

**From Metaphors to Mantras -  
Principals *Making Sense of and Integrating*  
Accountability Expectations:  
A Grounded Theoretical Model**

**Judith M Norris**

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education

School of Education  
Faculty of Education and Arts  
Australian Catholic University

2017

## **Declaration**

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 acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

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

Signed:

Judith M Norris

Date: 10/12/2016

## **Acknowledgments**

This doctoral experience, often described as a journey, has contained many unanticipated learning experiences, both interesting and challenging. The development of a thesis is situated in the formation of the academic. Forming the academic takes a village! My ‘village’ has been expanded by the many who have provided mentoring, guidance and support during this process.

First, this study was about principals’ experiences and voices. There would have been no study of principals’ experiences of accountability if they were not frank, honest and trusting. I thank you for your willingness and commitment in contributing to such important research about principals’ work. I trust that this study has captured your voices and has offered continued insights for yourselves and those that follow in your footsteps. I also wish to thank the school system directors for their trust in this research process. In turn, I trust that the findings which emerge will be helpful in your leadership with principals and teachers.

I am indebted to my principal supervisors, Professor Shukri Sanber and Dr Michael Bezzina. Shukri empowered my creative and conceptual thinking and research processes. He has been sensitive, persistent, insightful and wise. Michael taught me how to write. I thank him for his patience. I acknowledge and thank Associate Professor Charles Burford and Professor Tania Aspland for their perspective thinking on the body of work. All four of these wonderful mentors have provided emotional support through encouragement and their deep understanding of their learner.

Without the professional and financial support of the Australian Catholic University, undertaking this doctoral degree would not have been possible. The professional learning opportunities have been essential tools as a doctoral researcher. A fraction of my employment devoted to this study enabled me to complete in a timely fashion.

The provocation for this doctoral degree has been my mother, who provided the challenge of completing a research degree. I wish to acknowledge my parents, Janet and Eric,

along with my siblings and the extended families, who have continued to be interested in my work and have supported me during this time.

Last and by no means least, I thank my family, who moved cities, lifestyles and schools and breathed each moment of the doctoral learning experience. Specifically, I thank Connie and Jia Li, who celebrated the milestones and picked me up when I was in a trough or a dark place. We have all learned much as a family, through our laughter and tears. Words cannot describe the enduring love and support that I have been given. I am eternally grateful to you both.

This thesis was edited by Elite Editing, and editorial intervention was restricted to Standards D and E of the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*.

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## List of Abbreviations

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AHELO	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank
BOSTES	(NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016a)
CEC NSW	Catholic Education Commission New South Wales
CEO	Catholic Education Office
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
ECP	Early-career Principal
ECDF	Every Child Deserves a Future
GT	Grounded Theory
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage
KLA	Key Learning Area
LCP	Later-career Principal
MCP	Middle-career Principal
NAP	National Assessment Program
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy
NSW	New South Wales
NPA	National Partnership Agreements
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBMs	Performance-based Mechanisms
PIAAC	Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment

RSQ	Research Sub-question
SES	Socio-economic Status
SMART	School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
UK	United Kingdom
UNSW	University of New South Wales
US	United States of America

## **Key Words**

Assessment-focused accountability; regulated accountability; educational accountability; principals; educational leadership; translating policy into acts of learning and teaching; sensemaking; Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB); conceptualisations of learning

## **Thesis Preamble: Principals and the Character of the Eucalypt**

School principals influence the landscape of their schools, just as eucalypts influence the landscape of their environments. The environment for school principals is a ‘forest’ in which policy makers have increased access to global data for test score comparisons, potentially raising the educational stakes for school principals, school systems and educational jurisdictions. As trials of fire, floods and droughts are to the Eucalypt, so too are trials by media for Australian school principals, such as when the media rank and judge schools according to their students’ test results. This study raises the question of how Australian school principals endure through such trials and as with the Eucalypt, whether and how they adapt.

The principals in this study accepted the need for being accountable for their students’ learning. However, they rejected that a number could be an adequate representation of this. They experienced conflict between their views of a learning target and the elements of learning that were measured and reported, such as a National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) or tertiary entrance score. Like the Eucalypt, most of the principals adapted. They used sophisticated sensemaking processes and spoke in metaphors, imagery and mantras. For example, Barry the Buffer pushed back at public judgements and Leonie the Lantern held high her vision for learning. These sensemaking devices helped principals to evolve, generate and regenerate in the face of adverse conditions. However, some barely survived. Bettina confessed that she bulldozed staff by aiming for top-end results. The sensemaking devices that the principals used, like the markings on the tree, told their stories of action. For example, Charmaine, the ‘cheerleader’ told stories and her ‘markings’ were championing her teachers’ successes and walking with them in their failures.

This study derived a model that explains sensemaking processes and accommodates conflicting demands, such as the public expectations for favourable results and principals’ conceptualisations of productive learning. Such demands are too important to ignore. We do

not want to risk that our young people or teachers become fixed in thinking that learning, or their personal worth, are measured only in a test score. We need principals to have the character of the Eucalypt, to bend and be supple, to remain grounded in their beliefs and to integrate and regenerate in the face of adverse conditions.

## **Abstract**

There is increasing pressure on principals in Australia in general, and in New South Wales (NSW) in particular, to report and justify the results of their students on externally mandated assessment programs such as the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations and the National Numeracy and Literacy Assessment Program (NAPLAN). However, our understanding of the way these principals interpret and respond to accountability demands is limited. Research on the way principals understand, prioritise and comply with system accountability requirements regarding student learning is scarce. This study addresses this gap in the literature. It adopts a case study approach to investigate this phenomenon. Two cohorts, comprising 13 secondary school principals from two Catholic School systems in NSW, consented to participate in the study. The researcher interviewed each principal individually during the first phase of data collection. The interviews were semi-structured and were held in agreed sites. They lasted between 60 and 80 minutes. Interview transcripts were sent to the interviewees for member-checks. Upon completing the first phase of the study, the researcher met with four principals from the first group and five principals from the second group, in two separate focus groups. The focus group interviews were designed to represent the principals' collective consensus with the derived themes from the first phase. Collected data were analysed using the Grounded Theory analytical framework, favouring the Straussian techniques.

The study found that the principals did not simply implement policy expectations as policy makers intended. These principals rejected the idea of reducing their accountability reports on student achievement to a single grade or band. They were adamant that learning is broader and more complex than the limited aspects of achievement measured through external assessment programs, though they are governed by sophisticated technologies. These principals' conceptualisations of learning were more comprehensive than the domain of any external assessment program. They reported that they tended to realign their actions as leaders

of learning to be consistent with the priorities of their schools. Their actions indicated strong confidence in the teaching and learning that took place in their schools in response to the identified needs. The principals managed to absorb the tensions associated with the accountability demands through a process of sensemaking that was consistent with Weick's (1995) Sensemaking Framework and Ajzen's (1991, 2012) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

This study has generated a theoretical model that is based on the collected evidence and explains the effective sensemaking processes that principals may use to accommodate misaligned priorities. It proposes that principals' sensemaking processes are indicative of their ways of leading learning. This model may be a useful self-reflection tool for educational leaders in their continuing endeavours to make sense of and integrate policy expectations.

# Chapter 1: Introducing the Research

## 1.1 Preamble

In an Australian school, the principal is the key actor who interprets and implements educational policy. Policy makers increasingly expect educational leaders, notably the principals, to be a driving force for school improvement (Earley, 2013). At the same time, the demands of regulatory processes by policy makers and stakeholders have changed significantly during the 21st century and have elevated the importance of the principal's role (Earley, 2013). Australian principals are expected to understand, interpret and implement various external policies and a principal's performance in enacting these expectations is evaluated by their employer (McGuire, 2013a).

During this period, Australian educators in general have also experienced changes in the nature of their work (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012) because of the increased accountability expectations of federal educational policies with regard to student learning (Gillard, 2008). Educators are now in an era of standards-based agendas and increased centralised accountability systems, in which improved student learning is often defined narrowly and principals themselves are subject to increased accountabilities (Cranston, 2013). Lessons learned elsewhere suggest that some of these enactments of accountability can lead to unintended consequences, such as the emergence of a pseudo-curriculum (Sloan, 2008a; Stobart, 2008), low staff morale (Perryman, 2007) and competition between schools (Lingard, 2010). In Australia, educational leaders are expected to evolve and adapt to their changing conditions of regulating assessment-focused accountability while also meeting the increased expectations of leading improvement, innovation and change in the national 'leading learning' agenda (AITSL Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2016).

The ways principals understand the expectations regarding accountability and enact these expectations with their teachers are core to their work. Only a few studies have been

conducted on this topic, particularly on the way that Australian principals interpret the policy expectations regarding assessment-focused accountability (Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, & Spina, 2015; McGuire, 2012). Even less is known about how they enact these interpretations. Shedding light on these issues is important, because the way principals respond to the accountability expectations affects young peoples' learning in Australian schools (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Walker, Lee, & Bryant, 2014b). Moreover, some additional factors, such as the financial implications for regulating authorities and the morale implications for school communities can result from certain types of regulated accountabilities (Senate References Committee on Education, 2010) and are worthy of investigation.

International studies point to a potential accountability challenge for leaders in Australian education. A widely held view by policy makers is that the path to educational reform is through regulating outputs in the form of performance results (Council of Australian Governments, 2012). It may be assumed by policy makers that principals, as key implementers of policies, will interpret and implement policy mandates in the way that they had intended. Studies elsewhere have suggested that this does not necessarily happen and educational leaders can adopt policies, adapt them or at times, ignore them (Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). Not knowing how Australian educational leaders interpret and implement policies, such as regulated assessment-focused accountability, could be a key accountability challenge for Australian principals and policy makers alike. Additionally, the work of principals, frequently being affected by external forces, deserves attention. It is important to give voice to and honour the innovative ways that principals manage these external forces at the same time as leading learning.

## **1.2 Overviewing the Research**

Internationally, in all fields of endeavour, there has been a growth in accountability (Hall, 2010; May, 2007). The approaches to accountability that have come out of other

domains, such as economic, political and social spheres, are mirrored in education (Bezzina, 2000; Grace, 1989; Marginson, 1993). Education systems around the world that regulate assessment-focused accountability give expression to these approaches and their specific consequences (Lingard & Sellar, 2013; Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). The consequences for accountable learning may include: the development of pseudo-curricula (Sloan, 2008a; Stobart, 2008); an overemphasis on test results (Au, 2009; Goldschmidt et al., 2005); and resistance from educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Pettit, 2009), along with a culture of fear and distrust (Anderson & Cohen, 2015).

In Australia, the initial consequences of regulating assessment-focused accountability were similar to the findings regarding the issues in systems in the US and England, including cheating in tests; low-achieving students being absent on testing days; low staff morale (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Senate References Committee on Education, 2010); a decline in teachers' beliefs in their professional judgement (Comber & Cormack, 2011); and the disempowerment of the knowledge and voice of the teacher and learner (Busher, 2012). Interestingly, a later study by Rogers, Barblett, and Robinson (2016) found fewer negative effects from the 2015 NAPLAN testing than the earlier rounds of NAPLAN testing. Rogers et al. (2016) have argued that Australian educators were becoming normalised in regulated assessment-focused accountability cultures. The key point here is that the consequences indicate the types of decisions and the changeable magnitudes of the decisions, facing principals with regard to their perceived expectations in regulated accountability environments.

Research into leaders' perceptions of policy expectations has revealed that the ways educational leaders implement policies are not always as policy makers intend (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). As in other domains, there is not always alignment between educational leaders' preferred positions and the position of the policy makers (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Shipps & White, 2009; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). The relative

success or failure of policy implementations in other spheres has been found to be influenced by the capabilities, beliefs and values of the local actors (Werts et al., 2013).

Local actors in education, such as principals, conceptualise their accountability within the context of various sources, including (a) their beliefs and values about what they think they can or should do; (b) the collective norms and values of their communities; and (c) the accountability regulations by which ‘teachers account for what they do’ (Elmore, 2005a, p. 135). Principals often need to reconcile seemingly divergent viewpoints as they seek to understand the accountability expectations and make decisions about how to enact their accountability responsibilities (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). For some principals, the experience involves reconciliation in order to integrate these demands, which at times creates tension (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006b; Shipps, 2012).

In Australia, several studies conducted since the introduction of the public disclosure of performance results have indicated that some educational leaders have felt pressured to raise performance in their schools (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ), with ethical implications for their ways of leading (Ehrich et al., 2015). However, little is known about the extent to which principals experience such pressures and for what reasons. Importantly, it is unknown (in the Australian educational context) whether this experience points to the influence of principals’ beliefs, the collective norms or the regulations themselves in the ways they interpret and enact assessment-focused accountability.

Several well-recognised frameworks and theories provide windows into understanding the dynamics that can be operating between principals’ interpretations and their actions. Weick’s properties of sensemaking (Weick, 1995) or ‘framework’ offers insights into the ways that principals can interpret their expectations. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) sheds light on the dynamics between principals’ interpretations and actions that can be at play. Weick’s framework and Ajzen’s theory have been used to guide this investigation and provide insights into the identified research problem (see Section 1.3.1).

A logical step in understanding the principals' views, as well as the ways these views can influence the way they enact their assessment-focused accountability, was to ask the principals themselves about their views. This investigation invited principals to share their experiences of being held to account for learning, with the goal of developing a theoretical model to represent their understandings and their enactments. Principals' perspectives of how they view the external accountability expectations are important. Policy makers depend on the agency of principals to enact such expectations with a view to improve learning in schools (Council of Australian Governments, 2012). The participating principals in this study demonstrated frankness, honesty and commitment. Their views have been represented as accurately and confidentially as possible.

A theoretical perspective of interpretivism best represented the research problem, as knowledge is derived from participants' perspectives about their experiences. The methodology of case study was adopted because definitions of accountability were needed as well as boundaries between the context and the participants. Data were gathered through one-to-one, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and document analysis. The methods of data analysis were informed by the principles of grounded theory (GT), which generated a theoretical model. The model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of and Integrating* Policy Expectations', explains (through Weick's Sensemaking Framework) principals' sensemaking strategies and knowing these, provides indicators of the likely ways that educational leaders enact policy expectations (through Ajzen's TPB).

The next section begins with the profile of this research and the researcher, followed by the significance and the educational context of the study. The chapter finishes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

## 1.3 Profiling the Research

### 1.3.1 Identifying the Research Problem

Principals in other countries reveal that they *adapt* rather than *adopt* the accountability expectations that are set by policy (Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond et al., 2002). The research problem is that it is not known how principals in Australia respond to policy-regulated assessment-focused accountability. There are few empirical understandings about the ways Australian principals interpret expectations in regulating assessment-focused accountability outcomes and none that point to how these interpretations may influence the ways they lead learning. This lack of understanding is important, for five reasons. First, is that following the increase of regulated assessment-focused accountability, most principals in Australian schools are expected to demonstrate they have acted upon data (Council of Australian Government, 2013). Second, empirical studies show that educational leaders are having an increasing influence on the learning outcomes of the students in the schools that they lead (Marzano, 2009; Robinson, 2007; Walker et al., 2014b). Studies by Dinham (2005) and Walker, Lee, and Bryant (2014a) found 5–10% and 12% (respectively) of in-school variance in student learning was attributed to the influence of leadership. Third, a preliminary review of the literature suggested that educational leaders in other countries enact policy expectations (such as assessment-focused accountability) in unexpected ways (Firestone & Shipps, 2003; Shipps, 2012) (see Section 1.2). It is possible that this response is being replicated in Australia. Fourth, although several theoretical models in Australian educational leadership research point to the increasing demands on principals (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014; Burford, 2015), these models are more theoretical than empirical. The final reason is that when this researcher worked as a school system advisor, she observed diverse interpretations of the accountability expectations by principals and the ways they then implemented these interpretations in their work with teachers and students. This diversity was puzzling and sparked an interest in investigating the possible reasons for it. Thus, the lack of clarity

regarding Australian principals' interpretations of assessment-focused accountability and the effect of these interpretations on principals' enactments, with attendant implications for both Australian educational leaders and the regulatory authorities that determine such accountability policies, resulted in the identified research problem.

### **1.3.2 Establishing the Research Purpose**

The research problem concerning the lack of clarity about Australian principals' interpretations and enactments of assessment-focused accountability also identified a paucity of grounded theories about Australian principals' experiences of regulated accountability. From this problem, three purposes emerged. Research Purpose 1 (RP1) was to understand principals' interpretations of their assessment-focused accountability. Research Purpose 2 (RP2) was to examine how these interpretations influenced their ways of leading learning. Research Purpose 3 (RP3) was to generate a theory that would explain and describe the principals' interpretations and provide, under certain conditions, indicators of their likely ways of leading learning.

At the start of this research, a tentative definition of assessment-focused accountability was 'disclosing, explaining, justifying and enacting the consequences for performance results of external assessment programs'.

### **1.3.3 Forming the Research Question**

Given the three purposes of the study, the central research question was, *How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* This question includes the essential elements to meet the research purpose. The question's use of 'how' as an inquiring, explaining and discovering word met the research purposes of understanding principals' interpretations and enactments. The question addressed the need to understand principals' interpretations of the assessment-focused accountability expectations (RP1). The second question directed the inquiry to identify the ways principals may lead learning (RP2). Additionally, the third question ensured that the possible

relationship between principals' interpretations and their ways of leading could be revealed in an empirical and theoretical sense (RP3). Thus, the central research question provided this investigation with an effective means of meeting the three purposes of the research.

#### **1.3.4 Positioning the Researcher**

During the course of the investigation, this researcher worked at Australian Catholic University lecturing in the discipline of educational leadership. Previously, the researcher worked in various government and non-government secondary schools and a Catholic school system office, in the roles of classroom teacher, curriculum coordinator and assistant principal, principal and secondary schools consultant. Part of the latter role involved working with principals and executive staff in relation to their accountability responsibilities to system, state and federal bodies and importantly for this study, regulated accountability for student learning.

#### **1.4 Finding the Significance of the Study**

Given the elevated importance of performance results from external assessment programs in Australia (Council of Australian Government, 2013; McGuire, 2012), the key significance of this research was in understanding the way the principals in the study interpreted and enacted these accountability expectations. Central to this key significance was discovering how the principals' interpretations of their expectations affected their ways of leading learning. This was central because the discovery could provide indicators of the likely outcomes, given certain conditions and influences, when the principals were faced with external policy expectations.

The issues of expectations and enactment of accountability expectations are important because in regulating assessment-focused accountability outcomes for students, the federal, state and territory governments invest considerable resources in assessment programs, such as the National Assessment Program (NAP) and the New South Wales (NSW) Higher School Certificate (HSC) (NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016a). As

well as these resourcing implications, prioritising the performance results of external tests over other representations of students' and teachers' work can lead to negative effects on educators and students, such as low morale and feelings of injustice (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Senate References Committee on Education, 2010). However, it is unclear how this potential effect influences the ways principals lead their school communities. Studies in other countries have shown that principals' views of their external expectations have an effect on their implementation of mandated policies regarding their accountability responsibilities (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002) and notably, the outcomes for students (Walker et al., 2014b).

Although the following five points of significance had potentially less significance than the preceding key point for this study, they also needed consideration. First, educational jurisdictions worldwide have been affected by a rapid growth and evolution in assessment-focused accountability within the last 10 years (Hardy, 2015; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2011; Reid, 2011). This current study aimed to investigate the effect of the increasing accountability demands on principals, such as the influences at play for them ranging from factors in the school environment to their stage of career. Reports from the NAP of students cheating on tests, teachers teaching to the test, and high student absenteeism on the days of testing were all considerations in this study (Senate References Committee on Education, 2010). This study aimed to reveal the reasons, from the principals' perspectives, for their responses to NAP and the HSC.

Second, this study aimed to reveal whether interventions through the monitoring of performance resulted from the principals' perspectives on improving the learning outcomes of students. Often, attempts to improve learning outcomes are based on the application of such accountability policies (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2009; Pettit, 2010). For instance, since the inception of NAPLAN, the federal government monitors school performance results and at times has identified 'low-performing schools' and

developed intervention programs, such as National Partnerships. School systems, in their attempts to ensure that publicly disclosed results present schools favourably, set their own expectations for principals. It is not known whether Australian principals have applied the accountability expectations set by their school systems.

Third, this study compared the body of knowledge found in international jurisdictions with the ways the Australian principals were implementing external policy expectations. Research in other systems, such as in the US and England, has shown that educational leaders enact assessment-focused accountability in ways that are not intended by policy makers (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). This current inquiry aimed to explore whether or not Australian principals were enacting their responsibilities in similar ways.

Fourth, this inquiry offered an empirical perspective through the principals' voices. The voice of a principal is important, because school leadership and its role in improving student learning is often a central focus for researchers and government policy discussions (Bendikson, Robinson, & Hattie, 2012; Gurr, 2007; Murray, 2015). It is acknowledged that with the increase of regulated assessment-focused accountability, claimed to be a high-stakes exercise (Gable & Lingard, 2015; Reid, 2011), principals play a key role in its implementation (Cranston, 2013).

Finally, because principals are increasing their influence over student learning outcomes (Walker et al. (2014a), it is important to understand the principals' perspectives regarding their ever-increasing accountability contexts. Several empirical studies have suggested that principals hold a key role of influence over the learning outcomes of the students in the schools that they lead (Marzano, 2009; Robinson, 2007). As mentioned earlier, studies have found that considerable variance in student learning can be attributed to the influence of leadership (Dinham, 2005; Walker et al. (2014a).

## 1.5 Contextualising the Research

This study was conducted in the Australian state of NSW at secondary school sites within two Catholic school systems. Significant changes occurred in the broader educational context during the course of this investigation. Awareness of the global context of educational accountability began to increase, with Australian principals experiencing some of the effects of the global discourses and comparing Australian performance results (Sellar & Lingard, 2013) with member countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013, 2016). As member countries join the OECD, their triennial reports appear to be used as leverage by national policy makers with school system leaders to improve their results in specific content domains (Bagshaw & Smith, 2016; OECD, 2016; Sellar & Lingard, 2013). As pressure increases on the federal government through this global competition to improve these performance results, this suggests a pressurised ripple effect that flows from ministerial authorities to educational jurisdictions to school system leaders to principals (Lingard & Sellar, 2016). As a result of these increasing external demands, school system leaders are compelled to make decisions to regulate accountability for assessment program results. This need to regulate can be influenced by school communities (Gerbase et al., 2016), the public (Baroutsis, 2016), state or territorial authorities and the federal government (Bagshaw & Smith, 2016; Lingard & Sellar, 2016).

Key to the pressures of increased assessment-focused accountability are the consequences brought about by the disclosure of performance results. The introduction of the national public disclosure of performance results for literacy and numeracy and the increase of state-based disclosures have introduced more layers of accountability and with seemingly greater consequences (Lingard, Thompson, & Sellar, 2015). Comparisons occur and often result in judgement, with further competition between schools (McGuire, 2013b).

The next section begins with positioning the term ‘assessment-focused accountability’ for the study, followed by describing the context of assessment-focused accountability from

the global to the school perspective, including global governance, national, state, school system and school contexts. Each section draws out the contextual issues and pinpoints the potential implications for the study.

### **1.5.1 Positioning Assessment-Focused Accountability**

Over the last 15 years, assessment-focused accountability in Australia has changed from being an input into educational resources and programming to being an output in performance results (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013; Pettit, 2009). Educational leaders now are expected to account for these results (Cranston, 2013; Ehrich et al., 2015). Exactly *what* learning is accounted for and *how* learning is accounted for have also changed. This period has seen the introduction of national testing and the ways states and territories account for Year 12 exit results, along with the introduction of an Australian curriculum. A common experience for Australian educators and students in assessing learning is now through prioritising outputs in performance results (Lingard et al., 2013). Importantly, another common experience for educators during this time has been managing the public disclosure of these performance results. Performance results from external tests appear to be elevated in importance as a means of accounting for learning and possibly as a comfort for policy makers and school system leaders. However, empirical studies have suggested that there is a dissonance between the intention of accountability set by the federal government and its implementation by educators (Cranston, Reid, Mulford, & Keating, 2011; Pettit, 2009).

The potential implication of this dissonance, which this current study addresses, concerns the teachers' position in their relationship with principals in carrying out the work of implementing accountability expectations.

### **1.5.2 Contextualising the Global Influences for this Study**

While it is unclear what influence international organisations, such as the OECD, have on governing education, there is a growing interest in such influences (Morgan & Shahjahan, 2014), especially empirical comparisons with particular countries and cities, such as Finland,

Singapore and Shanghai (Morgan & Shahjahan, 2014). The OECD has built on past successes and continues to ‘gain authority as an expert and resource for evidence based education policy’ (Morgan & Shahjahan, 2014, p.194). The OECD, as described by Woodward (2009), operates through soft power<sup>1</sup> and through ‘cognitive’ and ‘normative’ governance. Cognitive governance asserts its function through the agreed values of the member nations. While normative governance, described as peer pressure, is perceived as being vague (Woodward, 2009), yet it may hold the most influence because it ‘challenges and changes the mindsets’ of the member people (Sellar & Lingard, 2013, p. 715). This is important for this study because of the influence the OECD may hold over the mindsets of federal policy makers, who may in turn influence school system leaders, the key regulating authority for the principals in this study.

The OECD uses the reports of the data from the Program for International Student Assessment<sup>2</sup> (PISA) to make recommendations to countries and jurisdictions, with certain effects on their policy directions (Breakspear, 2012). By 2015, more than 70 countries had taken part in the PISA survey, which has allowed the OECD to track progress and examine three areas: public policy issues in preparing young people for life; literacy in the ways that students apply their knowledge and skills in key learning areas; and lifelong learning, with students measured not only in their reading, mathematics and science literacy but also asked about their self-beliefs (retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisafaq/>). Importantly, the paper ‘Beyond PISA 2015: A longer-term strategy of PISA’ (OECD, 2016) explains that the PISA assessment is a tool to enable governments to review their education systems. Of importance for this study is that our national and state policy makers are fuelled by initiatives such as the OECD’s PISA data to compare and contrast Australia with other countries

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Nye of Harvard University developed this concept to describe a way to ‘attract and co-opt’, rather than use force (hard power) (Nye, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> 70 member countries of the OECD test 15-year-olds’ skills and knowledge (OECD, 2016).

(Lingard & Sellar, 2016). These comparisons and contrasts are likely to influence the directions of school systems and jurisdiction in Australia, as is occurring elsewhere.

Empirical research studies have compared international curriculum systems, using OECD reports from various jurisdictions (Creese, Gonzalez, & Isaacs, 2016). There is a recognition that international organisations contribute to the construction and continuation of evidence-based cultures, which as Pereyra, Kotthoff, and Cowen (2011) assert, legitimatises comparative data being employed as a tool to govern education. In essence, national policy makers now adopt this comparative data heavily, to guide their educational directions (Breakspear, 2012; Morgan & Shahjahan, 2014). It is possible that using evidence-based cultures as a governing tool has become normalised and this possibility was considered in this inquiry.

Interestingly, an OECD 2013 publication on the evaluation of school leaders, advised the ways head teachers (principals) should be appraised in terms of ‘fostering pedagogical leadership in schools’ (OECD, 2013). The priorities that school system leaders give to certain areas of leadership, such as pedagogical leadership and evidence-based leadership, can result in principals being evaluated on their students’ performance results, which may affect their ongoing tenure. Such consequences for principals were important considerations for this study.

Table 1.1 provides an overview of the largest OECD-based studies in education. The table illustrates that most age groups were assessed in some form by these studies.

Table 1.1

*'Beyond PISA 2015: A longer-term Strategy of PISA' (Adapted from Schleicher, 2013, p. 8)*

Study	Age	Subject areas	Sources of context information <sup>3</sup>	Frequency	Global coverage
<b>OECD PISA</b>	15	- Reading - Mathematics - Science - Collaborative problem solving (2015) - Problem solving (2012) - Financial literacy	- Students - Parents (optional) - Teachers (optional) - School principals	Every 3 years since 2000	OECD countries: 34 non-OECD participants: 40 (PISA 2009)
<b>OECD PIAAC<sup>4</sup></b>	16–65	- Literacy - Numeracy - Reading components - Problem solving in technology-rich environments	- The individuals who are assessed	Frequency to be decided <sup>1</sup>	OECD countries: 24 non-OECD participants: 2 (PIAAC 2011)
<b>OECD TALIS<sup>5</sup></b>	Teachers of lower secondary education <sup>2</sup>	- Focuses on the learning environment and working conditions of teachers	- Teachers - School principals	5 years between first 2 cycles	OECD countries: 16 non-OECD participants: 7 (TALIS 2008)
<b>OECD AHELO<sup>6</sup></b>	University students at the end of their B.A. program	- Generic skills common to all university students (e.g., critical thinking) - Skills specific to economics and engineering	- Students - Faculties - Institutions	Feasibility study carried out in 2012	Institutions from 17 countries participated in the feasibility study

Some people assert that the PISA program has helped to normalise the use of comparative data in education on the global stage (Sahlberg, 2011). Countries seek to understand why students in the top-performing education systems, such as Finland and Shanghai, perform so well in PISA testing. Others assert that bodies such as the OECD fuel national educational reforms, which are kept in the public eye by the media in the OECD triennial cycle (Bagshaw & Smith, 2016). These media assertions often disregard the incompatibility between the NAPLAN test (skills) and the PISA survey (applications of

<sup>3</sup> Sources of context information: refers to who is assessed and/or where it is assessed

<sup>4</sup> Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

<sup>5</sup> Teaching and Learning International Survey

<sup>6</sup> Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes

skills) (Lingard & Sellar, 2013) and other system impact factors on PISA data (Sellar & Lingard, 2013, p. 723), such as a student demographic of multi culturalism. As global studies increase both in number and in sectors, they are often adopted by policy makers as benchmarks for comparative rankings, although at times the validity of such comparisons may be questioned due to the impact factors at play.

The implication for this study is that when national and state policy makers compare data with other countries, the trickle-down effect from national policy makers to school system leaders is likely to form part of the principals' experiences of regulated assessment-focused accountability.

