceptual data from the school and system personnel who participated in this study.