### **1.5.3 Contextualising Australian Education**

Assessment-focused accountability at a national level is a relatively recent phenomenon for Australian schools and school systems. Before 2008, states and territories had their own standardised test-based programs with various mechanisms used to account for learning. In 2009, the Australian Government reinforced and formalised the goals of education through the 'Melbourne Declaration' (Ministerial Council on Education, 2008) and entered into a National Education Agreement (NEA) with the states and territories through COAG. The objectives of the NEA included specific statements about student performance: 'performance indicators and performance benchmarks, which outline a number of outcomes-focused targets and progress measures towards the outcomes specified in this Agreement' (COAG, 2009, p. 4). In 2008, national standardised testing and reporting procedures were introduced with the aim of improving educational quality and equity. This aim was enacted through two policy tools: NAPLAN and My School (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2009).

In 2008, the Labor Government established new funding agreements with state and territory governments and attempted to address the inequities highlighted in the OECD PISA performance data (Council of Australian Governments, 2009). These National Partnership

Agreements (NPAs) enabled the federal government to inject and target funds where they were most needed. The areas of NPA reform were literacy and numeracy, the low socio-economic status (SES) of schools, and teacher quality. NSW Catholic school systems received these funds and directed them to schools through such initiatives as targeted leadership roles, professional learning programs and clearer monitoring processes for outputs in performance results. Two schools in this study were identified and named by their school systems as National Partnership Schools.

In Australia, there are several educational jurisdictions, including those of state and territory governments, as well as a variety of education systems such as faith-based schools. These different education systems vary their accountability processes and often engage with the regulation of processes and/or outcomes. However, at a national level, assessment-focused accountability occurs through the measurement of student performance results from NAPLAN testing and a number of process-type indicators reported through the My School website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016). NAPLAN has two main aims: ‘to help drive improvements in student outcomes and provide increased accountability for the community’ (ACARA, 2013). The vehicle used to publicise the data from the students’ performance results from NAPLAN testing is the My School website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013).

In 2009, ACARA was formed to report on learning for all schools in Australia. ACARA’s role is to provide information to the Government and to the public on each school annually (ACARA, 2013). This public information includes data on each school’s student performances from NAPLAN testing. The intention in publishing this information is to provide comparisons of schools that are similar both geographically and in their student populations (COAG, 2009a).

The national test on literacy and numeracy, for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 is the vehicle used by the federal government to regulate outcomes. The public disclosure of these results,

through the My School website, can rank the schools based on their student performance results. Up to a point, public disclosure, if employed to make judgements, can lead to an assessment-focused accountability regime. Public disclosure of performance results can have consequences in terms of the public perception of a school and hence enrolments and ultimately, funding. My School, given its possible consequences such as funding flow-on effects, is an accountability mechanism that some regard as high stakes (Lingard, 2010; Reid, 2011). However, as time has passed and with educators managing the public disclosure of student results, there appears to be less concern about such disclosures (Rogers et al., 2016). Educators may be normalised regarding accounting for outputs with the emergence of testing and data-driven cultures (Ehrich et al., 2015; Lingard et al., 2015).

All schools in Australia have experienced eight cycles of the federal government's regulation in accounting for performance in NAPLAN testing. ACARA, unlike the OECD testing, leaves the possible recommendations for implementation from the NAPLAN data for policy makers in individual jurisdictions (Thompson, 2015). Compared with our global educational peers, it is reasonable to claim, from the point of view of the national authority (ACARA, 2013) and apart from the possible consequences of the public disclosure of performances from NAPLAN, accounting for performance results is currently a low-stakes exercise. However, if School systems impose their accountability expectations on educational leaders, the stakes could be much higher.

The key implication of the Australian education context for this study is that all Australian principals, irrespective of their state or territory accountabilities, are now faced with an added and common accountability mechanism for outputs from performance results. The accountability is regulated through the annual public disclosure of performance results from NAPLAN. The way states and school systems utilise this regulating accountability mechanism varies.

#### **1.5.4 Contextualising the State of NSW Education**

Since the inception of NAPLAN in 2009, states and territories in Australia have chosen various paths to account for learning. For instance, the state of NSW, in which this research was conducted, no longer provides a separate state-based report on student results and relies on the national skill-based test data for literacy and numeracy. Previously, the state of NSW administered a Basic Skills Test (BST), beginning in 1989 and ceasing when NAPLAN was launched. Historically with regard to the BST, educators in the Catholic sector were resistant at the outset to participating in the BST, yet moved to acceptance. The initial criticism of the BST was similar to the current criticisms of NAPLAN; that is, the tool was limited in representing learning. However, the BST moved to being a diagnostic tool rather than a tool for measuring outputs. Political changes introduced by the Keating Labor Government (1991–1996) prompted the adoption of economic rationalism, which meant that policy makers shifted their accountabilities from services and programs (processes) to products, such as performance results (outputs). NAPLAN was conceived within this rationalist climate. Knowing about educators' initial resistance towards the BST makes this an interesting consideration in this investigation.

NSW has its own secondary school exit credential, the HSC, which unlike NAPLAN, is aligned with curriculum outcomes. The HSC is the:

... highest award in secondary education ... students must complete Years 11 and 12, satisfy the HSC requirements and sit for the state-wide HSC examination ... The HSC mark is a 50:50 combination of a student's examination mark and school-based assessment marks for each course. Student performance in each HSC course is measured against defined standards. HSC marks for each course are divided into bands and each band aligns with a description of a typical performance by a student within that mark range (BOSTES, NSW, 2016a).

The NSW Government uses the regulation of processes in their mechanisms through the BOSTES, NSW (BOSTES, NSW, 2016a), with non-government school operations and curricula audited every five years. Schools are expected to meet standards of operation (in a process known as registration) and standards of curriculum delivery (in a process known as accreditation) (BOSTES, NSW, 2016). NSW government schools also use regulation of processes through the vehicle of school reviews to monitor and ensure adherence to the standards of the curriculum (Department of Education and Communities, 2012).

The regulation of outcomes by the NSW State Government is not accountability *per se*; however, the regulation of outcomes to hold educators to account for learning may occur by default through market forces. Curriculum-based test results in a student's exit year (the HSC), are used to inform their entry into higher education. Aggregated HSC results are rank ordered by the media and are often used by schools for marketing purposes (Bishop & Limerick, 2006) and as a means by which parents can make comparisons between schools. The disclosure of HSC results and the options of post-school pathways are viewed by some as being high-stakes issues (Ayres, Sawyer, & Dinham, 2004). The publication of HSC data at the state level may be conceived by some as the same dynamics that are at play in the disclosure of literacy and numeracy results (My School) at the national level.

Secondary school principals in NSW have been accounting for Year 12 students' results in this environment for over 35 years (BOSTES, 2016a). The amount of data available and the activity resulting from this analysis, particularly the data from the HSC results, has increased over the last 10 years. The implication here is that the principals in this study were accustomed to a regulated and centralised curriculum, with annual public disclosure of their performance results of the HSC. Some principals may believe that such public disclosure results in a high-stakes accountability (see Section 2.4.3). As this study was conducted in a NSW Catholic school system, its mechanisms are described in the next section.

### **1.5.5 Contextualising NSW Catholic School systems**

There are seven Catholic school systems in the state of NSW. This research was set in two different geographical regions and in two different NSW Catholic School systems. Both are members of the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) NSW, which acts as an advisory and resource for all Catholic School systems and independent Catholic schools in NSW (NSW Catholic Education Commission, 2016).

Assessment-focused accountability in a Catholic school that belongs to a School system is devolved through BOSTES to that School system. The governance of NSW Catholic School systems falls to a bishop (or his clerical delegate), who directs this authority to a director of that system. There are various organisational and leadership structures in NSW Catholic school systems, consisting of curriculum and compliance units to advisors and consultants. Although there is limited literature with regard to the ways NSW Catholic education systems account for learning, a sample of websites indicates that they regulate through processes (e.g., school reviews) and outcomes (Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta, 2016; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2016; Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016; Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga, 2016).

The above sample of Catholic education systems (representing metropolitan, regional and rural schools) monitors and expects adherence to BOSTES requirements through the regulation of processes. These school systems monitor and expect adherence to the school's Annual Plan and evaluate whether school goals are aligned with school systems' goals (Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta, 2016; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2016; Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016; Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga, 2016).

The regulation of outcomes in these school systems occurs through reporting on national, state and system-based test performances (Canavan, 2010). Importantly, directors of NSW Catholic School systems sit within a broader body called the CEC NSW (NSW Catholic

Education Commission, 2016). This body has several committees with different expert members from the school systems and universities offering advice and directions to the Commission. As the CEC NSW expands its influence across School systems, it is becoming one of the key and credible referral societies from which system directors and principals seek advice and support. In NSW Catholic School systems, the analytical tools used in secondary schools have seen a focus on growth in performance results, coined as ‘learning gain’. John DeCourcy (2005), through the CEC NSW, developed a tool that is justified to predict a student’s score from their achievement in earlier years. The aim of the secondary analysis tool is to enable principals to leverage the results to hold accountability conversations with their teachers about improvement.

Schools and school systems offer a broad range of professional learning for teachers, educational leaders and principals. Notably there has been an increase of professional learning opportunities and tools which enable principals and teachers to analyse data from external tests for example HSC RAP data, DeCourcy (2006) and NAPLAN Smart Data.

Moreover Catholic dioceses regularly send teachers, coordinators and principals for professional learning to analyse the annual data or John DeCourcy travels to Catholic dioceses enabling staff to analyse their HSC data that the project provides (Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta, 2016; Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016; Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga, 2016). Of note are the guide questions that are offered by DeCourcy which avoid individual blame, but rather promote constructive inquiry questions. DeCourcy describes the questioning in terms of levers, of which there are seven. These levers transition from basic questioning (see Lever 1 below) to more complex prompts, concluding with monitoring student subject selection and retention.

Lever 1 questions include:

What have you been doing and why?

How is it going?

How do you know?

What do you plan to do next? (DeCourcy, 2005, p. 97).

Another analytical tool offered to all NSW secondary schools is the Results Analysis Package (RAP) – for the HSC whereby educators in all NSW schools can utilise their data to improve student performance (NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), 2017b). RAP enables teachers to compare their school's performance in a course to the performance of the whole state candidature on either a whole course mark or performance band basis, and on a question-by-question basis (called item analysis). RAP gives schools access to all the new enhancements as well as data dating back to 2001. The package is a paid subscription and is available on the day that the HSC results are released.

Up to a point, the ways secondary principals have been held to account for HSC performance results both through market forces and the School system leaders, could be considered high stakes. Conversely, NSW primary school principals have had minimal exposure to these high-stakes environments. At the time of this investigation, primary school principals were adjusting to accountability expectations more than any other time in their careers (Comber & Cormack, 2011; Gable & Lingard, 2013). These differences were considered in this study when reporting the evidence in relation to the effects of the accountability regime on Australian principals (Senate References Committee on Education, 2010).

In addition, system curriculum-based outcomes, such as Years 6 and 8 (2012) religion tests, are regulated in some NSW Catholic school systems, which use both the regulation of outcomes and the regulation of processes. They do this by monitoring and adhering to school plans and their implementation, as well as where student performance outcomes are part of those plans. For instance, CEO Sydney uses a self-review instrument, called 'How effective is our Catholic School?' (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2016), which includes all aspects of school life, including accountability for performance results. Some indicators in their

assessment-focused accountability within their review processes are student performances in national and system tests.

The key implication of the NSW Catholic school systems for this study is that test-based mechanisms and data analytical tools were part of secondary school principals' experiences in the teaching and learning processes of their schools.

### **1.5.6 Explaining the Organisational and Curriculum Structures in Secondary Schools in NSW and Australia**

Historically, secondary schools in NSW have been organised through distinct units based on curriculum, such as an English and mathematics. As such, each curriculum unit has represented a key learning area (KLA) that reflected the state-based KLA. Through the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, diversity in organisational and curriculum structures has grown. This diversity has coincided with the growing interest and commitment by secondary school educators to broaden their understandings about learning not only to acknowledge their subject area but also to elevate the importance of knowing the young person as a learner (Goos, Stillman, & Vale, 2007). The greater priority given to knowing your student and their learning has occurred at the same time as national, state and territory governments have increased the priority of regulating assessment-focused accountability. Tertiary programs with international study tours opening up leader-practitioners' experiences of curriculum structures (UNSW, 2016) prompted the emergence of diverse curriculum structures, notably the emergence of middle schooling (Dowden, 2007) and project- and inquiry-based learning. The genesis of integrated curriculum and pastoral arrangements, in meeting the needs of the young person as a learner as distinct from teachers teaching their subject, has become the norm for junior secondary pedagogy in Australia (Connors, 2013).

Empirical research has influenced school designs, especially since the mid-1990s and with the injection of funds through Building Education Revolution (Australian Government

Department of Education and Training, 2014), traditional classrooms of separate units of rigid bricks and mortar have evolved into learning spaces of blended amalgamations of flexible physical or digital arrangements (Burke & Grosvenor, 2015; Mulcahy, Cleveland, & Aberton, 2015). These changes have altered the traditional formation of educational leaders.

An implication, given the changes to the organisational structures of NSW secondary schools, is that the principals in this study were formed as teachers and leaders through this period of change. Leadership structures in NSW Catholic secondary schools also changed to accommodate these organisational and curriculum structures.

Organisational designs in secondary schools, such as the diverse learning spaces enabled by the Building Education Revolution and especially the changes in the mindset of secondary school educators from being focused only on subject content to now include the student as a learner, may have influenced the principals' beliefs about learning and assessment-focused accountability that were explored in this study.

### **1.5.7 Overviewing the Leadership Structures in NSW Catholic Secondary Systemic Schools**

Leadership structures influence the career pathways that educational leaders may take. Some structures are binding and can mean that by default, an aspirant leader can miss opportunities to experience leadership positions in teaching and learning. Traditionally in a secondary school, depending on the student population, there have been four tiers. The first tier has been the teacher, who held two primary functions: classroom teacher and pastoral teacher. The second tier was the KLA coordinator or the pastoral/year advisor. The third tier was the deputy principal or assistant principal, for discipline and welfare. The fourth tier was the principal. Hence, deputies or assistant principals could arrive at the doorstep of principalship without having experienced leading learning and teaching.

For this study, the effect of the schools' leadership structures was an important contextual issue. Secondary school principals employed before the year 2000 and with a

student population of less than 650 were likely to have been removed from leading teaching and learning matters for a significant period, possibly between four and 10 years. However, as explained above, at the time of this investigation these traditional leadership structures were becoming less common. The role of the assistant principal with teaching and learning portfolios was growing in popularity—in one large NSW School system, ‘leaders of pedagogy’ had been introduced (Conway & Andrews, 2015). The principals in this study, from both cohorts, were part of such changes. Leadership restructuring had occurred in most of their schools over the last 10 years, privileging pedagogical leadership, as distinct from curriculum knowledge and skill in the teaching and learning processes.

#### **1.5.8 Situating the Role of the Secondary School Principal Globally, Nationally and in NSW Catholic Systemic Schools**

The role of the secondary school principal in NSW Catholic systemic schools and government school systems not only reflected the local educational context of the pedagogical movement in these systems but also reflected the global trends regarding expectations of school leaders (Schleicher, 2012). From the early 1990s to the first decade of the 21st century, the principal’s function had moved from administration to a higher priority in learning (Brookhart & Moss, 2013) and explicitly, the principal’s function was to be a leader of learning (DuFour & Marzano, 2015) (see Figure 1.1). There has been an increase in the accountability of principals for leading such learning. Moreover, the introduction of professional standards for principals may have provided another level of accountability should school system advisors deem the ‘Standard’ as an appropriate accountable measure.

The Principal Standard was introduced in Australia in 2015 (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2016). One of the practices and requirements within the Principal Standard is the expectation that principals ‘manage high standards and accountability’ (p. 18).

Managing High Standards and Accountability means principals will engage in Professional Practices which ‘use a range of data management methods and technologies to ensure that the school’s resources and staff are efficiently organised’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2016, p. 18). Principals are expected to ‘review the effectiveness of processes and use of data to improve school performance’ at the same time as embedding ‘a culture of review, responsibility and shared accountability to achieve high standards for all’ (AITSL, 2016, p. 18). Leadership Requirements means that principals will ‘utilise their personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills by taking into account the ‘social, political and local circumstances within which they work’ (AITSL, 2016, p. 23).

Some school systems adopt elements from the Principal Standard to guide the design of their appraisal processes for principals (Catholic Schools Office Wagga Wagga, 2016). Tertiary institutions include the practices of the Principal Standard in their post graduate programs for leaders (Australian Catholic University, 2017). Since the introduction of the Principal Standard a growth has been witnessed in such processes and programs which emphasise collective responsibility and minimise individual blame (for results).

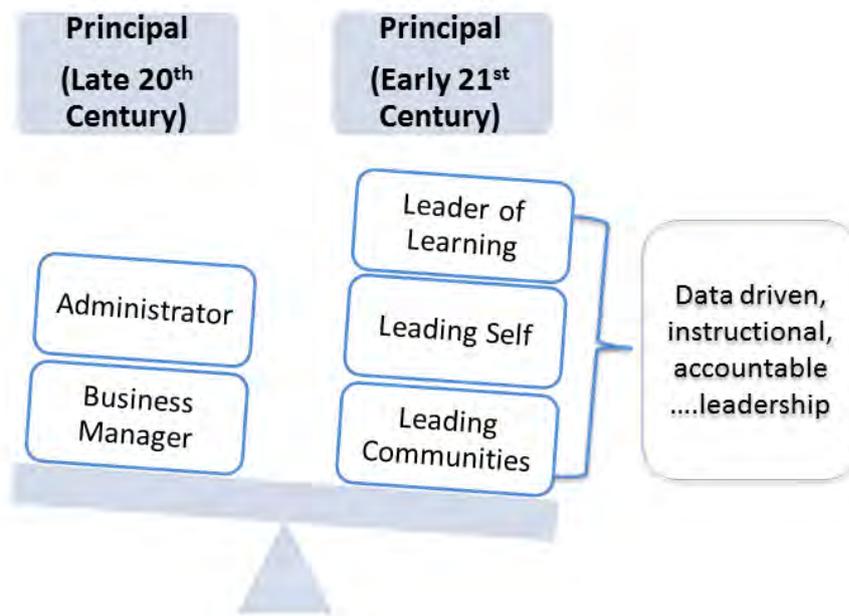
Tertiary programs in post graduate studies for educational leaders also offer leading learning streams which target performativity and accountability in the context of learning cultures (Australian Catholic University, 2017; UNSW, 2016). These units enable educational leaders and aspirant educational leaders to examine ways to integrate external accountability for performance results, such as the HSC. A reflection tool, named 360 degree Reflection Tool, is adopted by individuals and school systems as part of a principal’s suite of professional learning experiences (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2017). A new guide called the Evaluation of the Principals’ Preparation guide released in November 2016 by AISTL is a substantial practical guide for those preparing professional learning for principals, educational leaders and aspirant educational leaders. Such

a guide indicates the high importance of the considerations that may be needed in preparing professional learning for principals (see Section 8.4.4).

Catholic school principals in most NSW Catholic systemic schools had an additional priority to be the leader of faith (CEO Parramatta; CSO Wollongong; CEO Sydney; CSO Wagga Wagga). This section contextualises the role of the secondary school principal with the leader of learning function and its position within schools that are Catholic.

Being accountable as a leader of learning not only included performance results but pedagogies, establishing learning and teaching policies such as assessment, determining which courses were offered and when, with regard timetabling and resourcing. In terms of the expectations of being a leader of learning some Catholic school principals could possibly have seen this move in the priorities of the School system as an expansion of their role. Others may have been fortunate enough, depending on enrolments, to employ business or finance managers. These changes have meant a significant shift in expectations for principals themselves, the teachers with whom they work (Pettit, 2009) and changing expectations by their employers and advisors (see Figure 1.1). Principals in most NSW Catholic systemic schools, similar to government school systems, are employed and report to the director of that school system. Directors delegate this role to senior advisors, who support and supervise the principals directly.

The implications for this study of this structure were twofold. One issue concerned the principal-advisor relationship, as the external accountabilities for learning were made known to the principals by the senior system advisors, with the expectation of the accountabilities being implemented by the principals and monitored by the advisors.



*Figure 1.1* The ‘balance shift’ in the role of the secondary school principal.

The second issue was that all other expectations of the principal’s role were set out by the advisor and monitored. One such example that was important for this study was the priority of being leaders of learning.

The principal’s role in a Catholic school is ‘uniquely shaped by a Catholic world view, embodied in a particular set of values and ethics’ (Bezzina, 2008a, p. 222). Such values and ethics may present certain determinations in the ways principals may view external assessments and the ways principals may enact their accountabilities. The role of the Catholic school principal in this study held a dual function of leading learning and leading faith. It was reasonable to entertain that the dual function of the role may have presented competing priorities for principals in their interpretations and responses to accountability. For example, principals’ views of accountability for performance results may have been misaligned with not only their beliefs about learning but also their religious beliefs. For example, Striepe, Clarke and O’Donoghue (2014) found that perspectives on leadership were enhanced by the ethos of the school's faith tradition.

The Catholic ethos may find its expression in a principal’s fidelity to the Catholic Church traditions through the mission and identity of the Catholic school (Sullivan, 2014). An

ethos holds its own internal expectations within a secular external landscape. For this study, these expectations may be in conflict between principals' faith inspired practices and performance driven practices (Gleeson, 2015). Conversely, the Catholic ethos may have enhanced principals' perspectives in their preference for a particular leadership style. Styles that appear to align with faith and values based learning communities include servant (Greenleaf, 2002; Striepe & O'Donoghue, 2014), authentic (Duignan, 2015) and discipleship (Gordon-Brown, 2011). For the purposes of this study it was important to consider the degree that principals embedded the Catholic world view into their role and the possible impact of this embodiment in their interpretations and responses of their accountability.

## **1.6 Structuring the Thesis**

The first three chapters of this thesis 'set the scene' for this investigation. This first chapter has explained this researcher's motives for investigating the study's research problem and research question. The study's research design has been presented briefly and the significance of researching principals' experiences of accountability, along with the educational context and their implications for the study, has been outlined.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature pertinent to the research problem. Key topics include the definition of assessment-focused accountability; what learning is being accounted for; the methods and the consequences of accounting for learning; principals' experiences of enacting mandated policies; frameworks and models that offer insight into the ways individuals may make sense of external stimuli; and how these sensemaking devices may play out in their behaviours.

Chapter 3 provides the rationale and methodology of the case study and the methods selected, with the data analytical strategies informed by GT. It details the data-gathering methods of participant selection and data collection, as well as the analytical methods of

coding and memoing, along with an evaluation of these methods and the ethical considerations of the research process.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain the findings, which include the participating principals' understandings of their expectations, their ways of leading learning from these understandings, and the associated effects of them. Chapter 6 is a discussion of these findings, drawing from literature and through making comparisons, arriving at some propositions and conclusions that act as the 'planks' of a theoretical model.

Chapter 7 describes and explains the generation of the theoretical model from the presentation of findings and discussion. Chapter 8 demonstrates how the model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense* of and *Integrating* Policy Expectations', explains the likely ways the principal, as the local actor, sets about implementing policy such as assessment-focused accountability. This section addresses the research question, identifying its contribution and limitations, and makes recommendations for future directions of research.

## Chapter 2: Reviewing the Literature

### 2.1 Introduction

The international impetus for increased accountability in society has stemmed from the pressing need of individuals and institutions for certainty and trust (Biesta, 2004; Coglianese, Nash, & Olmstead, 2003). The post-modern condition has abandoned belief in the possibility of a universal moral code and has been replaced by responsibility (Biesta, 2004). Demands for individuals and organisations to be responsible or answerable for their actions can be seen in business, government and education sectors.

To appreciate principals' understandings of the assessment-focused accountability expectations, it was important to consider the broader contexts in which they were working. For instance, the espoused intentions of policy makers through educational mandates, often influenced by political and economic factors, are not always aligned with the espoused benefits from the position of the educator (Stobart, 2008) and at times in the Australian context, there are unanticipated consequences for learning (Comber, 2012; Senate References Committee on Education, 2010). Hence, it is important to consider this context and its potential influences on principals' views and enactments. Consideration in this literature review is given to the intentions and mechanisms of educational accountability and their consequences, with a particular focus on educational jurisdictions similar to Australia.

The ways principals respond to accountability expectations is also an area of interest. For example, what principals bring to this engagement, their making meaning of external stimuli, and their attitudes and beliefs, all need exploration. To this end, Weick's sensemaking properties (Weick, 1995) are explored. The TPB can also be used to explain an individual's attitudes and beliefs as determinants for their behaviours (Ajzen, 2012). As such, the TPB offers understandings of how principals' beliefs about assessment-focused accountabilities may determine their behaviours. An integration of Weick's dimensions and the TPB was

useful for this study because they provided an understanding of the potential sensemaking processes at work for principals and how their attitudes and beliefs had influenced their actions. Thus, an integration of the work by Weick and Ajzen has been used to guide this research.

This review of the relevant literature begins from a macro perspective, with a brief overview of the public purposes of education (see Section 2.2) and a critique of accountability, its definitions and its mechanisms (see Section 2.3). In Section 2.4, the review covers accountability from a learning perspective, including the definition of regulated assessment-focused accountability for this study as well as its typologies, rationales, mechanisms and consequences. The review then moves to the micro perspective of principals' possible engagements with their accountability responsibilities, notably their interpretations, impacts and enactments of assessment-focused accountability (see Sections 2.5–2.7). The review ends with a justification of the conceptual framework for this study, along with justifications for the research sub-questions (RSQs) from this review (see Section 2.8).

## **2.2 Public Purposes of Education**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

The public purposes of education across the Western world are based on common ideologies of social justice, liberty and equity (Wiseman, 2010). However, certain purposes gain dominance because of the political processes that reflect the climate of that time in history (Gunzenhauser, 2003; Reid, Cranston, Keating, & Mulford, 2011). There is evidence to support the failure of certain accountability arrangements, such as high-stakes testing in certain jurisdictions, when accounting for learning (Siegel, 2004). In Australia, the lack of alignment between the purposes of education and the federal and state arrangements of educational accountability has an effect on the way some principals perceive their responsibilities of accountability (Cranston et al., 2011). Pertinent to this study were

principals' ideologies about the purposes of education and the way these could have an effect on their interpretations of the accountability expectations.

The next section identifies the influence of the economic and social climate on the public purposes of education. It identifies Australia's public purposes of education and explains in general terms the way governments determine the shape and delivery of policy in their assessment-focused accountability and how certain arrangements affect principals as they carry out the public purpose of education.

### **2.2.2 Australia's Public Purposes of Education**

The economic, political and social climate for any particular time in history informs the priority given to particular educational purposes (Gunzenhauser, 2003; Reid et al., 2011). For instance in England in 2006, the emphasis was on the challenge to reform education through improvement in performance outputs (Education and Inspections Act, 2006). In the US at the turn of the century, the emphasis was on improvement in learning, with particular attention to closing achievement gaps and minimising disadvantage ("No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," 2002). In South Korea and Singapore in 2008–2009, the emphasis was on social and economic regeneration (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In Australia, by the turn of the century the emphasis was on citizenship and economic responsibility (Lingard, 2010) as well as individual purpose (Cranston et al., 2011), with an increased accountability for outputs in education (Rowe, 2005).

Governments make choices regarding which public purposes take precedence (Biesta, 2004; Shipps & White, 2009). In education, economic aims have been pushed to the foreground (Siegel, 2004). For instance, in England at the turn of the century, one of the economic aims involved a significant vocational aspect, such as individual employment and social well-being through economic prosperity (Wilkins, 2002). This section examines the choices that the Australian Government has made in determining which purposes of education should take precedence.

In the era of the federal Labor Government (2007–2012), a priority on citizens being competent economic contributors increased the focus on performance results in education (Lingard, 2010) rather than inputs on resources (Rowe, 2005). This economic priority, combined with the priorities from the Howard era that promoted choice of schooling, found their expression in the dominant assessment-focused accountability arrangements in this country.

According to (Reid et al., 2011), during the time of this study, Australia’s public purposes of education were dominated by three aspects: the *democratic purpose*, in which ‘society expects its schools to prepare young people to be active and competent participants in democratic life’; the *individual purpose*, which ‘aims to advantage the individual in social and economic life’; and the *economic purpose*, which ‘aims to prepare young people as competent economic contributors’ (p. 20, underline added). That is, the purposes that had precedence in Australia at the time of this study were the *individual* and *economic purposes* (Cranston et al., 2011; Reid et al., 2011).

The economic and individual priorities of these educational purposes were reflected in elements such as the structures of schooling, the culture and processes of schooling, and importantly for this study, the assessment and reporting practices of the official curriculum (Reid et al., 2011). These priorities and the way they have shaped education policies in Australia are discussed below.

In the period of the Howard Liberal federal government (1996–2007) the *individual* purpose in education was a significant priority, with education policy aiming ‘to advantage the individual in social and economic life’ (Reid et al., 2011, p. 20) and shaping policies that were premised on a view of education as a commodity (Bezzina, 2000). One priority, reflecting the individual purpose, was the emphasis on facilitating parents’ and students’ choice of school (Lingard, 2010; Reid et al., 2011). ‘Choice of school’ is characteristic of a neoliberal world view, which is believed by some to be a normalised practice in current

Australian education (Angus, 2015). This emphasis, in turn, may have influenced the accountability mechanisms being used. For instance in Australia, reflecting this individual purpose, the My School website provides parents and students with public information on student performance results, to help them choose a school (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2009). The possible effects that these priorities may have on principals are presented in the next section.

### **2.2.3 Effects of Priorities on Principals**

At times, the demands of educational accountability systems, both in Australia and other jurisdictions in the US, can pose difficulties and challenges for principals in achieving their commitments to the public purposes of education (Cranston et al., 2011; Shipps & White, 2009). In one jurisdiction in New York, Shipps and White (2009) found that principals faced moral and professional challenges in meeting their professional commitments when new accountability policy priorities were introduced. These studies suggested that principals experience tensions between their own understandings of what education should be and the pressure by policy makers to implement accountability mechanisms in particular ways.

### **2.2.4 Implications for this Research**

These tensions signalled an area of investigation for this study with regard to principals' own beliefs about the purposes of education and the expectations of their accountability systems. These beliefs can have an effect on principals' understandings about learning. In part, these tensions can stem from the types of mechanisms used in these systems (Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). Hence, it is important to consider the nature of accountability mechanisms in certain accountability systems, as well as their strengths and limitations in delivering on their espoused purposes.

## **2.3 Accountability in General**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

The economic sector approach to accountability is evident in approaches to accountability in public policy and social policy (Hall, 2010; Halligan, 2007), including education. For managers and leaders, these approaches have provided challenges between meeting the requirements of the policies and honouring their own positions (Hall, 2010; May, 2007; Power, 1994; Rose & Rose, 2003). These challenges were an important focus for this study because of their parallels to education.

Definitions of accountability are sparse in educational literature (Stobart, 2008); hence, this review examined other spheres to establish a substantial and meaningful definition. Ironically, the mechanisms employed in the economic sector regarding accountability, and their impacts for leaders, have already found their way into education in Australia (Connell, 2015; Marginson, 1993). The next section begins by reviewing a sample of definitions from different contexts, to form a definition of accountability that was suitable for this research.

### **2.3.2 Definitions of Accountability**

Several definitions of accountability were analysed and synthesised into five key concepts, to form a relevant definition for this research. The word ‘accountability’ can have varying emphases, depending on the context. The economic sector defines accountability as the obligation to provide information so that people can make informed judgements about the performance and financial position of an organisation (Halligan, 2007). In a corporate governance context, Huse (2005) defined accountability as defending one’s reasons for actions and supplying normative grounds by which they may be justified. Within a legal context, Bovens (2007) defined accountability as a ‘relationship between the actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the

forum can pose questions and pass judgement and the actor may face consequences' (Bovens, 2007a, p. 450).

Gray's (2002) definition in a social context, similar to that of Bovens (2007), was clear about the persons involved and the consequences that are to be faced. Accountability was explained in terms of individuals and organisations presenting an account of the actions for which society holds them responsible (Gray, 2002). Kuchapski's (2001) definition, from a political context, specifically identified consequences as 'redress', defining accountability as those in office providing information, justifying and explaining and providing redress to the people. Coghill et al. (2006), in the economic context, similar to Gray (2002), included the notion of relationship in the sense of 'direct authority', defining accountability as the 'direct authority relationship within which one party accounts to a person or body for the performance of tasks or functions conferred, or able to be conferred, by that person or body' (Coghill et al., 2006, p. 457). In the educational context, the definitions are less specific, explaining accountability as the processes involved in meeting goals (Leithwood & Earl, 2000) or as regulations for measuring educational outputs (Rowe, 2005).

Five key ideas from this initial sample of definitions that were deemed useful for this study were drawn from Bovens (2007) and Kuchapski (2001): (a) *disclosure*, making information known (Kuchapski, 2001); (b) *transparency*, providing clarity about the disclosed information and ensuring that this information makes sense to those receiving the information (Kuchapski, 2001); (c) *consequences* from the information disclosed, with some form of *redress or appropriate action* able to be taken from the disclosed information (Bovens, 2007; Kuchapski, 2001); (d) being obliged to *explain and justify* the information (Bovens, 2007); and (e) the notion of *relationship between the person being held accountable and their constituency* (Bovens, 2007a).

These five understandings underpin the following definition of accountability, which works as a platform for this study:

Accountability is a relationship between a person who is held responsible for the delivery of certain outcomes (the actor) and the individuals and organisations from whom they receive their mandate for those outcomes. This relationship requires that the actor behaves transparently and discloses, explains and justifies their conduct and its outcomes in the area of the mandate, with the expectation that there will be consequences contingent on these.

This study was concerned with gaining a better understanding of how the principals understood their accountability relationships and how these understandings affected their ways of leading learning in their schools. Later, it will be shown how this study situates the principal in the role of the actor, with the School system leaders as the mandating authorities for the Government.

Before turning to accountability in the educational context, the notion of accountability is elaborated upon from economic and the political contexts, for four reasons. One reason is to identify, describe and compare the rationales and mechanisms from these two contexts. A second reason is to demonstrate the way the mechanisms employed in the economic sectors have influenced the mechanisms in the political sector, with ensuing limitations (May, 2007). Third, as the review moves to education, it becomes apparent that these limitations parallel the educational experience when mechanisms from the economic sector are adopted (Lingard & Sellar, 2013). Fourth, managers' and leaders' experiences of accountability in these sectors may shed light on educational leaders' experiences of accountability. To this end, each section below presents the economic context first, followed by the political context. In this way, the review demonstrates the impact of the economic sector on the political context.

The sections begin with the rationales for accountability in those contexts, followed by their mechanisms and limitations, as well as their effects on managers and leaders. The

section concludes by identifying the implications for this research arising from the review of these contexts.

### **2.3.3 Rationales for Accountability in Economic and Political Contexts**

The growing focus on accountability within the economic sector, which has stemmed partly from the losses experienced through economic failures, has seen an increase in the expectation of organisations taking responsibility for their actions (Huse, 2005). The purpose of accountability in the economic sector is to provide information to shareholders so that they can make judgements about their financial positions (Australian Government Department of Finance and Deregulation, 2008). Similarly, the purpose of political accountability is to provide information so that people can make choices, as well as to promote participation in certain policy contexts (The World Bank, 2011). This purpose is based on a belief in citizens' entitlements, with the choices based on the theory of public choice (Felkins, 2009). The less widely proclaimed rationale for political accountability is to provide information to citizens regarding those who are elected to public office (Halligan, 2007). Mechanisms that account for the effectiveness of public policy strive to be different from those in the economic sector (Najam, 1996), insofar as they seek to involve ordinary citizens directly (The World Bank, 2011).

### **2.3.4 Mechanisms of Accountability in Economic and Political Contexts**

In the economic sector, the dominant mechanisms used for making judgements are processes of *regulating systems* and *regulating results* (May, 2007). The dominant mechanism of accountability in the *regulation of systems*, which has a long history in the economic sector, is the audit (Power, 1994). An audit is defined as an instrument that discloses information and assesses that information in accordance with predetermined quality standards of accounting, financial and non-financial disclosure (Dragomir, 2008). The audit is often used in the regulation of systems, as it provides an honest overview of the organisation's status (Kuchapski, 2001) and can evaluate the processes at work. Four key strengths of the

audit are its objectivity; it can be adapted easily to any context; it is less time consuming than other mechanisms (Rose & Rose, 2003); and it is visible in a checklist (Power, 1994). A limitation of the audit is that the audit process, while aiming to be objective, can exacerbate mistrust and anxiety (Rose & Rose, 2003) and dehumanise the people who are involved in the process (Power, 1994). The audit is not concerned with people; rather, it is concerned with the objective standards for the organisation (Rose & Rose, 2003).

The *regulation of results* or performance regulation uses performance goals as the object of accountability and as such, the processes for regulating results are named performance-based mechanisms (PBMs). These establish, monitor and require adherence to performance goals (May, 2007). Historically, in the economic sector this has focused primarily on financial results.

A definitive strength of PBMs is that the results provide an increased assurance to stakeholders of the financial position of current and past performances (May, 2007), with the mechanism providing information that is visible, objective and quantifiable (Rose & Rose, 2003). Another strength of PBMs is that there is autonomy in how the results are achieved, with managers and their employees having a degree of freedom in how they achieve their results (Coglianese & Lazer, 2003). A key limitation is that PBMs do not evaluate the performance of systems or organisational processes, which can impede or maximise economic growth (May, 2007). A second limitation of PBMs is that in their concentrated focus on accounting for profit to appease shareholders, they can omit consideration of the people who do the work to gain the profits (Campbell, Whitehead, & Finkelstein, 2009; Rose & Rose, 2003).

In the political sector, a strength of the legal mechanisms of political accountability is that they enable fairness and justice for citizens through democratic processes (World Bank, 2011) and they provide opportunities for citizens' redress (Kuchapski, 2001). Although their aims are different, mechanisms in the political sector and the social sector (education

included) have been derived from those in the economic sector. The application of audit and regulating for results, with public choice included in the mix, has the potential to treat the service of public policy as a commodity that can be marketised and contractualised (Hall, 2010; Halligan, 2007). In certain public policy areas, when accountability mechanisms are used to drive reform, they do not deliver their intention of improvement (Murty, Agarwal, & Shah, 2007). PBMs for regulating results, derived from the economic sector, appeal to government policy makers for evaluating benchmarks and justifying expenditure to their constituents (Halligan, 2007). However, audits (and particularly performance audits), may be ill-suited to certain policy context (McPhee, 2012).

### **2.3.5 Impact of Accountability on Managers in Economic and Political Contexts**

Managers in the economic sector experience several issues with regard to meeting their accountability responsibilities. They may experience tensions when there are conflicting accountability needs among different groups of stakeholders (Campbell, 1997) and when these needs come from different directions (May, 2007). The manager is accountable for bottom-line profits to shareholders, as well as being accountable to employees and responsible for ensuring the work is done (Siegel, 2004). Managers are consistently making decisions in the ways that they manage the different needs of shareholders and employees (Waldman & Balven, 2014). When the needs of shareholders' interests of bottom-line results supersede attention to systems' operations, managers may experience powerlessness and frustration (Jackson, 2015; May, 2007). At times, these needs may hold competing priorities for managers and challenge their own ethical and moral obligations (Maak, Pless, & Voegtlin, 2016). Finally, through audit processes of accountability, staff may develop a sense of mistrust and anxiety related to these audit mechanisms. Managers need to attend to these emotions of the employees (Power, 1994). In corporate governance, managers are called to do the right thing, to act responsibly (Pless, Maak, & Waldman, 2012), account to shareholders

and model behavioural integrity, to ensure that employee morale and satisfaction, integral to business productivity, are intact (Prottas, 2013).

In the political sector, the managers or policy formulators may experience several challenges. First, in some governance structures, consequences may occur if policies are not implemented in the ways that policy makers intend. For example in the US, poor performance of a civil servant in their responsibility for both promoting the policy and ensuring its implementation can lead to the removal of a person or their merit pay (Bearfield, 2013; Hays & Sowa, 2006). Second, interest groups, opposition parties and affected individuals and groups often attempt to influence the implementation of policy (Smith, 1973). These influences may create pressure and frustration for the policy formulator because of a mismatch between the policy formulators' expectations and the actual implementation (Natesan & Marathe, 2015; Smith, 1973). At times, politicians want to make a quick mark on the political landscape because of the nature of the electoral clock, which inevitably requires change for those involved in 'selling' the policy to implementers (Hays & Sowa, 2006)

### **2.3.6 Implications of the Economic and Political Contexts for this Research**

The tensions and challenges experienced by managers in the economic and political sector have parallels in education. Table 2.1 traces the rationales, mechanisms and impact on managers of the economic and political perspectives and aligns these with expressions in education. The regulating of systems and the regulation of results, originating from the economic sector, are found also in education (Perryman, 2006; Taubman, 2009). Some accountability systems, such as in England and the US, use one (or a combination of both) of these regulations (Education and Inspections Act, 2006; "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," 2002). Educational leaders also have a responsibility to meet the needs of policy formulators and to ensure the implementation of policies in their schools. The exploration of the literature on educational accountability (see Section 2.4) will explore whether these regulatory

processes have a similar effect on educational leaders to that experienced by managers in other fields.

Table 2.1

*Accountability in the Economic and Political Sectors and Implications for this Research*

<b>Lenses of accountability</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Impact on managers</b>	<b>Implications for this research</b>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevents loss: employees, customers, shareholders (Huse, 2005)</li> <li>• Provide shareholders with greater assurance (McCall, 2002)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulating systems (audit) (Power, 1994)</li> <li>• Regulating results (May, 2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicting accountability needs of stakeholders (Campbell, 1997; May, 2007)</li> <li>• Mistrust and anxiety (Power, 1994)</li> <li>• Powerlessness and frustration (Campbell, 1997; May, 2007)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulating systems and regulating results are both found in educational accountability regimes (Perryman, 2006; Taubman, 2009)</li> </ul>
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides citizens with information (Adams, Kirst, Murphy, &amp; Louis, 1999) and participation (The World Bank, 2011)</li> <li>• People make choices from that information, based on public choice theory (Felkins, 2009)</li> <li>• Seeks to directly involve the ordinary citizen (The World Bank, 2011)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audit—regulating processes</li> <li>• Regulating results (McPhee, 2012)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressure and frustration through the mismatch between the expectation of outcomes and the policy (Hays &amp; Sowa, 2006; Smith, 1973)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misalignment between educational outcomes and accountability policy (Koretz, McCaffrey, &amp; Hamilton, 2001; Senate References Committee on Education, 2010; Stobart, 2008)</li> </ul>

## 2.4 Assessment-focused Accountability

### 2.4.1 Overview

To appreciate the way principals may understand the accountability expectations, it was important for this study to examine various governments' claims regarding the benefits of accountability and the actual outcomes of particular educational accountability systems. It has been suggested that there are contradictions between the espoused benefits of certain accountability regimes and what is actually delivered (Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). Hence, in this study, the rationale, strengths and limitations of certain

accountability regimes were important considerations in shedding light on the principals' accountability contexts. Moreover, in the consideration of educational accountability systems, it was important to examine systems that had similarities with Australia's current educational accountability systems, both at the national and the NSW state levels. To this end, more attention was given to systems that were implementing test-based processes.

This section adapts the previously formed definition of *accountability* (see Section 2.3.2) to a definition of *assessment-focused accountability*. This is followed by an explanation of the types of accountability seen in education, then by an overview of several educational accountability systems that have test-based accountability processes. These processes are examined by identifying the rationale for the mechanisms, along with their strengths and limitations. An analysis of the impact on principals of implementing their accountability responsibilities in systems that are similar to those in Australia leads to the implications for this study.

#### **2.4.2 Definition of Assessment-focused Accountability**

This section establishes a definition of assessment-focused accountability, formed by integrating the clarification of assessment-focused accountability (see Section 1.2.1) with the broad conceptual understandings of accountability presented thus far (see Section 2.3.2). Stobart (2008) posits that 'we are so familiar with accountability in many spheres of life that it is hardly defined' (p. 117). His notes reviewed Herman and Haertel's *Uses and misuse of data for educational accountability and improvement* (2005), finding no single formal definition of accountability, therefore 'assuming we know what it is' (Stobart, 2008, p. 193). Thus, it is important to form a definition for this study.

So far, two descriptions of accountability have been offered. One was a clarification of what was being accounted for; that is, the object of the accounting. Assessment-focused accountability was clarified as meaning accountability for performance results in external assessment programs, being the performance results derived from the national test NAPLAN

and the NSW state Year 12 HSC (see Section 1.2.1). The other description was in the form of a broad definition of accountability (see Section 2.3.2), which specified the following five key elements of accountability: *disclosure* (Kuchapski, 2001); *transparency* (Kuchapski, 2001); *consequences* in the form of *redress or appropriate action* (Bovens, 2007a; Kuchapski, 2001); being obliged to *explain and justify* the information (Bovens, 2007a); and *relationship between the person being held accountable and their constituency* (Bovens, 2007a). These two descriptions are now integrated to form the definition of assessment-focused accountability for this investigation:

Assessment-focused accountability is a relationship between the principal (*person*) who is held responsible for the delivery of favourable<sup>7</sup> performance results in external assessment programs (*certain outcomes*) and the School system (*individuals or organisations*) from whom they receive their mandate (*outcomes*). This relationship requires that the principal (*actor*) behaves transparently and discloses, explains and justifies their ways of accounting for the performance results (*conduct and its outcomes*) in the area of the mandate, with the expectation that there will be consequences contingent on these.

Adopting this definition, the principal is the person who acts with responsibility to another. In other words the accountability relationship is a responsibility relationship. The principal's role in the accountability relationship can be defined as being obliged to be transparent, to disclose and justify their performance results to their performance results to their communities (parents, students, and state and federal authorities). In their accountability relationship, principals (as in the economic and political sectors) are accounting in different directions: to the government or school system, to parents and students, and to teachers.

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<sup>7</sup> As this investigation was situated in principals' understandings of accountability the meaning of 'favourable' was determined by the principal. Hence, favourability was a useful term to describe performance results, rather than high, mid or low results.

The next section explains the various types of accountability seen in education that at times and in some jurisdictions are points of reference for principals in their educational accountability systems.

### **2.4.3 Typologies of Educational Accountability**

The types of accountabilities were an important consideration in this study, as they have been referred to in several research studies in which educational leaders defined to whom and for what they were accountable (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Shipps & White, 2009), going well beyond the accountabilities set by governments (Adams & Kirst, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1989). The principals in these studies often distinguished between the types of accountability facing them (Shipps, 2012) and in particular, noticed the different pressures that could come to bear on their work (Farrell, 2014). For this current study, these types of accountabilities could be additional reference or pressure points for principals in understanding and implementing their assessment-focused accountability responsibilities.

The types of accountability that may come into play for principals include bureaucratic, market, professional, moral and ethical accountabilities. An explanation of each type demonstrates the way government policy in accounting for learning can affect and/or create other types of accountability. Table 2.2 provides a summary of the typology of accountabilities.

In education, bureaucratic accountability involves educators being required to achieve targeted goals from an authority that is external to the school (Sleeter, 2007). The rationale for bureaucratic accountability is for the authority to expect adherence from educators to the outcomes set by the targeted goals and to monitor that process. For instance, bureaucratic accountability in Australian School systems may regulate processes between School systemic learning goals and the school's learning goals (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2016; Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016).

Market accountability in education emerges when educators are seen as competing in a marketplace to 'sell' more of their commodity (Grace, 1989). In these instances, the enrolment data may serve as a performance measure (Harrison & Rouse, 2014). One rationale for educational market accountability is derived through the intentions of governments to provide choice of schooling, with educators responding to parent and student preferences. Another rationale is that increasing the competition between schools improves school performance results (Jensen et al., 2013). The mechanism employed to achieve this is through a competitive vehicle (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). An example of such a vehicle for market accountability in Australian education is the use of disclosed student performance results, so that parents and students can make choices regarding schools (*My School and Beyond*, 2009). The consequences of market accountability are played out through possible loss of market share and increased competition between schools. One Australian principal explained their competition this way: 'Why would I want to share all our secrets of success with my colleagues down the road?' (McGuire, 2012, p. 46)

Professional accountability occurs when educators are held answerable to the standards or goals of the education profession (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006). Some researchers prefer to cast professional accountability as 'professional responsibility' (Cranston, 2013). Similarly Darling-Hammond (2010) found that senior educational leaders preferred to frame accountability as responsibility, personalising the expectations. The rationale for the emergence of professional accountability is a belief that monitoring the set of preferred practices (Firestone & Shipps, 2005) will improve the professional standards of educators (AITSL Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2016; NSW Government, 2010). Its mechanisms are through the monitoring of and adherence to certain national and state standards and competencies. In Australia, these mechanisms occur nationally, with states and territories also establishing their professional standards for entry to teaching, and monitoring and adhering to early-career teacher milestones (ACT Parliamentary Counsel,

2015; AITSL Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2016; NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016b).

Personal accountability and moral/ethical accountability are often described interchangeably in the literature (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). Possible reasons for this are explained later in this section. Personal accountability is the sense of responsibility that the leader carries or exhibits through their actions that are shaped by their ethical and moral convictions (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). As such personal accountability is likely to reflect both personal and normative reference points of the individual leader, which includes values, beliefs, ethics and morals (Gold & Simon, 2004). As defined in this thesis accountability is a relationship of responsibility. Noddings (2013) provides reasons in the education context of why a responsibility relationship is a preferred concept over accountability to educators. She argues that accountability has the likely potential to ‘trigger a self-protective mechanism’, whereas responsibility places the emphasis on the individual’s needs (p.76). One other possible reason for responsibility being a preferred concept is its power to diminish individual blame. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) propose that responsibility may be viewed as ‘more inclusive and places the answerability for the success or failure of young people’s learning on all of society – the public, legislators, parents, teachers, and administrators as the schools’ (p. 160). Responsibility may appear to be a more inclusive and acceptable term by decreasing individual blame and increasing collective ownership. Collective ownership may move those in the accountability relationship away from the emotional triggers of accountability.

In this way the accountability relationship (see Section 2.4.2) asks everyone to place students at the centre and share the responsibility for the learning needs of the young person (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016). When accountability is viewed in this way, argue Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), it is more likely that the learning will encompass more than the results on a high stakes test but also ‘include evidence from authentic and alternative types of assessment in determining what students have learned (p.161). However, to equate

accountability only with responsibility misses some of the nuances in its relational elements as identified in the definition proposed for this study (see Section 2.4.2). That said, for the purposes of this study the term responsibility needs serious consideration whether the concept of responsibility is more palatable to principals, if so the possible reasons why and the implications for principals, such as professional learning (see Section 8.4.4).

Similar to the preferential term of accountability being a ‘responsibility’, some scholars prefer to examine accountability from a moral or ethical perspective. Sahlberg (2010) argues that a moral or ethical perspective is a more intelligent form of accountability for educators. The rationale for moral and ethical accountability is the belief that internal morality of the collective beliefs (a set of standards) must be observed if the specific task of the institution is to be realised (Dorbeck-Jung, 1997). The mechanisms used in this type of accountability may be through internal evidence checks by community members. For instance, Begley’s (2010) model measuring what is ‘in the best interests of students’ may include the value commitment of educators in a particular school, with educators adhering to the value commitment of the best interests of the students and measuring this through internal school evidence guidelines. In an individual case the principal or educational leader may engage in self-reflection and self-reflexive (Alvesson, 1996) tools to gauge whether their values and beliefs are being enacted in their behaviours (Branson, 2009).

Table 2.2

*Typology of Accountabilities in Education*

<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>	<b>Example</b>
Bureaucratic	Educators required to achieve targeted goals from an authority external to the school (Sleeter, 2007)	Educators to meet outcomes set by targeted goals	The regulation of processes and outcomes, with consequences (Firestone & Shipps, 2005)	Alignment of systemic learning goals and the school's learning goals (Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016)
Market	Educators seen as competing in a marketplace to 'sell' more of their commodity (Grace, 1989)	To ensure that educators respond to parent and student preferences	Disclosure of information to stakeholders	Use of disclosed student performance results so parents and students can make choice regarding schools
Professional	Educators held answerable to the standards or goals of the education profession (Anderson & Jaafar, 2006); viewed as a responsibility (Darling-Hammond, 2010)	To improve the professional standards of educators (NSW Government, 2010)	Preferred practices monitored (Firestone & Shipps, 2005) with the expectation of adherence and the consequences of ongoing employment (NSW Government, 2010)	In Australia certain states have professional standards for entry to teaching. Early-career teacher milestones are monitored and adhered to (NSW Government, 2010)
Personal including moral and ethical	The judgements made about the realisation of an individual's (or school's) morality and ethics of their enactment from their espoused beliefs and value commitments (Firestone & Shipps, 2005). Responsibility is a significant dimension of personal accountability	To ensure that the specific task of the institution is realised (Dorbeck-Jung, 1997) and sharing collective responsibility in meeting the individual's needs (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2016)	Internal evidence checks by stakeholders: individual self-audit	Educators monitor and adhere to a value commitment of 'in the best interests of students' through internal school evidence guides; leaders engage with their own self-reflection to monitor behaviours and beliefs (Branson, 2009)

Up to this point, the key terms of accountability witnessed in education have been identified and defined. Later in this section, these types of accountabilities are described further with regard to the impacts for principals in their implementation of their accountability responsibilities.

### ***2.4.3.1 The stakes in assessment-focused accountability***

A term that is rarely left out of accountability discussions is the subject of ‘stakes’. In Australia, external tests have cloaked some school systems like old cardigans (the NSW HSC exam has a 35-year-old history), with high-stakes tests being the cloth that is worn as a symbol of a normalised culture (Ayres, Sawyer, & Dinham, 2004). Since the introduction of NAPLAN testing and its public disclosure of results, there are multiple references in the Australian literature claiming that NAPLAN testing and the consequences of its disclosure is now a high-stakes accountability exercise (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Lewis & Hardy, 2015; Lingard et al., 2015; Smeed, Spiller, & Kimber, 2009).

While there are few definitions for the terms high or low stakes in the literature, it appears that a stake and a consequence are interchangeable (Jacob, 2005; Stobart, 2008). If we apply this understanding of stake to this study’s definition of assessment-focused accountability, then the consequence (stake) would be the outcome with regard to the levels of favourability of the performance results from the external test. While consequences in accountability systems are often described in terms of low or high stake, it has been argued that the determination of the stakes, similar to performance results (see Section 2.4.2 footnote 7), is often relative and subjective. In low-stakes environments it is possible that there are few or no consequences from the regulation of performance results (Klinger & Rogers, 2011), such as accounting to the community in general terms regarding annual learning goals. In other contexts, the consequences have been classified as high (or extremely high) stakes (Stobart, 2008) and may include school closures or loss of employment (Linn, 2003; Shipps & White, 2009).

Some Australian educational scholars, such as Klenowski and Wyatt-Smith (2011), Smeed et al. (2009), Reid (2011) and Hardy (2015), describe the consequences of public disclosure of student performance results from NAPLAN testing as high stakes with detrimental consequences. However, some US jurisdictions have experienced significant

consequences of public disclosure of student performance, such as loss of enrolments (funding), school closures and loss of employment (Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008). Hence, it is important to remember that the interpretation of stakes in the literature is relative to the experiences of those reporting them. To date in Australia, there have been no high-stakes consequences such as performance pay, school closures or staff restructures by the Government resulting from nation-wide test results.

In this first decade of NAPLAN testing in Australia, there have been distinct differences in the reactions of various school sectors to the educators' descriptions of NAPLAN testing and its consequences. These differences were marked in the first inquiry into NAPLAN testing (Senate References Committee on Education, 2010), with primary school principals by far the most disaffected group as a result of the initial testing and subsequent public disclosures of results. Secondary school principals featured less in the initial research (Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ), but they were included in the research from an ethical leadership perspective by Ehrich et al. (2015). These differences needed to be considered by this current investigation.

Irrespective of the relativity of the stakes, the evidence is strong that high-stakes consequences are likely to present problems for school communities. International studies have shown that educational accountability systems that regulate outcomes through PBMs and high-stakes consequences have undesirable results for students, teachers and schools (Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). This study was interested to ascertain whether the participating principals considered that their accountability for performance results was high stakes and if so, under what conditions.

#### **2.4.4 Rationales for Assessment-focused Accountability**

In the economic, political and social climate (see Section 2.2.2), it is understandable that government policy makers and politicians will seek to apply similar metrics to education

and in particular, hold educators to account for learning. The precise nature of the accountability mechanisms depends to some extent on the particular outcomes being pursued.

The rationale for Australia's current national accountability regime is that accountability mechanisms are a significant way to improve learning (Council of Australian Governments, 2012). Similar positions have been adopted in England (Education and Inspections Act, 2006) and the US ("No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," 2002). However, improvement through accounting for performance results has been shown to be an assumption that is not always borne out in practice (Koretz, Linn, Dunbar, & Shepard, 1991; Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). This assumption had implications for this study. The time and commitment required for principals to meet such expectations, with possibly little return, could be of concern for them and for those articulating such expectations (Anderson & Rodway-Macri, 2009). This anomaly or lack of alignment between the rationale and the practice of the accountability regime also raises a question regarding the appropriateness of the type of accountability mechanisms that are used.

May's (2007) terms (see Section 2.3.3) 'regulating systems' and 'regulating results', help to explain the mechanisms used in education to account for learning. For the purposes of this study, these have been called the regulation of processes (systems) and the regulation of outcomes (results).

#### **2.4.5 The Mechanisms of Assessment-focused Accountability**

Governments often regulate both processes and results to hold educators to account for learning (Rothstein, Jacobsen, & Wilder, 2009). For example, England uses both regulating processes and regulating results in their inspectorial accountability regime (Ofsted, 2011; Perryman, 2006). The British Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, 2011) uses the vehicle of auditing for school plans and their implementation (regulating processes) and through the vehicle of the inspecting, measure student performance results (regulating outcomes) (Perryman, 2006).

#### ***2.4.5.1 Regulation of processes***

In the context of schools, an accountability system that focuses on the regulation of processes can be described as a process-based regulation. Those who adhere to the process-based approach argue that goals can be regulated by instituting the appropriate systems for monitoring the implementation of an acceptable plan (May, 2007). Educational systems that regulate processes use mechanisms that are designed to assess long-term plans and the success of their implementation, such as quality teaching and teacher education programs (Sahlberg, 2007). A significant number of School systems in Australia use the vehicle of school review in their regulation of processes (Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta, 2016; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2016; Catholic Education Office Wollongong, 2016).

Ensuring that professional development and the general school operations are aligned with the school's learning goals is another mechanism that is used in regulating processes (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Accountability regimes using the regulation of processes have shown positive outcomes for student learning as measured through the OECD scales (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong, with a determination for long-term reform, evaluate their education practices (Darling-Hammond, 2010) through regulating processes. In her précis of countries that were achieving well in OECD scales in the PISA performances, Darling-Hammond (2010) showed that countries using mechanisms that regulated processes performed consistently better than those regimes using outcomes as their regulator.

#### ***2.4.5.2 Regulation of outcomes***

The regulation of outcomes uses PBMs to account for learning (Lingard, 2010). PBMs in education are defined as vehicles to account for the performance of students or subjects, providing a measure of the outputs (Lingard, 2010). England, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the US and Australia all place a degree of emphasis on student performance results as a mechanism of accountability (Perryman, 2006).

Accountability regimes using PBMs with large-scale assessment and reporting make use of standards and benchmarks in tests that are based on the state or national curriculum (Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). PBMs in educational accountability systems focus on the output of quality (Lingard, 2010). These include students' test results, teachers' performances as indicated by their students' test results, schools' overall ratings of test results, or students' grade promotions and graduations based on their test results (Linn, 2003). These are universal in Australia.

Given the significance of test-based mechanisms at the national level and in NSW Catholic school systems, it is important to understand their relative merits as vehicles of accountability. The following section begins with the strengths and limitations of test-based accountability mechanisms and concludes with a particular focus on the Australian context.

#### ***2.4.5.3 Strengths of test-based mechanisms***

The strengths of test-based mechanisms are identified from two perspectives in the principal's accountability relationship; the first is from the perspective of the authority and the second is from that of the community. Strengths from these two perspectives are analysed in turn.

##### **2.4.5.3.1 Strengths from the perspective of the authority**

Test-based mechanisms provide to the government or education system visible, rapid and quantifiable results (Thompson, 2015). Linn (2000) suggests that PBMs such as testing and assessment are relatively inexpensive, can be externally mandated, can be changed rapidly and have visible results. This fits the economist's need to see whether investments are paying off and further, it is a quick way for the government to exercise control over schooling (Stobart, 2008).

In Australia, owing to the comparatively recent introduction of test-based mechanisms at the national level, there has been limited research about their merits. However, two strengths have been identified from the perspective of the federal government. The first

strength is that test-based mechanisms are seen as an efficient way to track student growth in literacy and numeracy (Council of Australian Governments, 2012) and schools that are not performing to benchmark standards may be assisted. For instance, current programs such as the NPA between federal and state authorities serve in this assistance (National Partnerships: Literacy and Numeracy, 2009). The second strength of test-based mechanisms is that they allow the results to be made available publicly. Both the parents and the federal government perceive this positively, as parents can then make an informed choice of school for their children through their access of student performance results across all Australian schools (Gillard, 2008).

#### 2.4.5.3.2 Strengths from the perspective of the community

In this study, the community has been defined as educators, students and parents. Four strengths for the community were identified in the literature in relation to test-based accountability regimes. First, the use of test-based mechanisms sends a signal that improvement is expected (Stobart, 2008). Second, the data provided by national-, state- or system-mandated mechanisms give essential information to educators regarding required improvements in practice (Pettit, 2010). Accountability frameworks linked to large-scale test-based assessments have had a positive influence on teaching and learning; for example, principals and teachers involved in item writing and review can return to their schools with training and experience that they can apply to their classrooms and leadership (Cizek, 2001). The third strength is for the school itself. In some schools, when test-based mechanisms are incorporated into school cultures with existing strong evidence-based systems, they add value (Elmore, 2005a). There also is evidence that some schools in some jurisdictions have embraced standards and are thriving (Roche, 2004), possibly owing to the collective responsibility for students' academic success (O'Day, 2004). Fourth, test-based accountability regimes that also facilitate public disclosure provide additional information to the performance results (ACARA, 2009; NCLB, 2002). For example, information on expenditure

and demographics may be used for research into those systems or schools that achieve well (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The strengths identified in test-based accountability systems apply to those educational accountability systems exercising both low and high-stakes. The following section identifies the limitations of test-based accountability systems exercising high-stakes. Examining these limitations in these systems was important for this study, as these systems have parallels with Australia's current accountability systems

#### ***2.4.5.4 Limitations of test-based mechanisms in high-stakes testing regimes***

Test-based accountability systems in high-stakes environments have been shown to be less effective than those exercising low-stakes in improving learning (Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009). There are often unanticipated and undesirable consequences in high-stakes testing regimes (Diamond, 2007; Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008; Taubman, 2009), such as educators displaying resistance (McNeil, 2000) or experiencing discomfort (Pettit, 2009) and feeling that the enforced protocols present them with ethical dilemmas (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The limitations found internationally are examined here, followed by those within the Australian context.

One key limitation of using a test as an accountability mechanism in high-stakes testing systems is that there is an overemphasis on the results from the test (Au, 2009; Goldschmidt et al., 2005). The test may become a form of pseudo-curriculum (Sloan, 2008b), as the curriculum evolves to replicate the subject goals of the test. Additionally, an overemphasis on the test means that educators are likely to resist the test-based accountability mechanisms. This is a common occurrence when the performance results of students are used to compare schools (McNeil, 2000; Pettit, 2009).

Several studies have identified five major consequences when school and School system cultures over-rely on test results. The first consequence is that when the stakes are high there is an overemphasis by schools and School systems on the number of students who

score above the benchmark (Hanushek, 2011). Many schools and jurisdictions use ‘above’ and ‘below’ benchmarks to gauge how they are faring, with schools pressured to use the performance scores as a marketing tool (Bishop & Limerick, 2006; Fullan, 2011; Shipps, 2012). Within high-stakes testing regimes there is an over-interpretation of data (Cook, 2006), with the risk that schools will narrow the curriculum by judging all learning and enacting all teaching from the lens of the test score (Sloan, 2008b).

The second consequence from an over-reliance on test results is that comparisons are made about overall school performance from the single test—another form of narrowing and oversimplification. If public choice is a priority of the government, then the consequences may have an effect on enrolments and therefore funding (either positively or negatively). As the single test only assesses those outcomes for that particular time, it has limited value in providing all contingencies (Linn, 2000). Goldschmidt et al. (2005) found that ‘unadjusted single-year cohort information (status measure) is an imprecise indicator of true school performance’ (p. 18).

The third consequence is that the test results can limit both students and teachers when students are reduced to test scores (Au, 2009). Student learning is reduced by students engaging only in pedagogic activity that leads to better performances in test results (Au, 2009; Comber, 2012). Teachers may over-rely on content, as opposed to pedagogy, using more didactic forms of instruction rather than interactive forms (Diamond, 2012).

The fourth consequence of high-stakes testing regimes is that the focus on test scores provides little explanation of what needs to be changed (Kuchapski, 2001). The test measure does not track the growth in student learning; it tracks the performance measure on an arbitrary rating (Goldschmidt et al., 2005).

The fifth consequence is that generally, teachers’ responses are not focused on improving learning outside of the outcomes expected on the test (Stobart, 2008), resulting in a narrow focus on certain curriculum areas (Hanushek, 2011; Sloan, 2008b).

#### **2.4.6 Effects of Assessment-focused Accountability on Principals**

Australian principals, as the delegated authority to account for learning, are likely to be challenged by implementing test-based mechanisms. Comber (2012) found that educational leaders sought to make accountability policies less toxic, through ethical mediation of policy and at times protecting staff from the stress and the work as much as they could (Comber, 2012). The ‘emotional labour in sustaining a positive school ethos and a unified staff under these conditions is significant’ (Comber, 2012, p. 128).

#### **2.4.7 Implications for this Research**

These impacts of NAPLAN testing and the HSC exam, including the public disclosure of the results, could be considered by the participating principals as high-stakes. The impacts of test-based mechanisms in Australia and elsewhere raise several areas of investigation for this research with regard to principals’ understandings of the educational accountability systems. They include the principals’ views of the accountability mechanisms used, the possible undesirable consequences for student learning and the possible resistance from educators in their schools.

There is a clear empirical picture of the impacts on principals in high-stakes testing systems in jurisdictions outside Australia. However, apart from the research from Comber (2012) and Cranston et al. (2011), there are few studies of Australian principals’ understandings of the current educational accountability system. Hence, this study relied upon studies by Shipps (2012), White (2006), Firestone and Shipps (2005) and Spillane, Diamond et al. (2002) with regard to the impacts of the accountability systems on principals. These are detailed in the next section.

### **2.5 Principals’ Interpretations of Assessment-focused Accountability**

#### **2.5.1 Overview**

Two of the three purposes of this study were to investigate principals’ views of accountability and how these views played out in the ways they lead learning in their schools.

The rationale for assessment-focused accountability as defined in this study (see Section 2.4.2) can be described as an external mandate or policy. It also can be regarded in a broader sense as an external stimulus. Data from the external tests, along with school system expectations, are the external stimuli. Because the research problem was situated between the influences of views over behaviours, it was important to consider the literature regarding what was already known about principals' interpretations of accountability (see Section 2.6). However, due to the paucity of literature regarding principals' interpretations of external mandates, there was a need to explore other explanations about the ways individuals may interpret external stimuli.

This section begins with what is already known about principals' interpretations of external mandates of learning, followed by the ways individuals may go about interpreting external stimuli with an application of a sensemaking scaffold. The section concludes with the implications for this study.

### **2.5.2 Principals' Interpretations of External Mandates of Learning**

Government policies that mandate certain policies of accountability may not have the level of influence on principals that governments expect. It is inaccurate to assume that policy incentives are the only, or even the most important, influence on principals (Shipps & White, 2009). While Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) observed that district policies explained a large variation in how principals saw their effectiveness in enacting accountability policy, the study by Shipps and White (2009) found that the variations stemmed from what principals decided they would attend to in their accountability environment and how they related one obligation to another (Shipps & White, 2009). Shipps's (2012) research into principals' enactments found similarities to Spillane et al.'s study (2002) and concluded that 'school leaders do not simply react to policy makers' expectations' (Shipps, 2012, p. 3). Similarly, Braun, Maguire and Ball (2010) understood that policy implementers engaged in a process of interpretation

and translation of their understanding of the policy into the school environment, rather than simply implementation.

Principals do not react to shifts in policies, they make strategic choices (Shipps & White, 2009). For instance, when a policy change is introduced, principals deliberate about how they intend to respond. When faced with increasing accountability expectations, educational leaders make decisions about whether and how they will enact policy (Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). Spillane, Diamond et al. (2002) found that principals in high-stakes accountability regimes could choose to ignore or adapt a policy, rather than adopt it *per se*. In their responses to government policies in these systems, principals make considered decisions about how their schools are organised, what curriculum is taught, what counts for high-quality instruction and how the needs of diverse learners can be met (Marks & Nance, 2007).

Principals are aware of their own values and ethical commitments in their accountability environments and at times, choose not to align their professional and moral commitments with policy intentions. Shipps and White (2009) found that principals' value commitments were 'decoupled from professional commitments' as they attended to 'less ethical precepts with their other responsibilities' (p. 370). Some principals no longer continued with certain learning platforms, such as social justice programs (Marks & Nance, 2007). Some of these principals believed that they had foregone deeply held commitments and experienced a sense of loss (Shipps & White, 2009).

Clearly, principals need to make decisions when reconciling competing viewpoints. It is reasonable to propose that the ways principals reconcile competing viewpoints depends largely on how they make sense of them. Implementation of policy relies on getting a sense of the policy (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). Sensemaking in accountability environments means first, examining what a policy means then working out how it may be implemented in context (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002).

Principals vary in their ways of making sense of external expectations, ranging from what appears to be confident in this respect, to growing in confidence over time. Principals who demonstrate confidence in managing the expectations engage multiple data sources, using bureaucratic guidelines (bureaucratic accountability) and competitive forces (market accountability) ‘to create a coherent story about the school’ (Shipps & White, 2009, p. 379). For others they frame accountability as a responsibility, privileging responsibility for students’ learning and teachers’ professional learning over performance results (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Others struggle with reconciling what is being asked of them and implementing policy in the ways they prefer. For example in one study, in an educational jurisdiction with external incentives (such as performance pay for principals) early-career principals (ECPs) were more likely to experience tensions between their interpretations of their expectations and their implementation phases than were mid- to later-career stage principals (Shipps & White, 2009). Some principals, irrespective of the stages in their principalship, experienced changes in such tensions over time. For instance, in the same study by Shipps and White (2009), at least half of the principals said that in their early exposure to high-stake accountability systems, they were more likely to experience tensions between how they perceived the mandated policy and how they perceived the expectations of their school contexts. However, three years later, Shipps and White (2009) found that these principals’ tensions had decreased; they seemed to have made sense of the policy expectations and felt more capable of implementing the policy in their contexts.

These literature sources (namely Spillane et al. 2002, Shipps 2012 and Shipps & White, 2009) suggested that principals’ interpretations of the accountability expectations were not simply a matter of implementing what policy makers expected. Rather, principals made sense of their expectations; hence, the next section explores a body of knowledge concerning sensemaking.

### **2.5.3 Ways of Interpreting External Stimuli**

When faced with external expectations of accountability, principals will have a similar experience to any individuals who are faced with external stimuli. A new stimulus can require adjustments by the individual. A process that describes such adjustments by individuals is 'sensemaking' (Caughron et al., 2011). Some of the popularity of the literature about sensemaking is because its application makes sense! Weick's (1995) theory of sensemaking has given scholars the opportunity to examine groups of sensemaking practices within organisations (Johnson et al., 2013). This includes the ways that leaders (and particularly principals) (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Werts & Brewer, 2014) make meaning of imposed policies or external stimuli within their school environments and organisations (Thiel, Bagdasarov, Harkrider, Johnson, & Mumford, 2012; Werts et al., 2013). Combining sensemaking literature with ethical decision-making frameworks has demonstrated the importance of sensemaking strategies in the daily work of leaders, especially when making ethical decisions (Bagdasarov et al., 2015; Thiel et al., 2012).

The process of sensemaking enables individuals to work out the possible causes of the situation, the likely outcome of the situation and how they as individuals may influence the progression of the situation (Weick, 1995). Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) asserted that sensemaking starts when an individual realises that a foreign experience is happening and finishes when the individual comprehends the experience enough to allow them to make a decision to 'act, monitor, or ignore' the situation (Caughron et al., 2011, p. 353). In an organisational setting, when people are talking about sensemaking they discuss at least seven properties that have an effect on their efforts to 'size up what they face' (Weick, 2001, p. 461). Notably, part of the active sensemaking process is that the individual places constraints around the external stimuli (Weick, 1995, 2001). Weick presented a minimalist form in his development of his ideas about sensemaking, calling on the reader to rely on their 'common-sense understanding of the terms employed' (Weick, 2001, p. 461).

Each of the seven properties of sensemaking is defined briefly below, followed by the implications when the strategy ‘loosens’. They are drawn from Weick’s 2001 publication *Making sense of the organization*, rather than Weick’s landmark volume (Weick, 1995) because of the 2001 refinements and its more often mentioned in the literature about sensemaking (Allen & Penuel, 2015; Thiel et al., 2012).

1. *Social context*: Strategies in making sense of an event are influenced by the ‘actual, implied, or imagined presence of others. Sensible meanings tend to be those for which there is social support, consensual validation, and shared relevance’ (Weick, 2001, p. 461). Weick names these sensible meanings as ‘social anchors’. When social anchors seem to be absent or disappear for the individual, who then starts to feel isolated from others, the individual’s grasp of what is happening loosens.
2. *Personal identity*: This sensemaking property describes individual’s sense of who they are, recognising their threats or enhancements in a setting. Loosening occurs when the ‘identity is threatened or diffused’ (p. 461), such as in the early stages of a position within the group or losing ‘a job without warning’ (p. 461).
3. *Retrospect*: An individual is influenced by what they have noticed ‘in elapsed events, how far back they look, and how well they remember what they were doing’ (p. 462). Loosening occurs when individuals do not appreciate or recall the past or ‘use it casually, where they put their faith in anticipation’ (p. 462).
4. *Salient cues*: The individual uses their resourcefulness to elaborate on tiny indicators into full-blown stories, often shoring up an initial hunch. Loosening occurs when the cues become contradictory or unstable, the individual’s preferences change, or because the situation is dynamic.
5. *Ongoing projects*: ‘Experience is a continuous flow’. It is made a sensible event when the individual can place boundaries on some portion of the flow or when some interruption occurs. The individual loses their grasp when they ‘lose their ability to

bound ongoing events, to keep pace with them by means of continuous updating actions and interpretations, or to focus on interrupting conditions’ (p. 462).

6. *Plausibility*: This sensemaking act is about individuals developing coherent stories, ‘how events hang together’, a sense of reasoning and credibility to explain the event. This property is influenced by the other six properties. Plausible sense ‘is constrained by agreements with others, consistency with one’s own stake in events, the recent past, visible cues, projects that are demonstrably under way, scenarios that are familiar, and actions that have tangible effects’. Loosening occurs when ‘one of more of these sources of grounding disappears’ (p. 462).
7. *Enactment*: Action is taken as a sensemaking act when the individual sees what they are ‘up against, tries a negotiating gambit, makes a declaration to see what response it pulls or probes something to see how it reacts’ (p. 463). The old adages of ‘testing the waters’ or ‘dipping one’s toes’ possibly describe this act. Loosening the grasp occurs when no probing actions occur or no declarations are made.

For the purposes of this investigation, Weick’s seven properties were called the ‘Sensemaking Framework’. A purposeful question at this point was whether and how Weick’s Framework could be useful for this investigation. One way to answer this question was to evaluate whether the seven properties could be applied to principals’ ways of making meaning of their expectations. Table 2.3 lists Weick’s seven properties and develops operational definitions for each one in its application to the principals in this investigation.

Table 2.3

*Weick’s Sensemaking Properties Applied to this Study*

<b>Property</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>
1 Social context	Sensible meanings of accountability, with principals seeking support, consensual validation and relevance with their communities. These are the social anchors in making sense of accountability expectations.
2 Personal identity	Principals sense of who they are in the accountability events, whereby they recognise the threats or enhancements in their school contexts, which may determine their sense of efficacy where ‘judgments of relevance and sense’ emerge (Weick, 2001, p. 462).

<b>Property</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>
3 Retrospect	The capacity for principals to notice elapsed events, going back and remembering what they or others have done to meet the accountability expectations. For example, principals may draw upon the past year's student performance data to make sense of current experiences.
4 Salient cues	Principals use their resourcefulness to pick out indicators (Shipps, 2012). They shore up stories (Rigby, 2015) about the accountability expectations (Koyama, 2014). For example, principals may draw upon empirical research of the negative consequences of national testing from other countries. When these stories become contradictory, such as poor parallels in education systems, the grasp of making sense loosens.
5 Ongoing projects	Principals make sense of the accountability expectations by constraining what, to whom and how they account (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002) and/or by updating their actions and interpretations of the accountability expectations. They may negotiate and enact external accountability in ways that are creative and savvy (Koyama, 2014).
6 Plausibility	Principals make sense by developing coherent stories (Elmore, Forman, Stosich, & Bocala, 2013) about their expectations. These stories hold certain levels of credibility and reasoning. The principals' level of coherence in the story is constrained by the agreements of their communities, their own stake in the expectations, familiar scenarios, action and credible effects. They also create models which scaffold their stories (Darling-Hammond 2010; Kuchapski, 2001). Plausibility aligns with studies by Darling-Hammond (2010) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) where educational leaders create the coherent and convincing story that accountability is a collective responsibility.
7 Enactment	The principal takes action to see what they may be up against, tries a negotiating gambit or makes a declaration (possibly to the policy makers' expectations).

## **2.6 Implications for this Research**

The preceding synthesis of studies indicates that educational accountability systems with high-stakes testing can pose tensions and challenges for principals. Principals make sense of their accountability environments (Shipps & White, 2009), with consequences often having undesirable effects on learning (Koretz et al., 2001). There can be resistance from teachers in high-stakes environments, with principals pressured for better performances and reliant on the work of teachers. Managing such pressure while simultaneously working with teachers requires careful and strategic attention from principals (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Principals experience tensions between what they believe and what is expected of them (Shipps, 2012). They experience potential challenges in making decisions in how they enact their responsibilities (Marks & Nance, 2007) at the same time as meeting the increasing demands in leading learning (Brookhart & Moss, 2013). For example, some of these tensions may arise when principals' views about learning are under-represented through the accountability mechanisms (Goldschmidt et al., 2005; Stobart, 2008) and the consequences of

using a number to rank students and schools (Polesel, Rice, & Dulfer, 2014). These studies have indicated several areas worthy of investigation. One is how principals make sense of what is expected of them. The second area is to explore what influences may be at play in their sensemaking (Bagdasarov et al., 2015), such as principals' beliefs about learning, motivations and their self-beliefs in managing these tensions and challenges.

Beliefs, motivations and attitudes have a significant role in determining an individual's behaviour (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). These determinants are an important consideration in the dynamics that may play out between principals' interpretations of what is expected of them and how these interpretations influence their subsequent behaviour. The following section explains these dynamics.

## **2.7 Principals' Enactments of Assessment-focused Accountability**

### **2.7.1 Overview**

One body of literature that opens up the dynamic of principals enacting the accountability expectations concerns implementing policy. One understanding of policy enactment by Braun, Maguire and Ball (2010) is that it is a process of understanding, interpreting and then translating these interpretations into acts. In this current study, this process would involve translating policy into acts of learning and teaching. Hardy (2014) contended that policy enactment is a dynamic process; 'putting policies into practice is a creative, sophisticated and complex process that is always also located in a particular context and place' (p. 549). The practical enactments of policy as policy makers intend is rarely a lived reality in a top-down approach (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Interruptions occur when the enacted policy, to be successful, needs to be monitored carefully at each step of the process (Hardy, 2014). As a result, Hardy (2014) argued that the extent to which policies may hold influence, particularly upon teachers' classroom learning and teaching processes, may be tenuous.

There is little empirical research regarding the ways that Australian principals actually implement the accountability expectations set by their School systems. However, some aspects have been studied, such as principals' ways of viewing accountability and its possible impacts (Cranston, 2013); the importance of principals' understanding of the teaching and learning processes (Dufour & Marzano, 2011); the ways principals may integrate external and internal accountability processes; and the ways they buffer the impacts from the external expectations around external testing from teachers and students (Wenner & Settlage, 2015).

Within the context of educational accountability, the next section analyses the current scholarly thinking about what is known in an empirical sense about principals' enactments, including the possible impacts upon teachers and students and their actions.

### **2.7.2 Principals' Ways of Leading with Assessment-focused Accountability**

In this country, there are increasing expectations that educational leaders must be able to manage the assessment-focused accountability expectations and undertake these expectations with professional responsibility. Cranston (2013) argued that educational leaders needed to examine their role critically and take control with a liberating professionalism, unshackling the potential chains of accountability. Other expectations regarding principals meeting their accountability responsibilities include principals (a) enacting being leaders of learning (DuFour & Marzano, 2015); (b) meeting the non-negotiable expectations of employing data to inform their teaching and learning processes (Moss, 2013; Phillips, 2014; Shen, Ma, Cooley, & Burt, 2015); (c) demonstrating data use (*disclosing*); (d) providing reasons for performance results (*justifying and explaining*) to secure tenure (Drake et al., 2016); and (e) listening to the current mantra that the 'silver bullet' for these demands is instructional leadership (Rigby, 2016; Scott, 2016), (*accountability elements in italics added*). Meeting these expectations requires educational leaders to be adaptive and adept, not only with the task at hand but also with the plethora of advice that these studies offer to senior system leaders and principals. For example, numerous evolutions of instructional leadership

have been offered since 20 years ago (Bendikson et al., 2012; Blase & Blase, 1999; Hallinger, 2003) and the latest form of instructional style promises a potential avenue to liberating professionalism and removing the chains of accountability (Zepeda, 2014).

Other empirical studies offer more strategic insights into the effective ways that educational leaders may enact their assessment-focused accountability responsibilities. They need to be more than simply leaders of learning and take responsibility for being proactive and committed to the continued journey of knowing learning; to personalise data rather than simply providing evidence of data use (Kaufman, Graham, Picciano, Popham, & Wiley, 2014; Sharratt & Fullan, 2012); to learn with staff in professional development experiences (Robinson, 2011); and to seek out educational research, as well as understand the learning and teaching process and the impact of teaching on student learning (Bendikson et al., 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Richmond, 2007; Timperley, 2007).

However, some research points to ineffective practices. Limiting the utility of data to inform performance targets can produce negative effects. Koretz (2008) found that in school systems with high stakes and where leaders used accountability processes to drive performance results, this drive gradually superseded the 'diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students' learning' (p. 47). This study suggested the importance of being able to integrate external demands with internal school requirements. Other studies have suggested that the skills of managing external and internal accountability expectations are handled better by some leaders in some contexts than others (Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013). Elmore (2005a), for example, found that educational leaders who integrated external with internal accountability expectations reduced the possible negative impacts of the accountability expectations. The findings by Seashore Louis, Knapp, and Feldman (2012) suggested that education leaders, even though working in different environments, found similar strategising techniques, utilising resources from the array of external accountability demands (and supporting aids) to serve their own internal accountability goals. Their study

found that educational leaders internalise what is expected from external expectations and are able to design accountable practices, such as leading through data and modelling learning and teaching processes in a fully accountable way. As they did this, these educational leaders redesigned the scope of pedagogy and the instructional learning conversation and at the same time, made leading learning more public (Seashore Louis et al., 2012).

Educational leaders influence the ways teachers interpret and enact accountability expectations. It is a reasonable argument that if the percentages of in-school variance in student learning can be attributed to leadership (5–10% in Dinham, 2005 and 12% in Walker et al., 2014), then educational leaders are likely to hold some level of influence about how teachers interpret and enact external expectations. For this reason, it is worthwhile to examine the enactments of teachers and students in their responses to assessment-focused accountability expectations.

Polesel et al. (2014) found that teachers' interpretations of NAPLAN results were negative when they were used to police and rank schools. Teachers perceived that this undermined the school's reputation. In the publication of NAPLAN results on the My School website, the competitive pressures generated among teachers and even parents, and the use by systems of NAPLAN data, were interpreted by educators as blunt instruments for judging schools and teacher performances (Polesel et al., 2014). How these interpretations were enacted by teachers were unknown, other than the initial NAPLAN inquiry (Senate References Committee on Education, 2010).

Teacher enactments potentially provide some indicators of how accountability expectations are being interpreted by senior leaders in the school. Student progression is another indicator. However, this indicator needs a word of caution. For example, the dramatic improvement in students' performance results that was attributed to Texas's processes of accountability was questionable. Approaches by school leaders enacting their prescribed accountability mechanisms failed the minority youth and their communities, as young Texan

people had to repeat their courses of study if they failed to meet the benchmarks. This resulted in huge dropout rates (Valenzuela, 2005). However, these students did not appear in the Texan state's method of collecting data, which 'hid as much as it revealed' (Valenzuela, 2005, p. 1).

Another example was found in a study by Marsh, Farrell and Bertrand (2014), in which accountability policies placed high expectations on teachers. In this context, teachers often enacted potentially demotivating, performance-oriented learning processes. They unwittingly involved students in data use with the aim of motivating the students. The data were disclosed publicly, with the results compared with other teachers and focusing on status, yet there was minimal support provided with regard to ways of building knowledge. These contextual factors pressured teachers to focus on performance results. These authors have offered a cautionary tale of the 'trickle-down' effects of accountability policy on students. An important point that both of these tales present is that the principals or senior educational leaders would likely be influencing these interpretations and enactments (Donaldson, 2013; Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2009).

Some of the literature indicates that at times, principals need to reconcile seemingly divergent viewpoints as they make decisions about how to enact their accountability responsibilities. For example, the fight or flight theory may explain the principals' reconciliation of accountability expectations, particularly when stress related (Brimm, 1983). This reconciling process can be seen as a specific instance of a more general phenomenon when individuals make decisions to behave in certain ways. A person's decision-making process and its influence on behaviour point to a body of knowledge concerning beliefs and behaviours, as well as their capacity to predict behaviours.

### **2.7.3 Ways of Forecasting Principals' Enactments**

While the study of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours is a major field in social psychology, it is beyond the scope of this review to embark on a detailed study of this subject.

However, one of the most widely used theories, the TPB, is useful in shedding light on the principals' views and the way these might influence their behaviours. The TPB is based on the work of Ajzen (Ajzen, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). The theory is considered appropriate because studies on this subject have been conducted in health settings (French & Cooke, 2012; Juraskova et al., 2012; Prestwich et al., 2014), entrepreneurial settings (Kautonen, Van Gelderen, & Tornikoski, 2013) and in various educational settings over the last 25 years (Bezzina, 1989; Dadaczynski & Paulus, 2015; D. M. Grant & Malloy, 2009; Zolait, 2011). Additionally, the elements of this theory accommodate the findings from the literature presented thus far with regard to the likely behaviours in which principals may engage when faced with assessment-focused accountability.

In 1985, social psychologists Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein researched the relationship between decision making and action, to understand the key determinants of behaviour (Lunday & Megan, 2004). The fundamental thinking of the theory is that behaviour is influenced by intentions (Ajzen, 2012). In this way, an individual's intention is a precursor for their behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). These intentions are a function of three conceptually independent determinants (Ajzen, 2012): attitude, subjective norm and perceived control (Ajzen, 1991). These are shown in Figure 2.1. In varying contexts, these three determinants are the predominant influence on intention.

The first determinant is the attitude towards the behaviour and refers to the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable 'evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question' (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Ajzen calls this appraisal 'outcome evaluation' (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The second determinant is a social factor, termed a 'subjective norm' and 'refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior' (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Often, the social pressure is an individual and Ajzen calls these individuals 'social referents' (Ajzen, 2012). The third determinant of intention is 'the degree of perceived

behavioural control and refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and is assumed to reflect past experiences' as well as anticipated challenges (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). However, perceived behavioural control not only influences behaviour indirectly, through intention, but also has been shown to have a direct effect on behaviour (Ajzen & Madden, 1986), as illustrated by the red line in Figure 2.1. Perceived behavioural control is most compatible with Bandura's (1977) concept of perceived self-efficacy, which concerns the judgements that individuals make in how well they think they can execute courses of action required to deal with future situations (Bandura, 2006).

Ajzen postulates that 'as a general rule, the more favorable the attitude and the subjective norm with regard to a behavior, and the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger should be an individual's intention to perform the behavior under consideration' (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). The importance of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control is expected to vary across behaviours and situations. Hence, in some applications of the TPB, it may be found that only attitudes have a significant impact on intentions, whereas in others, attitudes and perceived behavioural control are sufficient to explain intentions. However, all three predictors make independent contributions (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Madden, 1986).

In Ajzen's TPB, the determinants of an individual's intention can be demonstrated through the current understandings of principals' views and their enactments of accountability. Ajzen's three determinants for human action have been used as the framework for the following sections. Emerging bodies of literature pertaining to leaders' intentions and actions are critiqued within the TPB. The section concludes with the implications of this research.

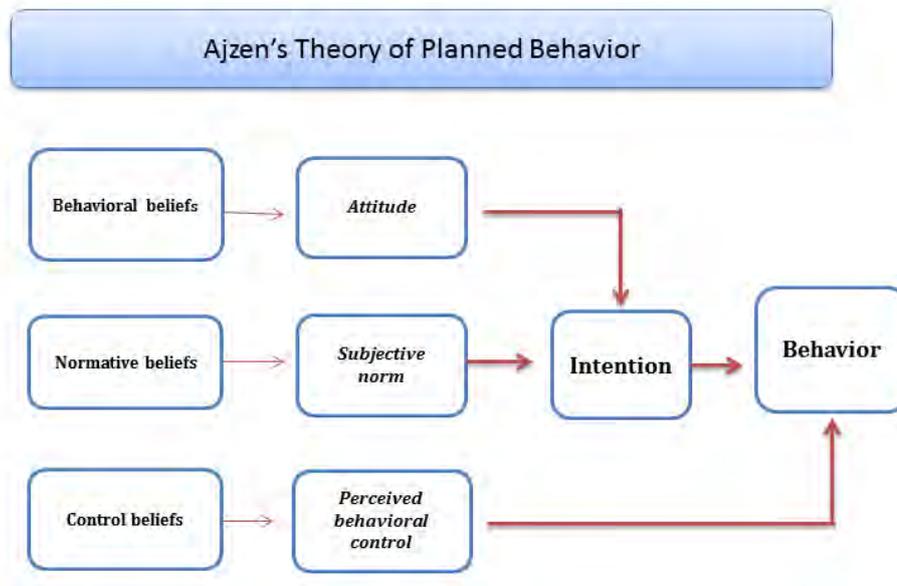


Figure 2.1 Ajzen's TPB (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

#### 2.7.4 Application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

This section applies Ajzen's theoretical components to the previous literature on principals' accountability, to demonstrate its utility for this study.

##### 2.7.4.1 The determinant of attitude and principals' accountability

Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) outlined a process for the measurement of attitude using the three determinants. The first step was the identification of the person's beliefs about the behaviour in question, with beliefs representing the information individuals have about objects (Bezzina, 1989). The second step was determining the judgement that the individual makes as to whether or not the behaviour is favourable (Ajzen, 1991).

Ajzen's understanding of attitude as a determinant of intention was reflected in Shipp's (2012) research. One decision a principal needs to make is whether to rely on external political resources in carrying out their accountability requirements. Applying the determinant of attitude to the research of Shipp (2012), it can be seen that principals identified that one of the possible consequences of relying on political resources in meeting the accountability expectations may generate conflict among stakeholders. Although the principals may have

seen this as being a negative outcome (outcome evaluation), they did not see it as likely to happen (likelihood of outcome). Thus, based on their evaluation and all other things being equal, principals would be likely to rely on external political resources. In this current study, some principals utilised these resources to the advantage of the school. Conversely, applying the same determinant to the research of Spillane, Diamond et al. (2002) could lead to the opposite result. That research discussed principals needing to decide whether to adopt mandated accountability policy. Some principals considered that a possible consequence of adopting mandated policy would be resentment by educators, which they perceived as negative (outcome evaluation) and likely (likelihood of outcome). In this case, it would be predicted that the attitude that developed would incline principals not to adopt the policy as expected by the authority. This is precisely what happened in Spillane's study, with principals not adopting policies as expected. This application of behavioural beliefs to these two studies demonstrates the usefulness of Ajzen's theory in understanding principals' evaluation outcomes about accountability and their influence on principals' behaviours.

#### ***2.7.4.2 The determinant of subjective norms and principals' accountability***

Subjective norms relate to a person's perceptions of what they should and should not do in terms of the perceived expectations of others (social referents) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Subjective norms as a determinant of intention can be demonstrated in Shipps and White's (2009) study, in which the principals identified their stakeholders as state and district authorities (external) and teachers, students and parents (internal). Ajzen would call the external and internal individuals social referents (Ajzen, 2012). In Shipps and White's first wave of research (2004–2005), the principals were more likely to comply with the opinions of their internal social referents. In their second wave of research (2007–2008), the same principals were more likely to comply with the opinions of their external social referents. In these two studies, the principals' perceptions of the expectations of the social referents changed along with their intentions. These changes may have been attributed to the reported

higher level stakes. School closures and staff deployments were some of the consequences in the jurisdictions where the later study occurred. These changes point to the possibility that principals are more likely to be influenced in their priorities (complying or not complying with particular social referents) according to the level of consequence. Ajzen's approach to subjective norms helps to clarify the dynamic that may have been at work in these principals' perceptions of their social referents and the value that they attached to different referents over time. In this way, the value they placed on complying with the particular referent influenced the behaviours of these principals.

#### ***2.7.4.3 Perceived behavioural control and principals' accountability***

Perceived behavioural control is described as the person's beliefs about whether they can perform the desired action and how these beliefs influence their behaviour to perform that action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The kinds of considerations that can interfere with a person's control can concern a person's belief about their ability, such as an individual factor, or their beliefs about an opportunity or their beliefs about an organisational factor (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). Ajzen's understandings of perceived behavioural control can be applied to the existing research findings on principals' accountability. For instance, in high-stakes accountability regimes, Shipps (2012) found that ECPs believed that their own lack of ability (individual factor) hindered their enactments of mandated accountabilities. These same principals perceived that factors in the community (organisational factors) were an important influence for not attending to their accountability requirements (Shipps, 2012). Ajzen's understandings of perceived behavioural control can be applied directly to Shipps's (2012) study, where the principals' beliefs about their organisational factors influenced their behaviours by not attending to their accountability requirements.

#### **2.7.5 Implications for this Research**

This application of the TPB to the few available research studies on principals' accountability shows that a principal's attitude to the consequences of their behaviours

enacting accountability, their perceptions of the accountability expectations (internal and/or external referents) and their beliefs about their capacity to enact mandated accountabilities all provide a useful way to understand (and potentially investigate) the ways principals might enact their accountability responsibilities.

## **2.8 Sensemaking Properties and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

### **2.8.1 Overview**

The second purpose of this investigation was to examine the way principals' interpretations with regard to accountability can have an effect on their ways of leading learning. There was minimal research found about *if* or *how* principals' interpretations of accountability affected their enactments. Providing evidence about views and actions can be problematic, as the evidence relies on an individual's understandings of themselves and an individual's behaviours being observed by themselves or others. Employing lenses that could be applied to situations, such as Weick's seven properties (Utz, Schultz, & Glocka, 2013; Weick, 1993) and the TPB applied to situations in education (Dadaczynski & Paulus, 2015; Underwood, 2012) offered this current investigation descriptions, explanations and indicators of principals' likely behaviours in similar contexts. While Weick's sensemaking strategies were useful in highlighting the possible cognitive processing that may be at play in principals' interpretations, the TPB was concerned with the relationship between intentions and behaviours and the beliefs and attitudes for an individual's reasons (motivations) for acting in particular ways. As such, these have been integrated and both acted as referral points for this investigation.

### **2.8.2 Integrating the Sensemaking Properties and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

Figure 2.2 represents an integration of Weick's Framework and the TPB. As noted earlier, according to the TPB, three independent factors affect the pathway from intention to belief: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Attitude concerns the

degree to which an individual favours a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude can be aligned with Weick's *social context*, in which the social anchors can influence an individual's attitude towards a particular behaviour (Weick, 2001). Attitude can also be aligned with *retrospect*, whereby the individual's attitude is influenced by the noticing of past events and their mindfulness of the task at hand (Weick, 2001).

The subjective norm is the priority that an individual may give to a social referent in directing the engagement of certain behaviours over others (Ajzen, 1991). *Plausibility*, with individuals creating stories to explain the event (Weick, 2001), aligns with the subjective norm because the priorities of the social referent fit in with their story. *Salient cues*, using tiny indicators to elaborate full-blown stories (Weick, 2001), also align with Ajzen's subjective norm, with the *salient cues* about the social referent shoring up the story. *Ongoing projects* serve to place boundaries on the flow of events (Weick, 2001). This aligns closely with the boundaries that the individual places on to whom they give preference (boundaries) with regard to their social referents.

Perceived behavioural control is the individual's perception regarding the ease or difficulty of engaging in the task (Ajzen, 1991). *Personal identity* involves the individual recognising the threats and enhancements that 'may be rendered efficacious' (Weick, 2001, p. 462) and aligns with perceived behavioural control whereby the individual interprets or evaluates their capacities to engage the behaviour. *Retrospect* parallels this norm because past experiences of the event may determine judgements about the likelihood of success or failure.

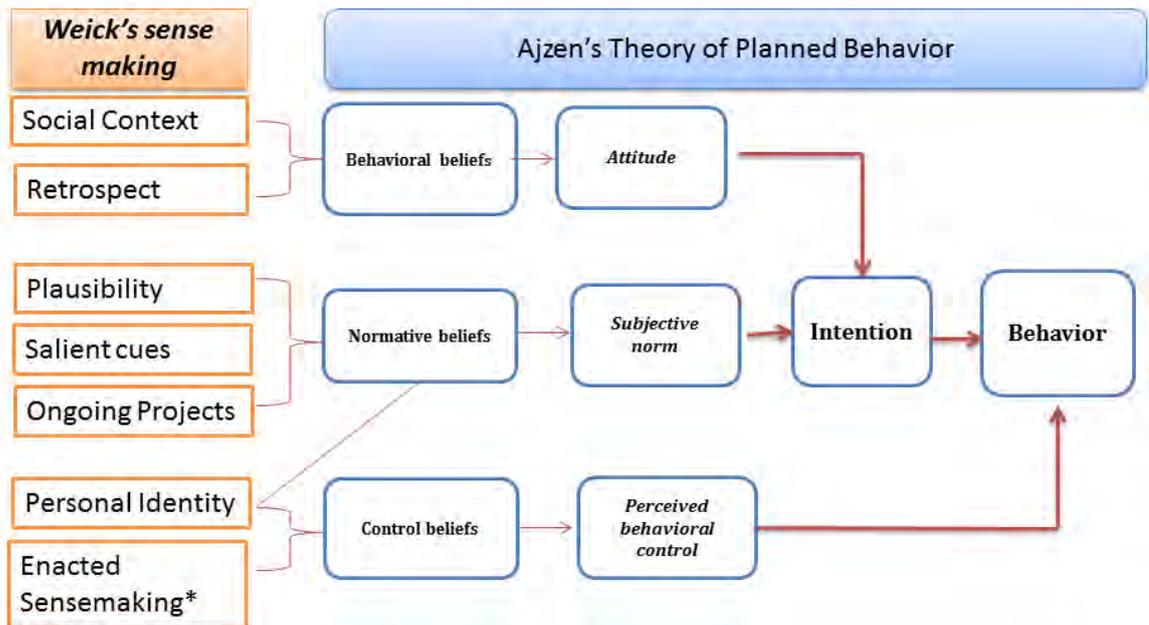


Figure 2.2 Integration of Weick's (2001) sensemaking properties with the TPB (Ajzen, 1991).

\*Enacted sensemaking could also be aligned with behavioural and normative beliefs

### 2.8.3 The Literature, the Sensemaking Framework and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

This section demonstrates how Weick's sensemaking properties and the TPB may contribute to an understanding of the issues that emerged in the literature analysed throughout this chapter. Table 2.4 illustrates this contribution.

Table 2.4

*Accountability Literature, Sensemaking and the TPB*

<b>Examples from the literature</b>	<b>Sensemaking (Weick, 1995, 2001)</b>	<b>TPB (Ajzen, 2012)</b>
Principals' decisions are influenced by stakeholders' likely responses (Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002)	Principals seek support and validation with their communities ( <i>social context</i> )	Principals weigh up the possible outcomes from their actions ( <i>behavioural belief – evaluating outcomes</i> )
Principals' decisions are based on how they relate one obligation to another (Shipps & White, 2009)	Principals make sense of their expectations by placing boundaries (often referred to as constraints) on what and how they account ( <i>personal identity</i> )	Principals make decisions about their what is expected of them whereby they prioritise one social referent over another ( <i>normative belief – motivation to comply with referent</i> )
Principals' decisions to act are influenced by a sense of their own ability (Shipps & White, 2009)	Judgements of relevance and sense emerge, which may be determined by principals' sense of efficacy ( <i>personal identity</i> )	Principals' beliefs about the extent to which they meet the diverse expectations in their accountability of learning ( <i>perceived behavioural control – extent to which individuals are in control of their behaviours</i> )
Principals' decisions are based on their professional beliefs (Shipps & White, 2009)	Principals make sense by developing coherent stories that hold levels of credibility and reason ( <i>plausibility</i> )	Principals give priority to their own values or beliefs about learning and accountability ( <i>Normative belief – motivation to prioritise own values</i> )
'Principals enact their accountability environments' (Shipps, 2012, p. 3), rather than react (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002)	Principals take action, try a negotiating gambit or make a declaration for action ( <i>enacted sensemaking</i> )	Principals demonstrate their behaviours based on their intentions or self-efficacy ( <i>perceived behavioural control</i> )

## 2.9 Summary: Research Questions and Conceptual Framework

### 2.9.1 Research Questions

This review of the literature has demonstrated that accountability in education has parallels with other domains, such as economic and political spheres (Grace, 1989; Wößmann, 2007), as more often than not, economic aims dominate education policy with regard to accountability expectations (Lingard, 2010; Perryman, 2006). These two domains have provided understandings of the way public policy is formed, particularly in the area of the public purposes of education. At different times in history, particular purposes can take precedence. For instance, currently in Australia, individual and economic purposes dominate (Cranston et al., 2011; Reid et al., 2011). Throughout the world, these dominant purposes give

rise to certain types of accountability processes, with most educational accountability systems regulated through processes and/or through outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Perryman, 2006). These regulations have certain kinds of consequences. Research in other countries has found that in some regimes, such as the regulation of outcomes, there is not always an alignment between the espoused benefits of accountability and what they deliver (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Stobart, 2008). In Australia, emerging research is demonstrating similar patterns (Howell, 2012; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2012 ; Smeed et al., 2009). Additionally, there may not always be alignment between the accountability mechanisms employed by governments and the core purposes of education (Cranston et al., 2011). When regulated through outputs rather than processes, assessment-focused accountability can lead to negative consequences. This change from regulating processes to regulating outputs as an accountability mechanism is an important consideration with regard to principals' interpretations of assessment-focused accountability in this investigation.

Accountability systems that regulate outcomes also have differing stakeholder views, such as what is expected by external authorities (the government and School systems) and what is expected by the community (teachers, students and parents) (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Shipps, 2012). These outcome-based regulatory processes lead to consequences that hold tensions for those who have responsibility in middle management and senior leadership positions; there is not always alignment between peoples' preferred positions and the position of the accountability regulators (Agarwal, Heltberg, & Diachok, 2009; Hall, 2010; Shipps, 2012; Shipps & White, 2009). Some of these tensions exist in terms of what is expected of principals, such as their perceptions of different stakeholder needs (Shipps & White, 2009), the actual espoused benefits of the regime (Cranston et al., 2011) and the mechanisms used to account (Perryman, 2006; Stobart, 2008). However, it is unclear whether Australian principals experience similar tensions.

These expectations and tensions signal a key area of investigation: the principals' understandings of the accountability expectations. The first RSQ that informs the investigation is:

*RSQ1: How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their school?*

The analysis of the literature demonstrated that principals enact their accountability responsibilities for learning through reconciling external accountability with internal accountability expectations (Elmore, 2005a), some better than others, given their contexts (Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013). They focus on their leadership of learning (Dufour & Marzano, 2011), employ instructional leadership styles (Bendikson et al., 2012) use data (Moss, 2013) and stay close to the learning (Robinson, 2011). The second RSQ aimed to understand principals' own ideas about how they enact their accountability responsibilities, given their views about their expectations:

*RSQ2: How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of the accountability expectations?*

### **2.9.2 Conceptual Framework**

Several research studies have indicated that principals' professional beliefs and value commitments partly influenced their intentions in their implementation of external mandates (Lyons & Algozzine, 2006a; Shipps, 2012). A body of knowledge that could position individuals' interpretations as integral to individuals' intentions and enactments was Weick's sensemaking properties.

The analysis of the literature about principals' implementations of educational accountability and the TPB demonstrated that principals' understandings of their expectations of accountability could be aligned with Ajzen's (2012) determinants of intention. These were the principals' views of their outcome evaluations (*attitude*), the value they placed on

complying with the authority and/or community (*subjective norms*), and their beliefs about their capacity to deliver on the expectations of accountability (*perceived behavioural control*).

Weick's Sensemaking Framework and the TPB were useful in guiding this research. The Framework situates the potential internal processes that may be at play for principals in settling on their interpretations of events. The TPB identifies the way principals may consider future consequences and how they concern themselves with the beliefs influencing their behaviour. Both accommodate the role of efficacy in shaping decisions. The Sensemaking Framework is integrated with the TPB and represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.3.

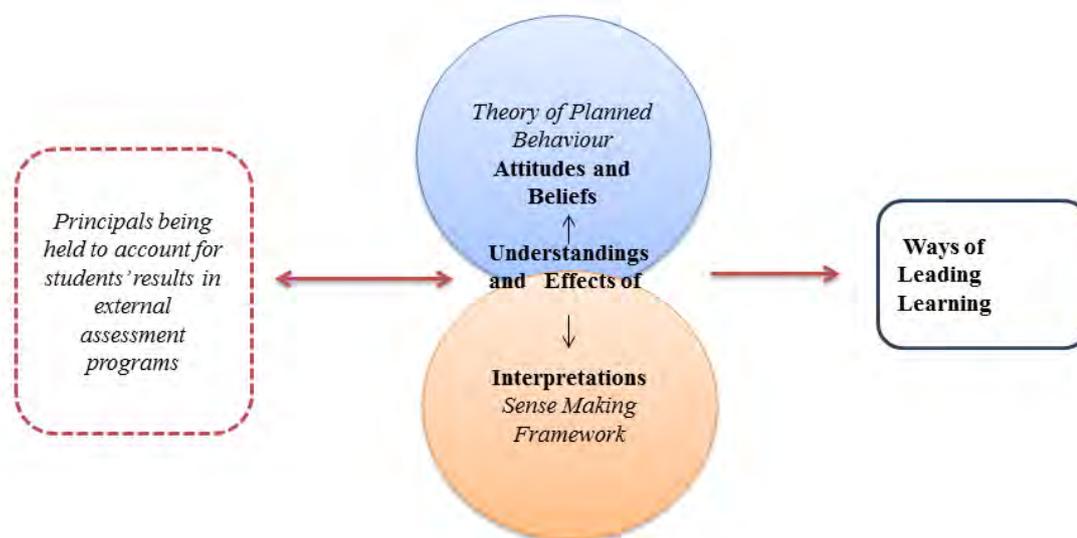


Figure 2.3 The conceptual framework guiding the study.

The accountability expectations facing principals are represented on the left-hand side of the figure. The double arrow illustrates the two-way effect of the accountability processes. The integration of Weick's Sensemaking Framework and the TPB in the two circles represents the ways principals' interpret their expectations and their possible enactments, affected by their interpretations. In applying the thinking of Weick (2001), Ajzen (2012) and the specific literature on principals' accountability, such as Le Fevre and Robinson (2014);

Louis and Robinson (2012); Shipps (2012) and Spillane, Reiser, et al. (2002), this integrated framework guided this research.

The next chapter explains and justifies the methodology and methods employed for the investigation.

## Chapter 3: Designing the Research

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain and justify the ways the following three research purposes were addressed:

- To understand principals' interpretations of their assessment-focused accountability.
- To understand how these interpretations influence their ways of leading learning.
- To generate a theory that explains and describes principals' understandings and provides indicators for their likely ways of leading learning (under certain conditions).

The central research question that guided the investigation was *How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* The term 'assessment-focused accountability' has been defined in this study (see Section 2.3.2) as the ways principals are required to disclose, make transparent, explain and justify their students' performance results in NAPLAN and HSC tests and to manage the consequences (Bovens, 2007; Kuchapski, 2001).

The two guiding research questions attempted to generate knowledge about the participating principals' perceptions of their ways of leading and how these were influenced by their interpretations of the accountability expectations. They were:

*RSQ1: How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?*

*RSQ2: How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of the accountability expectations?*

A research methodology is the reasoning that informs the particular way of doing research (Gough, 2002). The methodology for conducting this research was dependent upon the nature of the phenomenon being studied and this researcher's views of the ways knowledge is generated. This study used a qualitative approach, which was 'useful for

exploring and understanding a central phenomenon' (Creswell, 2007, p. 645). The central phenomenon in this study was the way the principals understood the accountability expectations and how these understandings influenced their ways of leading learning.

The theoretical perspective, which represented this researcher's view of knowledge generation, was interpretivism and symbolic interactionism. The methodology of case study was adopted, with the data collection methods informed by case study and data analytical methods informed by GT. Theoretical relationships were developed through memoing techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The perspective, methodology and methods are explained and justified throughout this chapter, demonstrating their appropriate selection in addressing the three research purposes.

The structure of the chapter is as follows:

- Adopting a Qualitative Approach (3.2)
- Establishing a Theoretical Framework (3.3)
- Settling on the Methodology of Case Study (3.4)
- Collecting the Data (3.5)
- Analysing the Data (3.6)
- Summarising the Chapter (3.7).

### **3.2 Adopting a Qualitative Approach**

Our pluralist life worlds require new sensitivity in empirical research (Flick, von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). The qualitative approach to this research provided the tools for this researcher to investigate, explore and discover the complexities of accountability expectations in the work of principals. Moreover, the study required an approach that would provide for anomalies. The qualitative approach managed not only ambiguities for the investigation but also anomalies (Strauss, 1987). The third purpose of the investigation was to generate a theory to explain the ways principals viewed the accountability expectations and

how these views influenced their behaviours. The qualitative approach used in this study provided for inductive and abstractive analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), to develop theoretical propositions. Critiques of qualitative and quantitative approaches argue that limiting analysis to deductive approaches only is becoming increasingly unsuited to social research.

### **3.3 Establishing a Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical perspective indicates how the generation of knowledge is understood and acknowledges the assumptions about knowledge and ways of knowing (Crotty, 1998a). According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2003), the decisions that guide the theoretical perspective are determined by the purpose of the research to be undertaken and the world view of the researcher. In the context of this study, the purpose and the researcher's world view were termed the *research concern* and the *concerns of the researcher*. The research concern included (a) the phenomenon to be investigated; i.e., the principals' world views of assessment-focused accountability and how these influenced their actions; and (b) the context in which the investigation occurred; i.e., within a system of other school principals and members of the school community, namely teachers, students and parents. 'The concerns of the researcher' is this researcher's terminology for this study and included the researcher's understanding of (a) what knowledge is (Cohen et al., 2003); (b) beliefs about the ways this knowledge is generated (Creswell, 2008); (c) interest in the area of study; and (d) interpretations of the participants' perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The guiding assumptions in this study's ways of investigating the research problem were influenced by this researcher's view of knowledge generation, which was best represented through the perspectives of interpretivism and symbolic interactionism.

#### **3.3.1 An Interpretivist Perspective**

The theoretical perspective that informed and guided the processes for this study was interpretivism. Knowledge within the interpretive paradigm is a mutually negotiated construct

specific to the research concern being explored and its members (O'Donoghue, 2007). It was predicted that participating principals would make sense of their world through what was expected of them and the contexts in which they were working. This researcher's view was that the participating principals' perspectives were generated through their beliefs. In turn, knowledge was generated through this researcher's interpretations of the participating principals' perspectives.

Table 3.1 summarises the six reasons for adopting an interpretivist perspective for this study. These reasons are discussed more fully in the text after the table.

Table 3.1

*Characteristics of the Interpretivist Perspective in its Application to this Study*

<b>Strengths of the interpretivist perspective</b>	<b>Application to this study</b>	<b>The researcher's way of being</b>	<b>Application to this researcher's way of being</b>
1. Humanistic bent	Central to this study were the social and psychological processes (B. Glaser & Douglas, 1996) of the participating principals' perspectives and how these influenced their actions.	Curiosity (Strauss, 1987)	This researcher attempted to set aside expectations and held a position of openness of mind. Asking questions such as 'What underlying beliefs mitigate this perspective?'; 'What historical experiences influence these thoughts and feelings?'
2. Language and action (Freire, 1970)	Participating principals used metaphors and imagery to make meaning of their experiences of accountability. The ways they reported to enact learning from these views demonstrated the meanings they had constructed about accountability.	Creativity and imagination (Freire, 1970)	Not constrained by prescriptive methods of analysis; following the directions of Glaser and Strauss (1967) to 'just do it'.
3. Complexities	Complexities involved the principals as individuals (their beliefs, previous experiences) and the impact of the contexts on individuals.	A sense of logic (G. Glaser & Strauss, 1967b)	Adoption of systematic methods for analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Asking questions to help manage the complexities: 'How could I find out if this perspective influences how the principal sees this?'; 'How this is manifested in their actions? If not, why not? How could I find this out?'
4. Recognises diversity as well as regularity	Methods of analysis provided the capacity to find patterns as well as anomalies.	Bricoleur (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) Ability to live with ambiguity (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)	Some findings remained a puzzle to be solved. 'I wonder why this principal's views are so different to other patterns.'
5. Flexibility to	Methodologies were adapted	'Acceptance of self as	Acceptance that this researcher's

<b>Strengths of the interpretivist perspective</b>	<b>Application to this study</b>	<b>The researcher's way of being</b>	<b>Application to this researcher's way of being</b>
work through problems in the field	and adopted as the study progressed.	a research instrument; trust in self and the ability to see values in the work produced' (Strauss and Corbin, 2008, p. 13)	interpretations of the participating principals' perspectives were considered part of the findings. Asking: 'What if?', 'Could it be?'
6. Drawn to worlds, phenomena and concerns that interest them	This researcher was drawn to principals' understandings and their enactments of accountability because of her previous professional experiences.	Researchers acknowledge and trust their own experiences when analysing data (Charmaz, 2006)	The research problem was determined by this researcher's interest and curiosity.

### ***3.3.1.1 Reasons for adopting an interpretivist perspective***

1. Humanistic bent: The interpretivist perspective has a humanistic bent (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), whereby the principals were likely to be engaged in social and psychological processes as they constructed their understandings of accountability. Questions with a humanistic bent were used to understand the principals' interpretations of the accountability expectations: *What underlying beliefs mitigate principals' views? What historical experiences influence their thoughts and feelings?* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
2. Language and action: Potentially, the principals would construct their understandings of accountability through language's rich imagery and metaphors to make meaning of what was expected of them (Freire, 1970).
3. Complexities: The interpretivist perspective acknowledges complexities, such as ambiguities and anomalies (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In this study, these complexities were the individual world views of the participating principals and their interpretations of the contexts in which they were working. This researcher predicted that each principal's construct of accountability would be different from the others, according to their personal, social and historical perspectives. To manage these complexities, this researcher asked questions such as: *How could I find out if this perspective influences*

*how the principal sees this? How is this perspective manifested in their actions? How could I find this out?*

4. Recognises diversity as well as regularity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998): This researcher looked for emerging patterns, as a bricoleur at work (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), but at the same time followed anomalies when they presented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008), with curiosity. The ‘why question’ was employed to increase understanding of the patterns (Merriam, 2009): *Why were the views of this principal so different from those of the others?* This question considered factors such as the principal’s past professional experiences, gender, geographical locations, stage of career, beliefs about learning and the purpose of schooling.
5. Flexibility to work through problems in the field: A key strength of the interpretivist perspective for research is that the employed methods provide for flexibility to work through problems in the field (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This flexibility enabled this researcher to use their creativity and imagination with confidence. Moreover, following Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) advice to ‘just do it’ enabled this researcher to immerse themselves in the data and ask questions such as *What if? Could it be that? I wonder if this happened, would this be so?*
6. Drawn to worlds, phenomena and concerns that interest them: Researchers using a qualitative approach to their study and holding an interpretivist perspective of knowledge generation are drawn to worlds, phenomena and concerns that interest them. They acknowledge and trust their own experiences when analysing data (Charmaz, 2006). In fact, they use their experience to weave patterns and highlight colours of importance, as the ‘bricoleur’ or the ‘quilt maker’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5). While acknowledging the importance of objectivity, this researcher capitalised on her personal and professional experiences (Charmaz, 2006). Engaging in skills of self-reflection are highly esteemed in interpreting what reality is and its role of

knowing in the world of participants (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The questions used in the applications that were adopted from the interpretivist perspective demonstrated some of the self-reflective methods employed for this research.

Qualitative research, while justified as an approach that aligns with the social sciences, has become highly effective in an empirical sense. Its effectiveness, particularly its growing credibility, was also dependent upon the ways in which this researcher was mindful of her place in the discourses and practices being analysed. This mindfulness of place, known as self-reflexive validity, was adopted by the researcher as a form of critical validity (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) for herself in this study. This validity is explained further in Section 3.5.7, when evaluating the trustworthiness of the data analysis.

### **3.3.2 Interacting Symbolically**

The approach of symbolic interactionism lies within interpretivism and enabled this researcher to discover principals' perspectives of the phenomenon (O'Donoghue, 2007). George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), a pragmatist philosopher and social psychologist from the University of Chicago, was the founder of this approach. Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 1969) a student of Mead, described three beliefs in the symbolic interactionism approach:

1. Human beings act according to the meaning they bring.
2. This meaning is negotiated in social interaction with others.
3. The meanings are continually modified through an interpretive process.

This section examines the general understandings of symbolic interactionism (Charon & Cahill, 2010), its three core principles (Griffin, 2012), the concept of self (O'Donoghue, 2007), and its multivariate social meanings (Blumer, 1969) and justifies its application in this study.

Researchers who employ a symbolic interactionist approach are seeking to understand the human being as a *social person*, a thinking person, a person who defines and interacts

with their environment (Charon & Cahill, 2010). This study aimed to understand the principals' social interactions with others, their own thoughts and the context of the people in their environments as they negotiated the meaning of the accountability expectations. Employing this approach influenced the data-gathering methods, as the focus groups were the participating principals themselves. Additionally, the data analysis process was influenced, as this researcher was attuned to the possible influences of the peer principal networks, the parent group and the teacher group (*social person*) on the principals' interpretations of assessment-focused accountability.

Griffin (2012) proposed the basic tenets of the symbolic interactionism theory in terms of three core principles: meaning, language and thought. *Meaning* states that humans act towards people or objects according to the meanings they give those people or objects. Symbolic interactionism holds that the principle of meaning is the central aspect of behaviour. *Language* gives humans the symbols by which to negotiate meaning. Individuals make meaning through speech acts with others, often termed 'symbols'. These symbols may be 'metaphors, allegories, analogies' or parables (Rock, 2016, p. 21). *Thought* modifies the individual's interpretations of symbols, anticipating that the principals' interpretations of others' and their own symbols in their school environments will be modified.

Griffin's (2012) core principles also justified the decision to adopt symbolic interactionism as the theoretical perspective for this study. The participating principals gave *meaning* to the government and school system accountability expectations. Understanding these meanings was essential to addressing the question of the influence of the principals' meanings on their behaviours, particularly their likely ways of leading learning. Participating principals used *language* for themselves, their communities and their peers, which provided for their negotiated understandings of these expectations. In this study, it was predicted that language about expectations would be a meaning-making tool. It was through the

participating principals' *thoughts* that this researcher could find out what principals thought about their expectations and how these thoughts may have influenced their behaviours.

It was proposed that the principals would be making meaning of the accountability expectations and remaking their own meaning in their responses to changing expectations and their school environments. Because enacting assessment-focused accountability is the shared work between principal, student and teacher and because the approach of symbolic interactionism recognises the shared construction of meaning through social interaction and symbols, this approach was considered appropriate.

The concept of 'self' is fundamental to understanding the approach of symbolic interactionism 'The concept of self relates directly to the way people attach meaning to and act towards particular objects and phenomena' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 18). The way individual principals attached meaning to the accountability expectations and how they acted with regard to such expectations or those regulating them was central to this research. This investigation sought to understand principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability (*object*) and examined how these understandings influenced their ways of leading learning (*phenomenon*).

This investigation had its roots in human social behaviour; that is, the behaviour of principals with others. Symbolic interactionism offers a perspective for interpretive empirical work in educational settings. Essentially, symbolic interactionism emphasises the importance of the multivariate social meanings that people attach to the world. At its core is the concept of 'group life and human conduct', which holds that 'all communication is symbolic and based upon interaction and meaning' (Blumer, 1969, p. 1). Hence, the participating principals' understandings of accountability expectations were likely to reflect their conduct in response to their socially determined thinking regarding accountability in their school contexts.

Since symbolic interactionism is grounded in how individuals understand their reality, resulting from individuals socially interacting with one another (Blumer, 1969) and through

meaning, language and thought (Griffin, 2012), it was adopted to provide the theoretical framework for investigating principals’ understandings of the accountability expectations. In this investigation, although the accountability expectations were assessment-focused and set by the school systems, its real effects in the school environment were reflective of the multivariate social meanings (Blumer, 1969) of the principals (Windham, 1980). As this study sought to generate a theory, symbolic interactionism provided for the formulation of theoretical propositions through creative and open-ended inquiry (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Table 3.2 provides a summary of symbolic interactionism and its application to this research.

Table 3.2 *Application of Symbolic Interactionism to this Study*

	<b>Phenomenon from the interpretivist perspective</b>	<b>The concern of this research</b>	<b>The researcher</b>	<b>The concerns of this researcher</b>
<b>Symbolic interactionism</b>	With others and by themselves, the principals negotiated through three core principles: meaning, language and thought (Griffin, 2012), employing symbols such as metaphors, allegories and analogies (Rock, 2016).	The conceptualisations of accountability are determined through principals’ interactions with others and in turn, others are influenced.	The researcher constructs meaning with that which is researched (the research concern), including the interactions with those in the research. Symbols are also employed.	This researcher co-constructed meaning with the participating principals.

Thus far, the theoretical framework chosen for this study has demonstrated the suitability of adopting the theoretical perspective of interpretivism and the theory of symbolic interactionism in meeting the purpose of investigating the research problem. This theoretical framework represented this researcher’s beliefs about knowledge and the ways knowledge is generated. This study was about the way the principals understood the assessment-focused accountability expectations that were placed on them. These understandings were not in a vacuum but were premised on the belief that they were socially negotiated through meaning, language and thought in the context of people, events and objects in their school

environments, school systems and the public communities. These contexts were one part of the consideration for selecting a case study methodology.

### **3.4 Settling on the Methodology of Case Study**

There were several reasons for adopting the case study methodology: (a) the research problem had factors that needed definition and identification; (b) the research required boundaries regarding what accountabilities and which principals would be investigated; and (c) the methodology needed to have the capacity to investigate the complexities between the research concern (Merriam, 2009) and its context. The case study is an ‘empirical inquiry that investigates a *contemporary* phenomenon *in depth* and within its *real-life context*, especially when the *boundaries* between the phenomenon and *context* are *not clearly defined*’ (Yin, 2009, p. 9, italics added).

Stake (2005) argued that cases are special. A ‘case’ is a noun and seldom a verb or a functioning, even when the focus of the phenomenon is a function (Stake, 2013), such as the principals’ understandings of the accountability expectations (Stake, 2005). Yet the events and the functioning can be bounded. For example, in this study, the principals’ behaviours were bounded and defined as their ‘ways of leading’, as distinct from their behaviours in administration or finances. Since a case study methodology is helpful ‘when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2009, p. 9), this methodology enabled this researcher to separate yet see the distinctions between the participating principals’ understandings of assessment-focused accountability and contexts of their school environments, school systems and public communities.

The key task of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study. The case is a single object or event around which there are natural boundaries (Merriam, 1998). Accordingly, these natural boundaries can be classified into three types: intrinsic, collective and instrumental (Stake, 2005). An *intrinsic* case study is an investigation in which the researcher has a particular interest in a case. A *collective* case study involves exploring

multiple case studies to reveal an issue. In an *instrumental* case study (the type that was employed for this case study methodology), the researcher focuses on one issue or concern and selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue (Creswell, 2007). Stake (2000) extended this description, holding that in an instrumental case study, ‘the case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role and facilitates our understandings of something else’ (p. 437). In this current study, the case was the influence of the principals’ understandings of assessment-focused accountability on their ways of leading learning. This case played a supportive role because the investigation of this case aimed to generate GT propositions, culminating in a theoretical model.

The case study methodology provides for definition and identification of the case, which is the phenomenon to be investigated (O'Donoghue, 2007). In this study, the case was the principals’ understandings of accountability and the ways these influenced their ways of leading learning. The research concern for this study held many of the elements of Yin’s description of a case study inquiry. The concern was *contemporary*; that is, the principals’ experiences of the accountability expectations were current. The investigation attempted to investigate the concern *in depth*; that is, it investigated the principals’ thoughts and feelings about accountability at both a social and psychological level. The concern was set in a *real-life context*, within schools, communities and within School systems. The boundaries were *not clearly defined*; that is, it was unclear whether or to what extent the participating principals’ views were determined by their school contexts, the geographical regions or their School systems. In case study methodology, context is considered pertinent, either because factors in the context impinge on the phenomenon (Harling, 2002) or because the separation between the phenomenon and the context is not clearly evident or defined (Yin, 2009).

The ways this researcher defined accountability and the particular selection of participants identified the boundaries of this study. These boundaries defined what was to be investigated and which participants were to be selected. LeCompte and Preissle (1993)

explained that the population of the case study approach is identified by the boundaries that distinguish between who will or will not be studied. Accountability and the principals were both central to this research.

The meaning of accountability was a key consideration in this study because the concept of accountability can hold many understandings for educational leaders (Stobart, 2008). Multiple views were revealed in the pilot interviews (see Section 3.4). Therefore, the meaning of accountability for this study needed to be defined. As noted earlier, the case study methodology describes the phenomenon and the context as a ‘bounded system’ (Yin, 2003), and in this study, the case was bounded by this researcher’s interpretations of accountability and by the selection of participants. According to Harling (2002), the bounded system places limits on what is considered relevant; for this research, only some aspects of accountability were relevant. For this study, accountability was defined in terms of disclosing, justifying, explaining and managing the consequences of being held to account for performance results. ‘Assessment-focused’ was limited to the performance results from the external assessments, NAPLAN and HSC. The bounded system included only certain principals from secondary schools in two Catholic School systems in NSW. As well as defining the case and adopting the bounded system, the case study methodology offered other strengths for this study.

The three characteristics of the case study methodology are its capacity to be descriptive, particularistic and heuristic (Merriam, 2009). This researcher deemed that it was important for the methodology to provide a vehicle to allow substantial descriptions of the principals’ experiences of the accountability expectations to emerge. The case study methodology is *descriptive*, providing rich, thick and literal descriptions of participants’ experiences (Merriam, 2009). It was anticipated that the principals’ descriptions would be rich, thick and literal, given that they were experiencing the accountability demands in their context and at that moment. A second characteristic is that a case study has provision for showing the *particular* (Merriam, 2009), focusing on ‘a particular situation, event, program or

phenomenon. The Case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and what it might represent' (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). In this study, this researcher anticipated that the case study approach would show particular perceptions in the principals' thoughts and feelings about what was expected of them and that this researcher would be able to probe and interrogate such particulars. Third, this researcher anticipated that readers would broaden and deepen their understanding of the principals' views of accountability and the way these views influenced their actions by comparing the experiences of the case study participants with their own experiences. This comparison is the *heuristic* character of case study methodology, which involves confirming what the reader already knows or extending the reader's experience (Merriam, 2009).

The principals were central to this research. When recognising contingency and situational theories of leadership and their influence on the behaviours of principals, school contexts needed to be considered. Context was an important consideration with regard to principals experiencing the same accountability expectations and levels (e.g., national, state and School systems). To minimise the effect of differing contexts, this researcher selected the principals from similar governance arrangements (systemic school or independent school) and from the same school sector (primary or secondary). The bounded system was formed by creating homogeneity in the school sector (secondary), governance of the school (same School system), religious tradition (Catholic), curriculum requirements and geographical region (NSW).

There were several challenges in adopting case study methods for this study. The first challenge occurred in the preliminary stages of data analysis with the emergence of theoretical propositions and mini-hypotheses. This researcher soon realised that the findings from the preliminary analysis were not limited to the participating principals' real-life contexts but other possibilities needed investigation and analysis. A limitation of the case study methodology, according to Shuttleworth (2008), is that it can result in a narrow knowledge

base that cannot be used to form patterns or generalisations. In this study, this was problematic as theoretical propositions were emerging and could be used to generalise about the ways in which principals' understandings of accountability, in general, could influence the ways they would lead learning.

Moreover, these key theoretical propositions challenged certain assumptions and theoretical research in the Australian educational leadership field. As such, this researcher needed a systematic and reputable approach in which to validate these propositions. The second challenge, combined with the third challenge, was that the participating principals appeared to be engaging in social and psychological processes in their understandings of accountability. Case study methodology could cater for such processes; however, a systematic way to analyse these processes was needed. This researcher needed methods that provided for 'a beyond the real-life context' (Yin, 2009, p. 9) of the participating principals, as well as one that would provide a systematic way to identify and explain the conceptual relationships that were emerging. The third challenge was finding methods that would manage both the theoretical nature of the preliminary findings and these social psychological processes in a systematic way; methods that would be able to identify and detail the conceptual relationships that were to be the foundations of the emerging theory. These three challenges led to the decision to adopt analytical data methods that were informed by GT and notably, to engage with memoing as an analytical yet reflexive tool.

### **3.4.1 Conclusion**

The research methodology for this study was dependent on the concerns of the research. These concerns could be affected by many factors. Case study methodology was appropriate for this study, as it provided for the case to be defined and a bounded system to be formed. The case was the principals' understandings of this accountability and the ways these understandings influenced leading learning. The bounded system was established through setting a definition for assessment-focused accountability and the selection of participants.

The research methodology was dependent upon the concerns of this researcher. The theoretical perspective that informed this study was dependent upon how this researcher understood knowledge to be generated, acknowledgment of embedded interest (and assumptions) about the nature of accountability in the role of the secondary school principal and the interpretations of the perspectives of participating principals (O'Donoghue, 2007). Thus, an interpretivist perspective informed and guided the methodology.

The case study methodology enabled the review of literature to inform the study through the formulation of research questions and justified this researcher's selection of certain literature over others. The boundaries of the case were also influenced by the way accountability was defined and the selection of certain participants over others.

Being clear about the methodology is important because the methodology, while taking into account the depth and complexity of the phenomenon to be explored, identifies the most appropriate methods to be used in light of the research purpose (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The methodology justifies the orchestration of research methods, linking it to the research narrative and thus enabling the researcher to answer the research questions (Crotty, 1998).

### **3.5 Collecting the Data**

#### **3.5.1 Introducing the Data Collection**

The data collection methods were determined by the case study methodology. Methodology 'is the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes' (Michael Crotty, 1998b, p. 3). The population of this case study approach was identified by the boundaries that distinguished between who was or was not selected, whereby principals in particular school systems and regions were selected (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The procedures to gather data, guided by the research questions, were bound by what information would be sought or not sought (Yin, 2009). In this study, the definition of accountability

determined which information would be sought specifically, that is, being held to account for performance results from HSC and NAPLAN assessments.

In this study, the participants were selected purposively. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and documentation (see Figure 3.1 for an overview of the data collection methods).

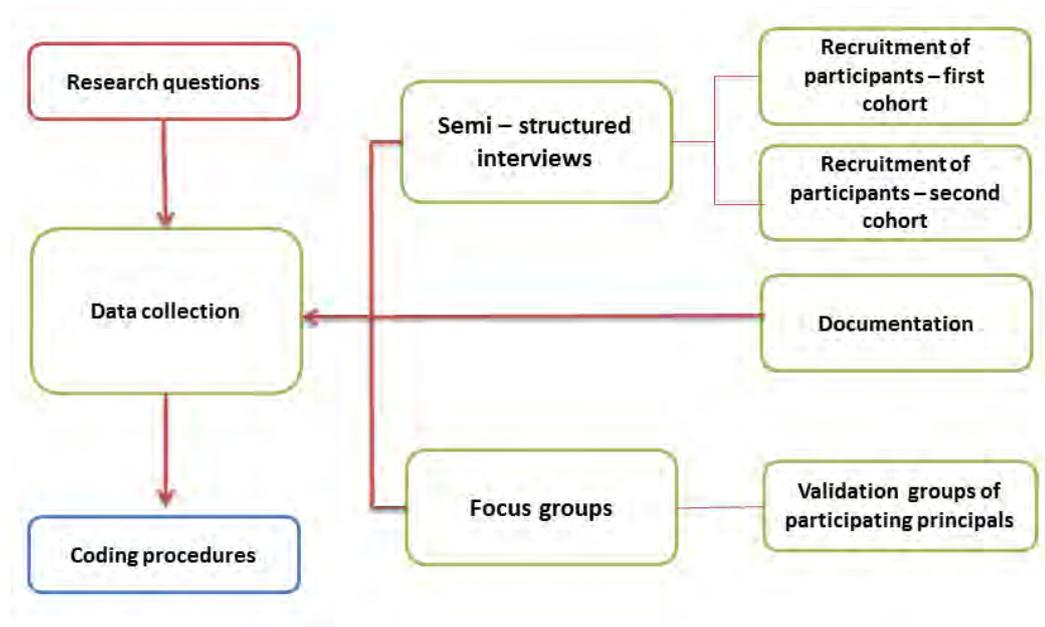


Figure 3.1 Overview of the data collection methods.

This section explains and justifies the selection of participants and data sources, the processes of data collection, and concludes with an evaluation of the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the data collection methods.

### 3.5.2 Selecting Participants

#### 3.5.2.1 Purposive sampling

Tongco (2007) explains that the technique of purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling. Purposive sampling is used when the researcher needs to study a social context (such as a school) with the knowledgeable experts within it. To investigate the principals' views of accountability in this study, it was deemed that the most knowledgeable experts were the principals themselves.

In choosing a sample that could address the research problem, this researcher needed to ensure that the selected principals were indeed reliable and competent to provide the information needed (Tongco, 2007). Reliability was determined by a reasonable representation of principals with particular characteristics (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). Competence was determined by the length of time the principals had experienced being held to account for externally mandated assessments. Leaders react to policy mandates in their first installation (Shipp & White, 2009); this selection ensured that the participating principals were working in contexts in which assessment-focused accountability had become part of their experience in their communities for a number of years.

Secondary school principals in NSW had been held to account for performance on the HSC for over three decades but it was a new experience for primary school principals. As such secondary school principals were chosen for this study to diminish the likelihood of immediacy reactions associated with change. At the beginning of this study, the principals had experienced three cycles of NAPLAN testing and one cycle of the public disclosure of results channelled through the My School website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015). It was deemed likely that in the first few years of NAPLAN testing, the findings with regard to the effects of NAPLAN could be clouded by change reactions (Huy, Corley, & Kraatz, 2014), given that Australian educators in the main had not experienced nation-wide testing with public disclosures previously.

All the principals in the sample had experienced at least 12 months of ongoing tenure in their positions.

### ***3.5.2.2 Settling on participants***

This investigation was reliant upon principals who would be willing to share their understandings of accountability within the contexts in which they were working. Qualitative studies emphasise the reality of the participants' world view, particularly within the context in which the phenomenon is happening (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). This

researcher had anticipated that the principals would hold certain views about the contexts in which they were working. With beliefs positioned in the theory of symbolic interactionism, this researcher anticipated their social interactions with others in this context would help in shaping their world view (Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975). Moreover, it was expected that the ways principals were leading learning would be determined in part through their values, beliefs and motivations. These determinants are congruent with a qualitative approach (Ajzen, 1991). The qualitative approach provided for the participants' views of the phenomenon and also situated this study in the principals' larger social structure (Charmaz, 2008b), the school's broader community (enrolment catchment areas) and the school system.

The selection of participants in this study was based on their experience of similar accountability expectations. In terms of governance, such as lines of accountability and the nature of accountability, the selection of the schools and school systems was reasonably homogeneous. Principals were drawn from two Catholic school systems from the same state, NSW. This selection was considered important because the context was likely to impinge on the principals' experiences of accountability. In some instances, the separation between their experiences and contexts would not be clearly evident or defined (Harling, 2002; Yin, 2009). Therefore, the participating principals within each cohort were selected from the same region and the same education system; these are represented in Table 3.3.

#### 3.5.2.2.1 Reasons for choosing NSW Catholic school systems

The boundaries in this case study were evident in the selection of participants; that is, who was or was not selected (O'Donoghue, 2007). States and territories in Australia have different governing relationships within their school systems. They interpret the national accountability requirements for learning in various ways and pass these interpretations on to school systems. The state of NSW's mandated assessment in Year 12 was the HSC, with NAPLAN being a nationally mandated assessment. This study's central research purpose was situated in principals' experiences of accountability; although of interest, comparing state and

territory jurisdictions was not the purpose of the study. Therefore, the two cohorts of participating principals were selected from the same state, NSW, to minimise differences in the lines of accountability. The case in this study, informed by this study's definition of accountability, was bounded by the objects of what was being accounted; that is, the performance results from externally mandated assessments.

When investigating the principals' experiences, the selection attempted to find parallels between the School systems and within the School system itself, so that the principals' methods and subjects of accountability would be as similar as possible. Catholic School systems were selected predominantly because of their familiarity with the researcher. She had worked most of career in the Catholic School system sector. Moreover, the research problem arose within the context of her work in the Catholic School system and with Catholic school principals.

The Catholic School systems used in this study were governed in similar ways. They both belonged to a collective of NSW Catholic School systems, which received advice from advisory groups in this collective. They hold relationships with each other through common funding agreements. Directors of these School systems meet regularly and are influenced by each other, reviewing each other's School systems regularly, and smaller School systems are supported by larger School systems with administrative matters.

At the time of data collection, a number of doctoral researchers had been investigating Catholic schools. Along with accessible geographical locations, this guided this researcher's choices. This researcher selected School systems that had not been approached before and that were accessible to visit several times easily. Table 3.3 illustrates the number of participants from each cohort.

Table 3.3

*Participants in the Study*

Participants	Catholic School system 1	Catholic School system 2	Total
Secondary school principals	8	5	13
School system advisors	1	1	2

3.5.2.2.2 Reasons for selecting more principals

A second group of principals was selected, which enabled emerging theoretical propositions to be validated. The data also provided for possible variations of the participating principals' perspectives within and across School systems. This researcher's thinking around these decisions is demonstrated in Memo: More Participants!



**Memo: More Participants!**

My supervisor and I discussed this week the need for more participants. Some unusual findings have been occurring and I need to see if this could be happening elsewhere. This first School system certainly has high competition for enrolments and is subject to the *Sydney Morning Herald's* public disclosure of HSC results. Some of the principals are acutely aware of the significance of these on their enrolments. I wonder if in another school system, where the competition is not so fierce, would they be concerned about their results? If so, how would this concern be manifested in their actions? Looking at the GT literature and coming back to the resemblances of GT, Glaser and Strauss don't worry about the number of participants, whereas Charmaz (2014) proposes that you need enough participants from different contexts to see variations. Apart from this variant, I am really keen to find out what another cohort of principals thinks about their accountability responsibilities and how the School system personnel view their accountability as well.

### 3.5.2.2.3 Reasons for selecting system advisors

Central to this investigation were the principals' views of accountability and their actions arising from these views. The understandings were not intended to include other peoples' views of principals' understandings. However, in the preliminary data analysis, the principals' perspectives about what and to whom they accounted were very diverse. This researcher needed find out if the School system expectations were also diverse. To understand what the School system expected of these participating principals, the principals' supervisors were interviewed. This selection included two School system advisors. Advisors act on behalf of the School system's director to support, advise and ensure principals meet the requirements of their role. While this relationship may appear to be supervisory, in reality the relationship between the advisor and the principal is recognised as functioning effectively if both see the relationship as a mutual partnership, rather than as a supervisory relationship (Whelan, 2000).

### 3.5.3 Selecting the Research Sites

The research sites in this study were selected from the schools of the participating principals. The pertinent data about the schools' sites were obtained from the participating principals, schools' and systems' websites, and through the My School website. The data are represented in Table 3.4. Pertinent data were determined through the emerging propositions in the data analysis. In other words, the information about the research sites included what the participating principals deemed as important in their experiences of accountability. For example, if performance results influenced the enrolment pattern, then increases or decreases in enrolment patterns were considered pertinent. The results of NAPLAN and HSC tests, in terms of a benchmark, were not as important for this researcher compared to the ways that the participating principals judged these results. Hence, the term 'favourable' or 'unfavourable' was noted in relation to the principals' views. Some research sites were participating in National Partnership programs and this affected the ways they carried out their NAPLAN accountabilities. This was also noted. Competition for enrolments and schools being hard to

staff were additional factors deemed as important in the participating principals' experiences of being held to account for performance results.

Reporting on participants' perspectives was potentially problematic with regard to confidentiality, given the small number of participants and sites. Once writing up the findings began, pseudonyms were created for the participating principals, schools and School systems. The principals were given pseudonyms without any pattern, except that the pseudonym was congruent with the gender of the participant. The school pseudonyms were taken from Italian capital cities and regions and the pseudonyms for School systems were drawn from an Australian Catholic saint and the saint's geographical place of interest: Mackillop and Penola. As all schools were Catholic, the choice of Italian names seemed appropriate for the Catholic character of the schools.

Table 3.4

*Relevant Profile of School Sites for this Study*

Systems and schools (pseudonyms)	Population <sup>1</sup>	ICSEA <sup>1</sup>	Competition for enrolments <sup>2</sup>	Results favourable/ unfavourable <sup>2</sup>	
				<i>Low/high</i>	<i>HSC    NAPLAN</i>
<i>MacKillop System</i>					
Venice College	650–700	1050	High	-ve	-ve
Palermo College	650–700	1040	High	+ve	+ve
Bologna College	500–550	1050	Very High	-ve	-ve
Turin College	250–300	Not available	Low	+ve	+ve
Catania College	1250–1300	1000	Low	++ve	++ve
Milan College	750–800	1090	Mid	-ve	Unknown
Genoa College	1000–1050	1100	Mid	+ve	+ve
Trieste College	1050–1100	980	Low	+ve	+ve
<i>Penola System</i>					
Veneto College	650–700	1050	Mid	++ve	++ve
Tuscany Catholic College	700–750	1030	Mid	-ve	Unknown
Sicily College	700–750	1010	Low	+ve	+ve
Basilicata Catholic College	650–700	1010	Low	+ve	unknown
Sardinia College	800–850	1040	Low	-ve	-ve

1 Approximates, to ensure confidentiality; 2 Views from principals

### **3.5.4 Identifying the Data Sources**

The key data sources for this study were the principals themselves and the school and system documentation. The case was defined by what would or would not be investigated (Yin, 2009) and as such, the boundaries of the case determined the data sources. In this study, the boundary of what would or would not be investigated was determined to be principals' experiences of being held to account for performance results from NAPLAN and HSC instruments. What would or would not be studied determined the research interview questions and determined which particular documentation would or would not be sourced.

#### **3.5.4.1 Principals**

Until the preliminary data analysis was underway, it was not clear which characteristics of the principals' profiles would be considered important. However, as the analysis progressed, emerging relationships determined the importance. For example, periodically in the interviews, the principals referred to their career stage and being held to account for results on NAPLAN as difficult. Adrian (pseudonym) explained that '... in the early years on the job, certain things are hard. I was told [by supervisor] to take into account the NAPLAN results in Year 7. As a new principal, this was confronting, as I did not think we were responsible for these results'. The number of years that the principal had held the role in the school was also important, as Vanessa (pseudonym) pointed out: 'You need to understand that I have not been here long so I don't have the creds [credibility] to do much with learning yet ...'. For this study, the stage of career was determined by the number of years the participant had been a principal. A useful classification of a principal's stage of career at the time of this study was adopted from the New Zealand Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Another element that was deemed important in the profile of the principal was the study status of the principal, particularly whether they were engaged in current post-graduate study. When the participating principals explained their understandings of the accountability

expectations and their influence on leading learning, they often recalled empirical research studies from their university course programs. Damien (pseudonym), for example, recounted the School system’s performance results in the context of the results for particular countries in PISA and TIMMS (OECD, 2010): ‘... as a Catholic system of schools ... we have much to celebrate; however, when compared to other nations through TIMMS & PISA studies, we are ranked lower than we should be’ (Provided document: Staff News).

Table 3.5

*Relevant Characteristics of Participating Principals*

Characteristic	Principals		
	Female	Male	
Gender	3	10	
Career stage	ECP	MCP	LCP
	7	6	0
Years in School system	<3	>3	>8
Study	Yes	Last 5 years	No
	6	5	2

**3.5.4.2 School and system documents**

Documents as a source of evidence are described as the ‘public and private records that qualitative researchers can obtain about a site or participants in a study’ (Creswell, 2008, p. 639). An advantage of using documentation is that it is seen as unobtrusive, exacting and stable, can be viewed repeatedly (Yin, 2009) and is another source of objective evidence (Merriam, 2009). In this study, documentation, as a form of data, came in various forms, from written texts to recorded visual images. Until the preliminary data analysis was underway, it was unclear which documents would be useful for gaining information and validating the participants’ perspectives. To determine which documents were important, the researcher asked the participating principals what documentation would be helpful to shed light on their perspectives about their accountability responsibilities. Some suggested their annual reports, newsletters and staff news documents (see Figure 3.2).

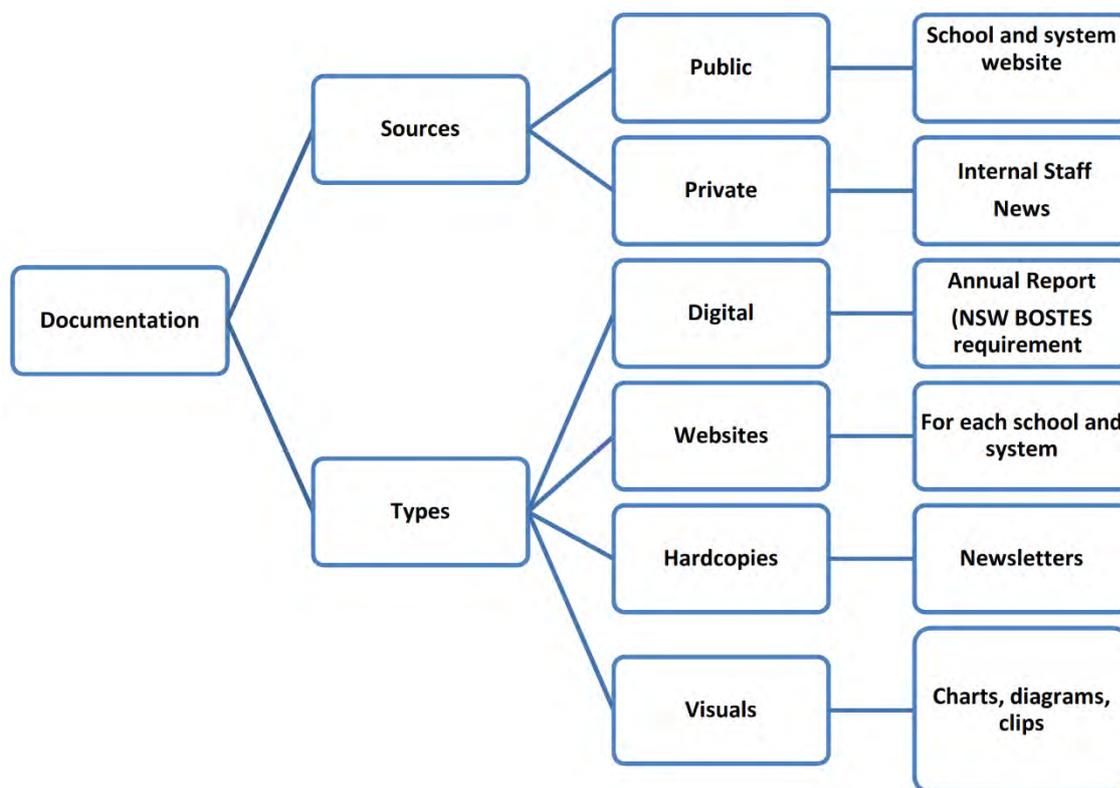


Figure 3.2 Documentation: sources and types.

The way the documentation was collected is explained in the next section on methods of data collection, along with the other methods used: the semi-structured interview and the focus groups. At times, the terms methods, procedures and applications are used interchangeably.

### 3.5.5 Ways of Collecting the Data

Data collection methods are the methods of securing the evidence required for the research (Yin, 2009). The research question focuses the research methodology (Kidwell & Jewell, 2010). For this study, the central research question was *How do the principals' understandings of accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* Hence, this researcher needed to investigate three main elements: the principals' understandings of accountability, their descriptions of their ways of learning, and how these understandings influenced their ways of leading. This relationship between understandings and influence raised the question of the determinants of behaviour (see Section 2.7.3) This researcher deemed it important to consider the determinants from the TPB (Ajzen, 2012) as a guide to the types of questions

that needed to be asked on this topic. To this end, the RSQs were formed and aligned with the TPB, to ensure that the aspect of influence could be adequately investigated. A sample of these questions is illustrated in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6

*RSQs Aligned with the TPB*

<b>RSQ</b>	<b>Sample questions</b>	<b>TPB</b>
<i>1. How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?</i>	<i>What expectations are made of you with regard to external accountability for your school? What do you think about these expectations?</i>	Attitude-behavioural beliefs
<i>2. How do the principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of the understanding of the accountability expectations?</i>	<i>To what extent do you think about the consequences of your accountability responsibilities?</i>	Attitude-behavioural beliefs
	<i>Who requires this of you? To what extent do people influence you in carrying out your accountability responsibilities?</i>	Subjective norms
	<i>How would you describe yourself at your best when leading learning?</i>	Perceived behavioural control

Case study evidence may include a variety of sources (Merriam, 2009), including interviews, questionnaires, interviews, documentation, observation, archival records and physical artefacts (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This study was conducted from an interpretivist perspective and as such, the data collection methods privileged the principals' voices. Data were collected through one-to-one, semi-structured interviews, via direct quotations from the principals about their experiences, feelings and thoughts (Patton, 2005), as well as through documentation and focus groups.

There were two phases to this interviewing strategy. The first phase investigated the participants' understandings through the research questions and the second phase aimed to verify, discount or expand on the interpretations of the data and emerging themes from Phase 1. The study began with one group of principals. The second group was added to verify and test some of the propositions that began to emerge in Phase 1 of the interviews. Table 3.7 demonstrates the sequence.

The theoretical propositions and mini-hypotheses arising from the data collected and analysed through the semi-structured interviews and documentation informed the interpretations used with the focus groups.

Table 3.7

*Sequencing the Data Collection*

<b>Data collection</b>			
<b>Method</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
Semi-structured interviews	December –March	Phase 1	Round 1 semi-structured interviews: Group 1 (principals)
Semi-structured interviews	May–November	Phase 2	Round 2 semi-structured interviews: Group 1 with Group 2 (principals) being introduced
Document analysis	December- November	Phase 1 and 2	The documents were those that the participants perceived were relevant to the research questions: school newsletters, school annual reports, staff briefings, minutes of professional development meetings and school and system marketing brochures
Focus groups	July–August	Phase 3	Focus groups

In the next section the data collection methods are defined, their strengths and limitations are identified, followed by the ways the methods were used in this study.

**3.5.5.1 Conducting the semi-structured interviews**

An interview is described as the process in which the researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to the research purpose (deMarrais, 2004). According to Merriam (2009), interviewing is necessary when the researcher needs to understand the actions or feelings of people, or way that people interpret the world. Semi-structured interviews provide a flexible yet guided approach in which to collect data from individuals when a personal perspective is required. This study aimed at investigating the principals’ world views of accountability. Depending on their reports, the interview process needed a capacity to probe, change course in questioning and at times to forgo certain areas of inquiry (Merriam, 2009). Different types of interviews can be categorised in a number of ways and the level of structure that is desired determines which is the best type to use

(Merriam, 2009). Structured interviews that rigidly adhere to predetermined questions, for instance, may restrict the researcher's freedom to access the participants' perspectives fully (Merriam, 2009). However, the open interview, without predetermined questions (Merriam, 2009), may not provide sufficient structure for the researcher and lead to opportunities being missed or areas of inquiry forgotten. This researcher was concerned that if questions were missed through an oversight, there was little probability of returning and asking further questions, owing to the participants' time constraints.

The processes of a semi-structured interview were adopted because they provided more flexibility than the structured interview yet at the same time, the predetermined questions ensured guidance and safeguards during the interview. There were several advantages in selecting the semi-structured interview method. One was that the researcher was confident that the questions would be asked and not forgotten. A second advantage was that the semi-structured interview enabled this researcher to be directed by the participants' responses (Yin, 2009), which provided flexibility for both the participating principals and this researcher (Merriam, 2009). Third, the semi-structured interview also catered for the use of probes. A probe is a follow-up on something mentioned previously (Merriam, 2009). As Merriam suggests, it was impossible to predict these ahead of time. As areas of interest arose, this researcher could inquire further as to the meaning behind the concept. For example, 'When you mention competition, what does that mean?' Silences were used as a technique and 'Yes, hmm' was also a useful utterance through the probe questioning process (Merriam, 2002). There were moments in the interviews when this researcher was not able to predict the questions that needed to be asked. To this end, she rehearsed generic, probing questions such as, 'Tell me more about that. What would that look like? How do you go about that? Tell me a time when ... .' This assurance of having the guided questions but with flexible paths to follow provided this researcher with a confidence in the interviews.

It was essential for this researcher to establish rapport early in the interview process with the participating principals. Rapport and neutrality for this researcher were guided by Merriam's (2009) understandings that the interviewer needs to care very much that the person is *willing to share* what they are saying, but a stance of neutrality is needed in terms of *what* the participant is saying (Merriam, 2009). To enable the best possibilities for rapport with participants early in the interview processes, neutral questions such as the demographics of the school context and the length of time as principal were asked. As rapport was built, more complex questions were asked.

There were several limitations with this type of interview process for this research. The first was that poor recall and misinterpretation by this researcher could have occurred (Yin, 2009). Misinterpretation can seriously affect the credibility of the research and poorly articulated questions and poor interview technique can block rich, descriptive data from emerging (Yin, 2009). One method for addressing poor recall or misinterpretation is recording the interviews. The interviews for this research were recorded and the transcripts of the recordings were checked for accuracy by the participants (Yin, 2009). Another method is to cross reference the data by comparing the field notes with the transcripts. To this end, this researcher took notes at the interviews and compared the data. A third way to address poor recall is through an iterative process, in which participants are invited to subsequent rounds of interviews, to review their thoughts and to clarify further thoughts (Yin, 2009). This researcher invited the participating principals into an iterative process in which they verified, discounted and expanded on their previous responses.

The second limitation was that the interview process and resulting data could have become time consuming and challenging because of its enormity and complexity. For this study, it was essential to ensure that the procedures used in the semi-structured interviews yielded rich data and at the same time, employed the questions that were guided by the literature and this researcher's experience in the field. Effective interview questions with an

interpretivist approach are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data about the phenomenon (Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2009). The questions in the interviews for this research ensured that the investigation had the best possible chance of gaining rich, descriptive data from participants in the first instance and yet were flexible enough to investigate hunches, ideas and theoretical propositions.

Predetermined questions with some flexibility were employed for both phases. This researcher considered that having well-prepared questions, with a certain amount of flexibility, would stimulate responses from the participating principals (Merriam, 2009). The questions in Tables 3.8 and 3.9 demonstrate the types of questions that were prepared before the interviews. Although these questions appear here in sequence, this was not the practice through the interviews. All questions were asked yet were woven into a natural conversational flow.

Table 3.8

*Interview Questions for Phase 1*

RSQs	Questions for Interview 1
1. <i>How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their school?</i>	<i>What is your understanding of the expectations with regard to the external educational accountability for your school? Who requires this of you? How are these expectations made clear to you? What are the consequences of not following the expectations?</i>
2. <i>In what ways do principals perceive they lead learning given these accountability expectations?</i>	<i>How would you describe when you are at your best when leading learning? What metaphor or image describes the way you lead learning and being accountable? (added after the fourth interview)</i>

As soon as the first participant's data were collected, the preliminary analysis began. Interview techniques were evaluated, such as 'What did you think of the principals' responses to your questions? How were your follow-up questions?' (*Supervisor*). In turn, questions were reformulated and new questions were introduced. In this way, this researcher was not restricted to the predetermined questions.

Phase 2 involved the second round of interviews with the participating principals. There was a wealth of ideas, hunches and emerging theoretical propositions to investigate in the second round of interviews. The interviewer probed (Merriam, 2009) at a deeper level in this phase and subtly introduced the theoretical propositions suggested by the first interview. The question of ‘why’ was useful at this point (Merriam, 2009). The questions put forward in this phase are illustrated in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

*Interview Questions for Phase 2*

<b>Steps</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Interview questions</b>
a.	Verify, discount or extend transcript	<i>After reflecting on the transcript, what areas would you like to question or elaborate on?</i>
b.	Insights from emerging propositions	<i>Some participants have described their ways of leading learning and being held accountable through a metaphor. Do any metaphors or images come to mind for you? Why do you think that the participating principals all have different views about what they account for? How would you describe yourself when you are at your best in leading learning and responding to your accountability responsibilities? What affects or has an effect on you in leading learning?</i>
c.	Perspective taking	<i>What has emerged for you through this research process with regard to your understandings of your accountability responsibilities? (RSQ1). What has emerged for you in terms of the ways you enact these responsibilities? (RSQs3 and 4)</i>

**3.5.5.2 Sourcing the documentation**

Yin (2009) explained that documentation corroborates information from other sources. However, the danger is that the researcher may be misled and possibly give excessive emphasis to certain ideas (Yin, 2009). Documentation was sought to validate and deepen the understandings and insights that were gained from the semi-structured interviews. The main sources of data were the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, which the participants corroborated to ensure there was no misinterpretation in them.

Public records, such as the participating principals’ annual reports or school newsletters, are written for a specific purpose and a specific audience (Yin, 2009). To address

this limitation, only documents that were pertinent to the issues raised in the interviews were sought and analysed as a way of validating the data from the interviews.

As the data analysis progressed, information from the My School website and annual reports were regarded as additional useful places to access regularly the school demographics and validate some of the principals' reports about their schools. Table 3.10 describes the types of documentation analysed in the study: school newsletters; the NSW annual reports for non-government schools (BOSTES); school and School system websites; the My School website; staff news/memos; and minutes of staff meetings. However, this study's own boundaries determined the information in these documents that was pertinent. For instance, in the annual reports this researcher was not interested in the reported performances of HSC results; rather, the participating principals' narratives about their performance results in HSC were of interest; that is, how they explained their results to the community.

Data from documentation can be expansive. To address this issue, defined boundaries around which particular documents to seek were created, based on the principle that documentation was sought only to verify and gain deeper understandings of principals' views of accountability *after* their interviews. The framework adopted to analyse documents is explained in Section 3.5.

Table 3.10

*Documentation: Type, Descriptor, Rationale and Provision*

Type	Descriptor	Rationale	Provision
Hardcopies	<p>School newsletters, handed to researcher. Public to parents. Depending on the principal public on the website. Monthly to parents/carers, students and board members. Yet often found on the school website often with open access for a 6-month period.</p> <p>Staff briefings/news acts in a similar way to a parent newsletter yet information is provided to staff. At times the Staff News is used as a persuasive text.</p>	<p>Investigate the participating principals' perspectives as presented at interview</p> <p>Offered by one participating principal as a means to understand how they viewed accountability and enacted upon it in their leadership of learning.</p>	Corroborated and validated participating principals' perspectives. There was a surprising congruence between what principals said at interview and how they wrote their views in their Newsletters and Staff News. In this way the corroboration supported the findings that principals use mantras to hone in on essential messages
Digital	Annual Report (NSW Board of Studies, 2010). Public document. Compliance to the NSW Board of Studies for the purpose of the school community and school system; results, school demographics and showcase of particular programs	Investigated the participating principals' perspectives as presented at interview	Corroborated and validated participating principals' perspectives.
Websites	<p>School system The school system websites provide information to the public. The information consists of whole system planning documents, regular publications to parents on the growth of the system and showcases particular learning programs</p> <p>My School(<i>My School and Beyond</i>, 2009): A website that publishes national performance results in literacy and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Other school demographics are also recorded and updated annually.</p>	<p>Participating principals held particular perspectives about the public narrative issued by the school system: <i>'They [school system] say to us that they are only interested in growth but what they say to the public is different'</i> Adrian</p> <p>Access to the demographics of the school over the last 6 years; school enrolment, literacy and numeracy results</p>	Corroborated, validated and provided further insight on participating principals' perspectives.
Visuals	<p>Photographs, diagrams in School Magazines, Newsletters, system publications, marketing brochures, Annual School Report.</p> <p>Photographs, diagrams and clips in marketing materials</p>	Validated participants' views in the ways the public image of the school is portrayed: <i>'Yeah we also send them out all glossy and shiny'</i> Damien. <i>'I get really excited when we can take our Year 10 to the primary schools with [programs]. Marketing is a big thing about this role'</i> Patricia	Corroborated, validated and provided further insight on participating principals' perspectives.

### 3.5.5.3 Establishing focus groups

The purpose of the focus groups in this study was to validate or discount the findings from the data interpretations of the Phase 1 and 2 interviews and expand on them. The participating principals were invited to the focus groups. This section begins by explaining why the focus groups were used as a data collection procedure and addresses some of the limitations of the focus group method. The section concludes with the questions used.

The intention to utilise focus groups as a method of data collection was to build further understandings about the findings. A focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic (Krueger, 2008). The intention of a focus group is for participants to build conceptual understandings on the phenomenon at hand (Wilson, 1997). For this study, it was important that the members of the focus groups had knowledge and experience of assessment-focused accountability; hence, it seemed logical to invite those already engaged with this research. The participating principals held the knowledge and they could validate or discount the findings (see Tables 3.11 and 3.12 and Appendices 3 and 4).

Table 3.11

#### *Processes for Focus Groups*

<b>Explanation of findings (points from slides)</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Example response from participants (Group 1)</b>
Participating principals reported that they mainly accounted to: - parents, students and themselves - the School system (generally understood this accountability to be less important). There was no accounting to the government, even in schools with National Partnerships programs.	How well do these findings about principals' expectations reflect your experience?	<i>'I agree with most of these findings yet contest your finding where there is no account to the government. In our college in the past this has been a huge accountability ...'</i> Paul, Turin College.

Table 3.12

*Example Questions used for the Focus Groups*

<b>Examples of conceptual understandings</b>	<b>Propositions</b>	<b>Example validation questions</b>
<i>Integrating understandings about learning</i>	The ways principals understand learning influences the ways they lead learning	<i>To what extent do you find that the ways you understand learning would influence the ways that you lead learning?</i>
<i>Forming identity</i>	Principals' understandings about learning is influenced by their formation and leadership pathways	<i>What do you understand as 'forming identity'? (Purpose was to check whether this researcher's understandings of this label represented the principals' understandings.)</i>

There were four reasons for employing the method of the focus group as the final stage of data collection. First, the focus group procedure allowed member principals to respond and react to others within the group context (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1996). Second, it allowed the member principals to react and build upon this researcher's interpretations of their perspectives of the findings. The third reason, as explained by Krueger (1994), which is not addressed in the individual interview, was that their responses deepened the ideas, created new connections and provided cues to explore a range of perceptions held by the member principals that this researcher may have overlooked or misinterpreted. The fourth reason was that this researcher anticipated that the interactions would occur with the participating principals and not the researcher, hence minimising her influence on their views (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). It was hoped that social interactions would construct further meaning and understandings about their experiences of accountability.

The decision to ask the participating principals from both Phase 1 and Phase 2 proved advantageous, as this researcher noted that they had reflected on the experience of the first two interviews, had a vested interest in what they had contributed, and were interested in other participants' viewpoints. The participants in the validation group continued to co-construct their understandings of accountability. This interest and co-construction aligned with the findings and was an expression of symbolic interactionism in which the peer

communications helped participants to construct their meanings with regard to accountability. As the focus groups progressed, it became evident that the participants and researcher were becoming co-constructors of the emerging theoretical propositions.

Two potential limitations of the focus group procedure are that not all voices may be heard (Wilson, 1997) and the number of participants (too many or too few) in a focus group may inhibit participation (Yin, 2009). Several steps were taken to address these limitations. Information from the conceptual understandings, along with the discussion questions, was forwarded to participants before the meeting, allowing for their internal preparation. Members of the focus groups were invited to make comments privately outside of and/or after the validation process. To address the possible limitations of too few people in the focus group, this researcher ensured that the principals were aware of the numbers before participating. Moreover, the principals reported that they attended forums such as group discussions regularly and discussed projects they did together. The manner and substance of their discussion seemed respectful, warm and supportive.

In summary, this section has explained and justified the sources of data and the methods for collecting data in this study. The section has aimed to provide clarity for the reader that the collection procedures were determined by a case study methodology. Defining the case and creating a bounded system directed certain ways of progressing the data collection.

### **3.5.6 Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data Collection Methods**

This study's data collection procedures were embedded in an interpretivist theoretical perspective, informed by a case study methodology. Therefore, this researcher deemed that the criteria designed for interpretivist studies were appropriate for such an evaluation. Criteria developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for assessing the trustworthiness of data collection procedures are credibility and dependability.

### **3.5.6.1 Credibility**

Researchers interpret data to arrive at information (Merriam, 2009). According to Allen (2001), researcher interpretation is a perennial challenge for researchers because data do not speak for themselves. Interpretations by researchers have the potential to diminish the credibility of the data. Credibility 'refers to the truthfulness of the data' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 99) and is described as the correspondence between research and the real world (Wolcott, 2005). Given that the interpretations are 'something other than reality itself' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the credibility of the research rests with the question of whether the findings are reasonable, given the data presented (Merriam, 2009). This researcher acknowledges that the data for this study were based on her interpretations.

Strategies and safeguards were employed to ensure that the findings were a reasonable interpretation of the research and the real world of the principals' experiences of accountability (Stake, 2005). According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), a way to increase the credibility of findings is through member-checks. A member check is 'a qualitative process during which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account' (Creswell, 2008, p. 642). As an initial strategy, participants in this study checked their transcripts to verify, discount or expand on their reports and the researcher's interpretations of the data. O'Donoghue (2007) advised that member checking, using those employed in the study, is helpful if participants can critique the conceptual understanding and theoretical propositions. The members of the focus groups, who were also participants of the previous interviews, verified and discounted the preliminary findings. Their critiques included not only the transcripts but also the findings and the emerging theoretical propositions. To build the study's credibility, several professional colleagues listened to the focus group recordings and examined the initial interpretations, to assess the veracity of the researcher's interpretations (Merriam, 2009).

Another strategy that increased the credibility of this study (albeit not a deliberate one) was the extended period of data collection. The interviews and focus groups extended over a two-year period, which allowed some of the participating principals to reflect back over their views and allowed this researcher to analyse their changes in thinking over time. Vanessa reflected: ‘Gee, I cannot get over how much my views [about accountability] have changed since you first interviewed me—it’s about two years!’ (*Focus Group 1*). The extended period also provided time to establish research relationships with the participants. These relationships created rapport and trust and resulted in disclosures that may not have been forthcoming with a shorter period.

Another consideration in increasing the trustworthiness of the procedures of data collection is the corroboration of data sources through the method of triangulation. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different sources (Creswell, 2008). Merriam (2009) describes the process as cross-checking data collected through different means and/or different places and times and from people with different perspectives. According to Yin (2009), corroboration aims to increase accuracy, identify the particular and converge the data points. For this study, corroboration occurred via the participants’ different perspectives in the semi-structured interviews, interpretation of particular documentation, the focus groups and the literature review. This process of triangulation improved the accuracy of the findings, provided for further investigation of anomalies and brought together several pieces of evidence around the one concept.

#### **3.5.6.2 Dependability**

The data collection for this study was executed differently from the way it was originally planned. For example, a second group of participants was sought to validate the preliminary findings. These changes were accommodated through the flexible design of the original research methodology. Marshall and Rossman (2011) described the planning for these changing conditions as dependability: ‘the ways by which the researcher plans to

account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study and the changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting' (p. 253). Clearly, demonstrating the ways in which the plan was executed was also an element that increased dependability, such as explaining how the methods changed through collecting more data. 'The development of an "audit trail"' has become an accepted strategy 'for demonstrating the stability and trackability of data and the development of theory in qualitative studies' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 100). For this study, there was a permanent audit trail with Excel and Word documents filed in electronic folders named Interviews 1 and 2. Memos were also filed in the specific conceptual areas, along with their dates. Anyone who examined this study's chain of evidence (Yin, 2009) could find and understand the path taken (see Appendices 9–13, 15–19 and 21).

### **3.5.7 Considering the Ethics**

The two bodies that monitored the ethical considerations for this study were the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee and the school systems in which the participating principals were employed. This was deemed a low-risk study. No vulnerable people were interviewed and the anonymity of participants and school systems could be maintained.

#### ***3.5.7.1 Ethics for the Australian Catholic University***

This research was conducted in accordance with the policies of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee. Ethical clearances obtained from the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee consisted of an information letter about the research, consent forms and invitations to participate. These were forwarded to the directors of the Catholic school systems (see Appendices 5 and 6).

As documents were stored as a chain of evidence for auditing purposes (Yin, 2009), they needed to be secure for a certain period. All documents selected as data sources, including the transcripts of the participating principals, were held in a locked cupboard at the

Australian Catholic University Canberra Campus and filed according to each participant's pseudonym.

### ***3.5.7.2 Ethics for School systems***

Following clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee for Australian Catholic University and prior to data collection, permission was sought from the directors of the Catholic school systems to conduct the study. In the application, the directors were informed of the University's ethics clearance number, the research purpose and significance of the study. Once the request to the directors was approved, participants were invited through a letter that outlined the purpose of the study, the criteria for selection and their anticipated commitment. Other points covered in the letter included the data collection methods; the period of the study's; the participants' time commitment; steps taken to ensure the participants' privacy; and how the findings would be communicated to them during the research phases (see Appendix 5).

### **3.5.8 Section Conclusion**

This section has explained each of the methods of data collection and at the same time, justified the choices in light of the research concern. For this study, the research concern was situated in the principals' understandings and their enactments regarding accountability. This researcher anticipated that the principals' experiences of accountability would be inextricably linked to their school contexts and as such, difficult to separate from their understandings and enactments (Yin, 2009). The methods of case study methodology managed this likely difficulty. They enabled this researcher to define the case and placed boundaries on the information that was or was not collected and who was or was not the subject of the investigation. The section has addressed the associated issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations pertinent to the data collection procedures.

## 3.6 Analysing the Data

### 3.6.1 Overview

The methods of data analysis in this study were informed by the principles of symbolic interactionism and GT. This allowed the data analysis to be both exploratory and interpretative (symbolic interactionism) and rigorous and systematic (GT). There are numerous approaches in GT methodology (see Appendix 7). Some well-recognised approaches include Glaser's classic approach in Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Strauss (Strauss, 1987), the Straussian approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and the constructionist approach (Charmaz, 2008a). These are often referred to as the Straussian techniques<sup>8</sup> (see Appendix 8). Their methods were selected because of their rigorous and systematic procedures, such as their analytical devices; their capacity to illuminate the interacting relationships from data, such as densifying and specifying the conceptual relationships (Corbin & Strauss, 2014); their support for an interpretivist perspective in generating knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008); and acknowledging the importance of the literature in the development of the theoretical propositions (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Most importantly, Straussian techniques enabled this researcher to meet these considerations and construct a theory that was grounded in data.

Rigorous methods were required to incorporate inductive strategies and to develop 'concepts, insights and understandings from patterns in the data' as distinct from 'collecting data to access pre-conceived moulds, hypotheses, or theories' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 58). GT methods of analysis are rigorous and systematic. Methods for this study needed to be

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<sup>8</sup> These techniques include not only the techniques of Anselm Strauss who developed the 'classic' grounded theory with Glaser in 1967 but also Juliet Corbin (2008, 2014). Corbin, since Anselm's death, has honoured their previous works and has continued to develop their combined techniques further, such as coding paradigms and matrices that have been refined (see Appendices 9 and 10, which demonstrate the processes in choosing the Straussian techniques as the preferred GT family).

responsive and reliable to the context and perspectives of the participants, yet needed to provide for theoretical imagination in order to generate a theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

This study favoured an interpretivist perspective in the generation of knowledge for both the participating principals and the researcher, aligned with Straussian techniques as stressed by Corbin and Strauss (2014):

Therefore, the final theory that is constructed, though grounded in data, is a representation of both participant and researcher. Another researcher could take the same data and by placing a different emphasis on the data construct a different theory. However, that does not negate the validity of the theory. The most important point is that whatever theory is produced is grounded and that it gives another insight and understanding (p. 29)

The most important point stressed by Corbin and Strauss compelled this researcher to find a technique that could identify the conceptual relationships, which would facilitate insights and understandings that may not otherwise be found using case study analysis. Specifically, the choice was made to use Corbin and Strauss's coding techniques and the literature to inform and make sense of data. This is unlike Glaser's approach (1967) of coming to the data with an empty mind with no preconceived views. Charmaz's theoretical perspective (Charmaz, 2008a) aligned well with this researcher's beliefs regarding knowledge generation; that is, interpretivist. However, Straussian techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2014) were more useful in their ability to analyse and abstract (see the comparative table in Appendix 19).

This section begins by explaining the overlay of the analytical methods, then moves to the detail and justification of the methods employed. The section concludes by assessing the quality of the GT methods and specifically provides an evaluation of the trustworthiness of the data.

### 3.6.2 Overlaying the Methods

Some overlay methods were employed in the data analysis in this study. These were deductive and inductive analysis and constant comparative methods. Deductive analysis was used when the new mini-hypotheses were generated and new data were sought or existing data were tested (B. Glaser & Strauss, 1967a; Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Deductive analysis involves the testing of predefined concepts or hypotheses, whereas, inductive analysis begins from a loosely structured framework and assesses the conclusions from data as they emerge (Mouton & Marais, 1998). GT, deriving a theory from data, is an inductive analysis (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). In this study, inductive analysis began with a loose framework. The inductive analysis was mobilised by the application of the constant comparative method.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain the constant comparative method as follows: ‘constant comparative units change for comparison of incident with incident to comparison of incident with properties, if the category resulted from initial comparison of incidents’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 108). The method of constant comparison of data (see Figure 3.3) was applied in this study in an intra-comparative way (codes with codes) and in an inter-comparative way (codes with categories) (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, when comparing incident with incident, the theme *prioritising* emerged: the more principals understood the expectations and their school environments, the more they *prioritised* their expectations of accountability in adaptive ways. From this point, each incident bearing on the theme *prioritising* was compared with the years the participating principals had been at the school. Thus, the number of years the principals were at the school and in the School system could possibly predict a *prioritising of* expectations that was adaptive rather than adoptive. Through constant comparative analysis, this researcher moved back and forth, testing the theoretical propositions and mini-hypotheses by revisiting the existing transcripts and collecting more data. The iterative interplay of gathering and analysing more data in order to

validate or discount the emerging theoretical propositions densified and specified the social processes in the theoretical propositions and this interplay increased the credibility of this study (Parry, 1998; Silverman, 2001).

Apart from revisiting existing data, this researcher sought another cohort of principals and several personnel from the school system for interviews. These additional participants were sources for data that helped to define the categories in a more precise way.

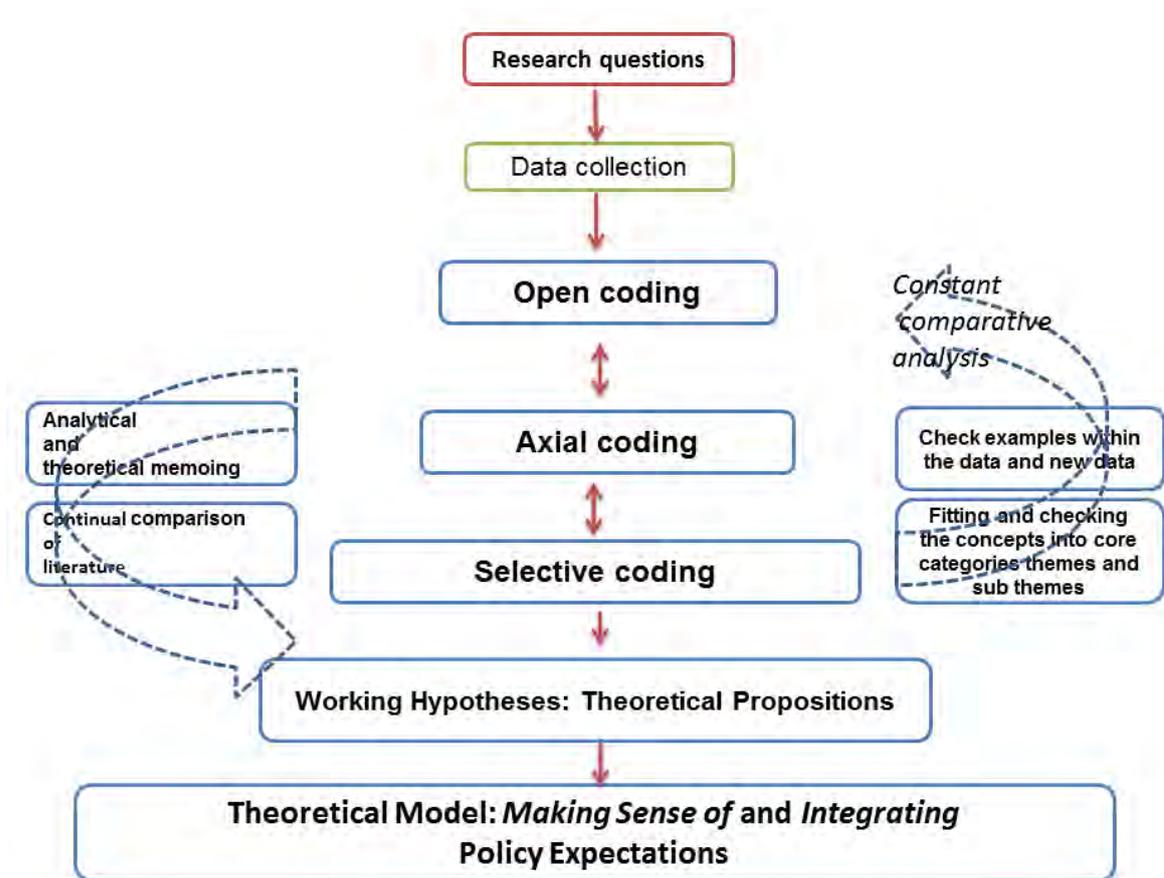


Figure 3.3 Overview of the data analytical methods and the iterative interplay of applications in the construction of the theory.

### 3.6.3 Selecting Grounded Theory (GT) Techniques

Most of the techniques devised by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 2008) and Corbin and Strauss (2014) were adopted for this study. Each technique is explained, followed by an example of its application. Table 3.13 indicates the Straussian techniques that were employed for this study. A core category was employed. A core category, according to Glaser & Strauss

(1967), is the category that is the closest to relating to all other categories. Theoretical sampling was not used as it was deemed that selective coding and the use of coding paradigms and matrices were sufficient to draw out the theoretical relationships and test them.

### 3.6.4 Coding, Categorising and Theorising

The most significant advantage of employing GT methods in the data analysis for this study was the certainty that the theoretical underpinnings would be based on rigorous analytical procedures. The coding procedures are recognised as the heart of GT (Babchuk, 2011). The coding processes below are described in discrete sections; however, the reality for this study was that there was a back-and-forth process, for example, between open codes and selective codes. Parry (1998) aptly describes this movement as an iterative interplay. The nature of coding in GT requires going back and forth to data at different times and for diverse pieces of information (Brown, Stevens, Troiano, & Schneider, 2002).

Table 3.13

#### *Applying Straussian Techniques*

Parent	Family name	Resemblances	Methods employed for this study
Strauss (1987)	Straussian	<i>Generates</i> theory: addresses the main concern of the study	Generated a theoretical model; addressed the main concern
Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998)	GT	Theoretical propositions, narratives, no core category, storyline Constant comparative analysis using three levels of data fracturing Three types of coding: open, axial and selective Coding paradigm: conditions; interacting among the actors; strategies and tactics; consequences Analysing through memoing Theoretical sampling	Theoretical propositions; used narrative; storyline Constant comparative analysis Open and axial coding; selective coding Coding paradigm: conditions; interacting among the actors; strategies and tactics; consequences Analysing through memoing

The section begins by explaining open and axial coding, followed by selective coding processes. These coding processes demonstrate the ways in which themes and categories were generated.

### ***3.6.4.1 Open coding***

Open coding was employed by coding different incidents into as many categories as possible (Glaser, 1978). Open coding is the process used by the researcher to form initial common groups of information about the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2008). Open coding, being an interpretivist pursuit, reflects this researcher's theoretical perspective (Goulding, 2012). The aim in open coding is to name or label bits of text data (Glaser, 1978). This researcher acknowledges that the labels used may be different according to the analyst interpreting the text data.

Line-by-line open coding was employed (see Table 3.14), rather than word-by-word coding, because there was a considerable amount of text data and line-by-line coding freed this researcher to move beyond description to a 'conceptual mode of analysis' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 66). Allan (2003) advises that analysing data word by word can lead to confusion at times, with a mass of data that needs to be studied to locate the relevant information. Instead, this researcher selected key points to address the research questions and was persuaded by Allan's reasoning that line-by-line coding would minimise data overload (Allan, 2003).

Each transcript from the interviews was coded line by line. Pertinent documents were also coded line by line. Code words were recorded in Excel documents on the right-hand side, which allowed space for memoing, possible themes and visual diagrams to be noted at the same time. During this process, the data was 'broken down' or 'fractured' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97) into 'concepts to be closely examined' (p. 62).

Table 3.14

*Example of Line-by-line Coding*

Interview statement of a participating principal	Line-by-line coding
<p><i>You mentioned some contradictions or in some ways tensions in being held to account. Can you talk more about that?</i></p> <p>Oh yeah there's a definite tension between my personal passion around developing students and growth and I'm always looking for ways and it's a lot more difficult to portray that publicly than what it is to straight results, that's why the government take that option of doing that. To be fair to them, there are reporting mechanisms available now around learning growth; you know that members of the public can access and things like that and that's a part of our annual report. But to be quite honest, I'm not worried about that. I honestly believe if a school is doing well in the area of learning and I hear it in enrolment interviews all the time, as late as yesterday, as recently as yesterday, when a parent said to me when they relocated to [location], people said there's only one school to go to and that's [the school]. Now that's wonderfully affirming and I'm also hearing that part of the reason why we have that sort of reputation in the local community</p>	<p><i>Definite tensions/personal passion; student growth/strategies</i>  <i>Difficult to publicise student growth</i>  <i>Government publicises straight results</i>  <i>Fair to Government rep mechanisms</i>  <i>Show learning growth/public access learning</i>  <i>Report grow through annual report</i>  <i>Not worried [about public results] if school does well in learning. Evidence at enrolment interviews. Parents relocating</i>  <i>Hear school's public reputation/our school</i>  <i>Reasons why</i>  <i>Feedback about reputation in local community</i></p>

According to Glaser (1978), open coding ends once a core category is decided and this may come early. While the core category in this study was generated in the first round of interviews, the decision to keep the original core category was not confirmed until other coding processes were completed.

Progressing from the open codes to themes was methodical. The approach enabled this researcher to generate as many themes and sub-themes as possible (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Table 3.15 demonstrates the generation of themes and sub-themes. A theme was a grouping of open codes with similar characteristics. A sub-theme was a more refined grouping, belonging to the theme, with similar characteristics.

Table 3.15

*Example of Creating Themes and Sub-themes*

<b>RQ1: How do the principals understand the expectations of them with regard to external accountability in their schools?</b>		
<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Text data</b>
<i>Theme: Accounts for growth in performance results on external tests</i>		
Juxtaposes learning gain with gain in performance results	View that they are accountable for growth in performance results yet use the term learning gain for this growth	<i>We do spend a lot of time, we do exhaustive review of HSC data, more so from a learning gain point of view, a DeCourcy learning gain far more (P 10)<sup>9</sup>.</i>
Achieving favourable performance results	HSC results are given a key emphasis in the school. Comparisons are made from previous years. NAPLAN results are given emphasis, but less than HSC results. Benchmarks against state averages to use as target setting for staff. Counts and celebrates the number of [top scores] the students attain; promotes and pushes for raising the bar and closing the gap	<i>'So how many Band 6s?' (Participant 6). '... I am going to be measured using HSC and NAPLAN ...' (P 6). 'Performance results matter BECAUSE of the door that they open' (P 7). 'But the reality is that we're measured by them [results]' (P 7). 'They rank, I think it's the top 200 schools and people look at that and make lots of personal judgements on what's a good school and what's not a good school ...' (P 8). Parents say, 'Tell me about what percentage of your kids .... go into universities (P 2). 'I know I sit there the morning the results come out—I'm analysing the number of Band 6s, Band 5s, 4s, 3s, 2s, 1s and always thrilled to see each year less 1s and less 2s' (P 13).</i>
<i>Theme: Accounting to students and parents for post-school pathways and opportunities</i>		
Providing multiple opportunities and pathways	See themselves as personally accountable to the students and parents and ensuring that students may be able to secure a trade, enter the academic pathway of their choice and/or enrol in training; able to take up opportunities such as international exchanges	<i>'Other indicators are the number of students who are getting into the courses post school and the pathways post school that they want to go to ... My primary accountability is to the kids, to provide them with the best opportunities' (P 4). Parents say, 'Tell me about what percentage of your kids ... go into universities (p. 2); 'whether it be straight into a trade, whether it be in a volunteer situation overseas, around being ... having the skills to be set up for success' (P 10). 'We've got to give these kids the best possible chance' (P 6).</i>

The next step in the analysis was progressing themes to conceptual understandings. This progression involved a narrative around the conceptual understandings. Memos were used to provide explanations for these conceptual understandings. Renaming these understandings to represent the narrative more accurately occurred often. Active codes or

<sup>9</sup> The letter P represents the code name for the participant

gerund words<sup>10</sup> (developed by Glaser and Strauss, 1967) were used for the themes because the active words best captured the experiences of the participating principals (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Examples of active words to describe the themes are illustrated in Table 3.16.

Table 3.16

*Using Active Words to Describe Themes*

<b>Code groupings</b>	<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Themes (active words)</b>
<i>Understandings about learning</i>	Understandings about learning important in accountability	<i>Integrating</i> understandings about learning
<i>Post-school pathways Joy, happiness at school</i>	Philosophy of education	<i>Resolving</i> beliefs about education and accountability demands
<i>Incongruence in accountabilities between School system and principals (P 8, P 7); account to parents, students; account for happiness of students (P 12); accounts for performance results (P 6)</i>	Principals reconstitute expectations	<i>Reconstituting</i> expectations

There were relationships between themes, identified by employing Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) axial coding techniques.

### 3.6.4.2 Axial coding

The tool used for axial coding in this study was the Straussian coding process called the coding paradigm. ‘Axial coding is when the grounded theorist selects one open coded category, positions it at the center of the process being explored (as the core phenomenon), and then relates other categories to it’ (Creswell, 2009, p. 637). The coding paradigm is unique to the Straussian family. ‘The researcher specifies a category (this could be the phenomenon) and the conditions that give rise to it; the context, its specific set of properties in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of those strategies’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). This

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<sup>10</sup> Gerund words are the names for codes that are active verbs, used in basic social processes to depict explicit actions (B. Glaser & Strauss, 1967a).

paradigm process was a structured procedure that enabled a clearer understanding in the identification of the relationships between codes and categories.

The utility of paradigms enables theoretical propositions to gain more specificity and density. This procedure of Strauss and Corbin was adopted because of its capacity to specify and densify, hence leading to more substantial propositions. An example of the paradigm's capacity is illustrated in Figure 3.4.

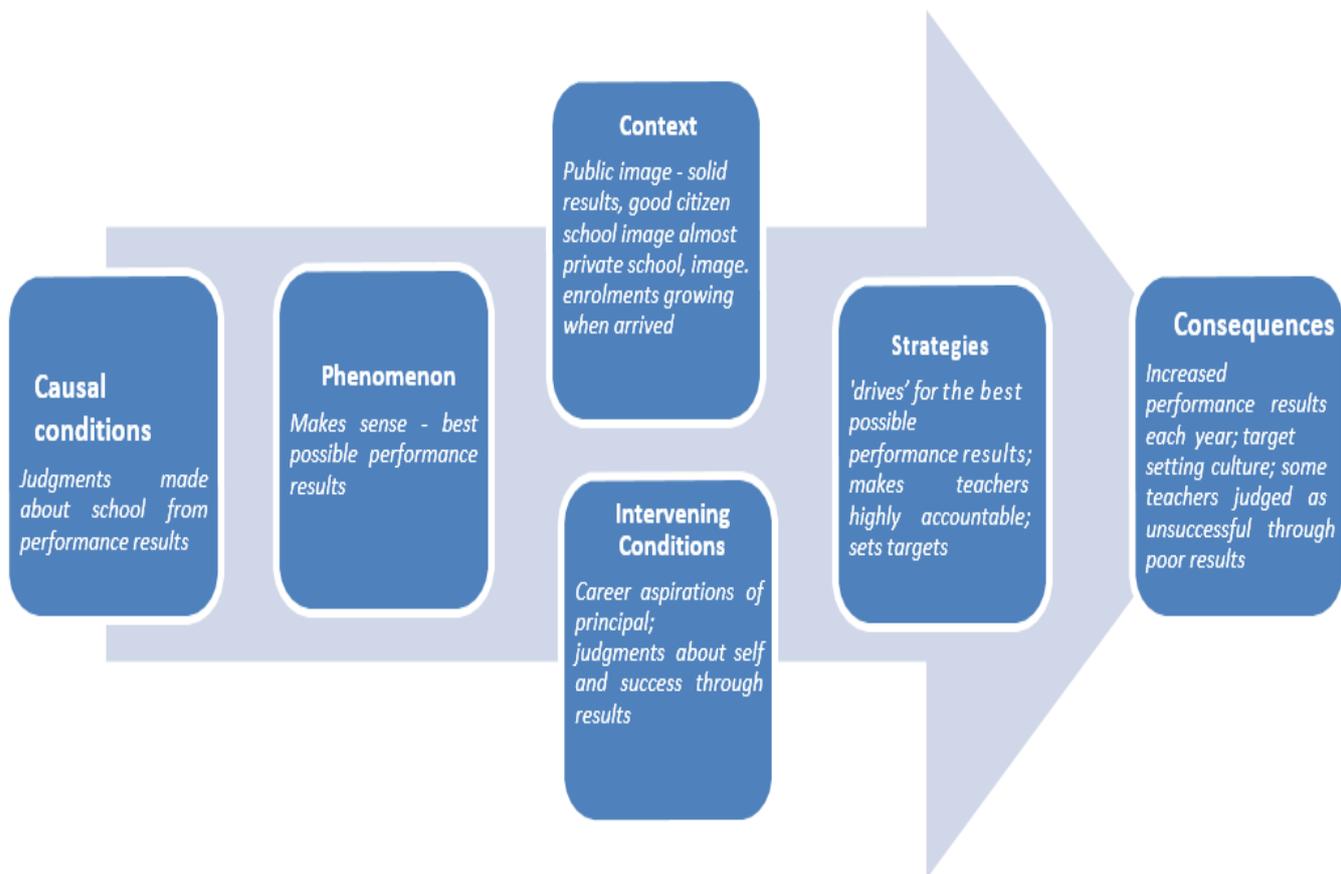


Figure 3.4 Example of coding paradigm.

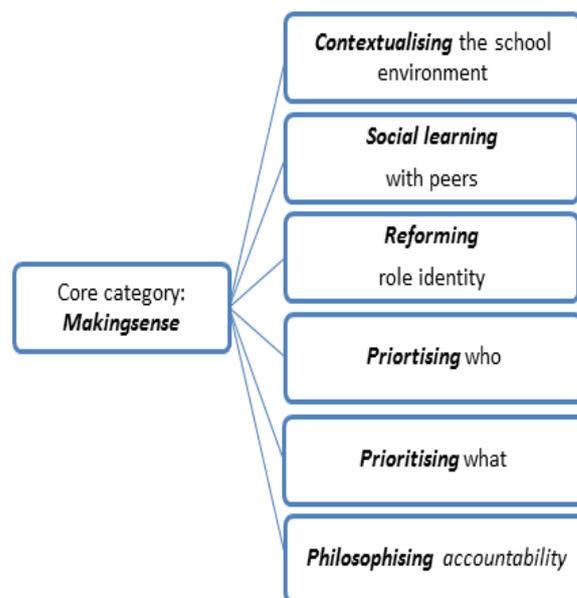
As the relationships were become more specific and dense through the procedure of populating the paradigm, the theoretical planks of a model were being built. There was one cornerstone on which all the planks relied: the core category (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which is explained in the next section.

### 3.6.4.3 Selective coding

In this study, selective coding commenced with a core category. The core category may also be an actual experience found in the data. The core category is often central to the storyline (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The core category can be analysed in its relationship with other categories, by validating or discounting them through the procedures of the coding paradigm. In this study, the core category emerged early from the experiences of two participating principals. It will be described fully in detail in the Findings chapters but it is important at this point to know that the core category was the reference point by which codes were kept or discarded. Gerund words were used because they best captured the experiences of the participating principals (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Table 3.17 provides an example of a selective code (making sense) and the labelling of the gerund words.

Table 3.17

#### *Example of Selective Coding*



### 3.6.4.4 Generating the theoretical model

As well as being the reference point in selective coding, the core category was also central to the storyline (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this study, the core category was the

actual experience of two of the participating principals. It was the naming of the experience by two participating principals that led this researcher to the core category. This core category allowed this researcher to examine and compare codes, which in turn generated the theoretical propositions. While Glaser's practice is to cease open coding once the core category is discovered, this researcher continued with the iterative interplay of open coding and further data collection with the comparative analysis of codes and categories (Parry, 1998). While it was not an exact science, the process did continue until the relationships were dense and specific. The analogy of flesh and bones was helpful at this point. This researcher imagined the core category as the backbone of a body and the continual interplay initially provided the other skeletal components, such as knees, elbows. The final stages in the interplay provided the flesh on the bones. The storyline became the garment, defining the body and providing colour and character.

The storyline was the narrative explaining the potential social and psychological processes at play in the principals' understandings of accountability and the way these understandings influenced the ways they led learning. Several storylines were written as the processes of selective coding notes were prepared (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At the same time, the storyline was sharpened as an ever-increasing theoretical abstraction (Strauss, 1987). However, the aim was to ensure that the steps to the theory generation could withstand scrutiny, while building conceptual density and 'conceptual specificity' (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 98). Diagrams formed at the selective coding stage were an example of conceptual density and conceptual specificity (see Appendix 9 and Appendix 10). The 'general descriptive overview of the story' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 119) represented an emerging theory. The main story was a memo to the supervisor—'Memo: The descriptive story' (see Appendix 11).

#### 3.6.4.4.1 Memoing

Memos are a specialised type of written record which 'contains the products of analysis or direction for analysis' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 217). According to Birks,

Chapman and Francis (2008), memos can be employed by both the apprentice and the experienced researcher as a 'procedural and analytical strategy' (p. 68). Memoing also assists the researcher in 'making conceptual leaps from raw data to those abstractions that explain the research phenomena' (Birks et al., 2008, p. 68). Charmaz (2009) advised that there are five helpful purposes of the memo: (a) sorting the ideas about data; (b) setting a course for analysing; (c) reducing and refining categories; (d) defining the relationships between categories; and (e) demonstrating to the researcher that analysis is actually occurring (giving a sense of confidence). Contemplation and communication are aided through the use of memos (Birks et al., 2008). Memos are an important part of understanding the data as the researcher lives with the data over a period of time (Urquhart, 2007). Memos that were employed in this study were an effective strategy for data analysis, enabling this researcher to generate conceptual understandings from initial concepts to more abstract ones.

This researcher applied the technique of memoing to remind herself of important points, to communicate with her supervisor her evolving thoughts and to reflect continually on the perspectives of the participating principals. As data collection and analysis spanned a two-year period, memos aided the evolving reflections on the data. Memoing began after the data collection from the first interview. Guidelines also existed to aid this researcher to draw upon the flexible options in the ways memos could be utilised (Charmaz, 2009).

Memoing usually starts in a small way (Glaser, 1978) and they can be short (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006). For example, 'Memo: Categorising stage' is a short yet reflective note about the categorising stage. Irrespective of length or type, memos are 'the most useful and powerful sensemaking tool' that the researcher has at their fingertips (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 72). The power of the tool is where the researcher explores ideas and thoughts and then takes them apart. The researcher is always in search of broader explanations (Creswell, 2008).

For this study, memos were used as needed and in different forms. As Charmaz (2009) notes, the purpose of the memo often dictates the shape or form that it takes. Researchers using GT methods often use memos for different purposes, such as code notes, theoretical notes, analytical and operational notes, and variations of these can occur within the single memo (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Urquhart, 2007). A code note can also establish relationships between categories in visual diagrams. Assuredly, the researcher should never see these diagrams as superfluous, even if pushed for time (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Appendices 20 and 21 demonstrate how this researcher used memos for tracking coding and establishing new research questions.

This study used visual diagrams from the preliminary phases to the later stages of data analysis. Moreover, Strauss (1987) recommends using integrative diagrams in conjunction with the theoretical memos in which the relationships between categories are considered. In this study, whiteboards were used and these were captured later in photos, providing a narrative, theoretical note of the ways the concepts related. While the photographed diagrams through may appear roughshod, they allowed ideas to flow and move to more specific conceptual understandings (see Appendix 12 for several integrative visual diagrams).

The coding applications, along with memoing through the application of constant comparative analysis, were an iterative interplay that led to the construction of the theory. Figure 3.3 above provided an overview of this iterative interplay, along with its place in the coding procedures.

### **3.6.5 Triangulating Data Sources**

Triangulation was used in this study to increase the credibility of the findings. Corroborating evidence was gathered by seeking the different perspectives of the participants through semi-structured interviews, the interpretation of particular documentation and the focus groups. As mentioned, the process of triangulation improved the accuracy of the findings. According to Yin (2009), the aim of corroboration is to gain accuracy, identify the

particular and converge data points. Table 3.18 demonstrates such corroboration of data regarding Damien’s perspectives on being held to account for performance results from three converging data points. With the two examples provided, the colours aim to demonstrate alignment of the transcript data, the documentation and the literature comparisons.

Table 3.18

*Example of Corroboration of Data*

Interview transcript	Documentation: Staff News	Literature comparison
1. ‘Not because someone else is watching and we are going to be competing, because that’s what the kids need to perform, <b>in order to give them life chances.</b> ’	‘Whilst I can tell you we need to be accountable to the [School system] through [strategic reviews], I believe <b>we have a much grander reason.</b> ’	Grander reason for being held to account: <b>moral purpose</b> (Bezzina, 2012; Burford & Bezzina, 2014)
2. ‘Call it a <b>moral imperative</b> , whatever you want to call it.’	‘Accepting that ALL students can learn is central to our work, setting targets ... are all aimed at helping ALL students learn—that is our <b>moral imperative!</b> ’	Moral imperative needs to be realised (Fullan, 2011)

### 3.6.6 Analysing Documents

Document analysis is a well-recognised social research method (Heffernan, 2014; Rhodes, 2012). This researcher viewed the analysis of documentation in two ways. First, document analysis was an important research tool in its own right and second, it was an invaluable part of the scheme of triangulation. Prior (2008) argued that by focusing documents, social research can embrace a much wider range of approaches to both data collection and analysis. Towards this end, this researcher viewed documents as a pointer to the ways that the participating principals enacted their views about accountability. In this way, these documents were not static but rather dynamic and active agents in the participating principals’ ways of leading (Prior, 2008).

In this study, the application of document analysis enabled the procedures of triangulation to be applied, contributing to the trustworthiness of the analysis (see Section 3.5.7). Given that the theoretical perspective of this study was interpretivist, the method

employed for document analysis was also interpretative, rather than content analysis or textual analysis. Interpretative analysis of documents is the examination of messages that capture the hidden meaning and ambiguity (Heffernan, 2014). Researchers employing interpretative analysis are acutely aware of the intended audience (Yin, 2009). The latter approaches to analyses are for the purposes of quantifying, such as counting the frequency of words, or semiology (the study of signs) (Wharton, 2006). As Wharton prescribes, some textual analysis occurred, taking into account words used for potency.

This researcher had an interpretive approach when analysing documentation, as distinct from an objective content analysis. The lens was an ‘already knowing’ of certain concepts, with this researcher seeking to corroborate them with evidence that either supported or added to the data from the semi-structured interviews. As such, the researcher was not coming to the data with *rasa*<sup>11</sup> (Rhodes, 2012) or an empty mind (Glaser, 1992). The Framework employed to collect and analyse the documentation was adapted from Heffernan (2014). The key elements of the Framework were interpretation and evaluation (Heffernan, 2014).

### ***3.6.6.1 Interpreting***

Several templates were employed to analyse the relevant documents. These templates were chosen from the US Archives (Bennett, 2014) and were deemed appropriate because of their structure and suitability for each form of documentation that this researcher collected.

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<sup>11</sup> Latin for ‘clean sheet of paper’. This blankness aligns with the original works of Glaser and Strauss (1967) about coming to the data with an empty mind in order to discover the theory.

Table 3.19

*Sample of Document Analysis: Written*

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1.	<b>TYPE OF DOCUMENT</b> (Highlight) Newsletter; Staff Briefing; Minutes of Meeting; Press Release; Marketing Material; Annual Report; School Planning Documents; Memorandum; and; School system news magazine
2.	<b>DATE OF DOCUMENT</b> <i>April, 2013</i>
3.	<b>CREATOR(S)</b> : <i>Principal and staff</i>
4.	<b>AUDIENCE</b> : <i>Parents, students, staff and website</i>
5.	<b>PURPOSE</b> : <i>Information about the fortnightly news at the school</i>
6.	<b>EVIDENCE</b> : (altered to honour confidentiality) <i>'This school's latest results in the HSC indicate that we achieved above what we would normally expect of these students. It is important to remember that we cannot compare apples with oranges. This school overachieves ...'</i>
7.	<b>POINTS THAT CORROBORATE OTHER DATA</b> : <i>Semi-structured interview: 'You can't compare apples with oranges.' 'That's my mantra here.' [A colleague and mentor] '... taught me you have to repeat the message over and over again and to as many people as you can until they are sick of hearing it.'</i>

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Pictures in the documentation included figures and charts from school magazines, school annual reports, system publications, school websites and marketing brochures. These told stories that were enactments of the participating principals and at the same time, corroborated evidence. Table 3.20 provides an example of the way the data were interpreted from these sources.

Table 3.20

*Sample Document Analysis: Photographs and Diagrams*

Step 1: LOCATION and RETRIEVAL	
A	Place of origin: <i>Brochure</i>
B	Date: <i>2013</i>
Step 2: OBSERVATION	
A	Record overall impression: <i>Clean, happy students with expensive uniforms, looking interested in each other. A cultural diversity is present among students. Carrying equipment for class. In the background are trees, lawn and garden plus the school building. They are looking at each other, not the camera.</i>
B	Divide the photo into quadrants and note the new details that become visible: <i>Students are the older ages in the school. Carrying technological equipment, some are wearing glasses. Shoes are all matching and students are wearing blazers that are not compulsory [needs to be changed after I actually do it!]</i>
C	List people, objects and activities in the photographs and diagrams: <i>Five male students, bags, technological equipment, walking along talking and having fun.</i>
Step 3: INFERENCE	
Based on the observations, what inferences can be drawn from the photographs and diagrams?: <i>The students will be happy if they attend this school. The imagery of wealth comes through and students will be mixing with students who are clean, safe and possibly wealthy. There is an element of cultural and racial diversity; however, the image is not representative of the diversity of the geographical region. Overall, the image is trying to portray a private and elite school.</i>	
Step 4: CONCLUSIONS	
Points that corroborate other data: <i>'I take the students out ... the glossy kids and show them off' 'you see that's our market ... we need to compete ... you just need to do it.'</i> These corroborations lead to what conclusions in relation to the research?: <i>The inferences from the photo and the participant's statements corroborate that marketing is important. Certain images of wealth associated with private independent schools are needed to be competitive. Student safety and happiness need to be portrayed as part of this marketing. This participant also believes that the quality of the school is judged on performance results 'whether we like it or not'.</i>	

Several school websites presented movie clips for information for enrolling students and for marketing purposes. This information corroborated the principals' reports of marketing for enrolments (see Table 3.21).

Table 3.21

*Sample Document Analysis: Website and Movie Clip*

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**Step 1: Pre-viewing**

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- A. Type: Movie clip  
 Title of website or clip: A quote from the school’s Mission Statement  
 Location/source: Website  
 Purpose: Marketing purposes for choice of school
- 

**Step 2: Viewing**

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- A. **Type of website or clip:**
- Marketing
  - Enrolment information
  - Principal’s communication
  - General school information
  - Other
- B. **Mood or tone of the website or clip:**  
 e.g., High energy, high performance, caring: *playful, light, yet informative, an array of activities in each of the KLAs, which at the same time referred back to the Mission of the school. Building personal growth featured strongly in the clip. The voice-over indicates a current and mature student at the school.*  
**Evidence:**  
 e.g., Music, special effects, colour, live action: *classical guitar with an upbeat tempo, students in the woodwork room, performing on stage, music, at retreat and worship, sporting and athletic field.*
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>C. <b>Key points being emphasised:</b><br/>         Decision about which high school to go to, good location, easy access to public transport, long tradition (years) with a specific charisma, ‘heart of our community’, ‘making young men strong in heart and mind’, newly developed facilities to assist in learning, wide scope of subjects in all years, ‘our students working with our professional staff consistently achieve exceptional results’, technology: ‘ensuring students of today are equipped for tomorrow’, opportunities to showcase their talents, wide range of sporting on offer, the school does extremely well in cross-school competitions, religious experiences with students enjoying being reverent; ‘you are more than welcome in our community’.</p> | <p><b>Open codes</b><br/> <i>Location marketed; tradition-proven record</i><br/> <i>Charisma promoted</i><br/> <i>Builds character</i><br/> <i>Intelligence esteemed</i><br/> <i>Learning facilities</i><br/> <i>Subject choice</i><br/> <i>Relationship between students teachers</i><br/> <i>Preparation for future</i><br/> <i>Talents</i><br/> <i>Sport for competition; does well</i><br/> <i>Religious experience (end of clip)</i><br/> <i>Best you can be</i><br/> <i>Welcoming, belonging here</i></p> |
|---|---|
- 

**Step 3: Conclusions**

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- Points that corroborate other data:**  
 Location, proven track record—tradition, competition, school prepares for the future, intelligence, facilities for learning, best you can be
- Further insights that have implications for the theory:**  
 Being the best you can be—challenges the theoretical proposition from other data that students are performing to a certain benchmark
- 

**3.6.6.2 Evaluating**

The evaluation was not a lengthy or complex process; rather, the procedures for evaluation were to evaluate whether the analysis achieved its purpose of corroborating the evidence. The clip analysis in Table 3.22 is the sample used in Table 3.21 above.

Table 3.22

*Clip Analysis*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Rubric</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Authenticity	Genuine, complete, reliable and of unquestioned authorship?	Yes	Found on the school's website; author was the school principal with a voice-over completed by a current student.
Credibility	Free from error or distortion?	Yes	The purpose of the clip was to market the school's offerings and as such, it fulfilled its purpose and at the same time, confirmed the participating principal's view of the school. Hence, there is no distortion in the corroboration.
Representativeness	Constitutes a representative sample of the documents that originally existed?	Yes	The clip corroborates the Annual School report and other brochures that market the school.
Meaning	Surface meaning and/or a deeper/semiotic meaning?	Yes	The potency of particular words had semiotic meanings that were supported by data from the semi-structured interviews. The two examples here demonstrated the potency and the corroboration of the secondary and primary sources. Clip: 'Professional staff' interview: 'I expect a lot of them [teachers] ... that's how it is here and if they won't do it then they need to think about [going] elsewhere.' Clip: 'Exceptional results' interview: 'They set their targets—students and staff. How many Band 6s do they estimate?'

Clip from Table 3.21 above

The documents were analysed for the purpose of corroborating the principals' perspectives that were gained from the semi-structured interviews. The document analysis confirmed and at times cemented a point that was provided at the interview.

### **3.6.7 Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data Analysis**

Two criteria used to evaluate the trustworthiness of the data analysis were confirmability and transferability. The other two criteria of trustworthiness of data procedures, dependability and credibility, have been addressed in Section 3.4.6.

### 3.6.7.1 Confirmability

Confirmability is the ‘extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events rather than the inquirers’ personal constructions’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 324). However, this study used the Straussian approach to GT, which acknowledges that the researcher brings assumptions, experiences and interpretations to the events (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The acceptance of this interpretivist perspective creates its own set of implications regarding the criterion of confirmability, according to the description by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These implications were considered in conjunction with the criteria developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), because they welcomed the researcher’s interpretations and hence made provisions for such interpretations.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) developed seven questions to evaluate the extent to which a GT study is empirical. These questions are listed in Table 3.23 as the criteria in the first column, along with an assessment of their application in this study in the second column.

Table 3.23

*Application of Confirmability Criteria adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1990)*

<b>Criterion (pp. 254–256)</b>	<b>Application in this study</b>
1. Are the concepts generated?	Themes, labelled fluid or solid, were generated through line-by-line open-coding processes (see Section 3.8). Once groupings ‘densified’, they moved to solid themes (see Appendix 15).
2. Are the concepts systematically related?	The concepts were systematically related through axial coding processes, through the utility of tables, narratives, coding paradigms and integrative diagrams (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) (see Appendix 16).
3. Are there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed? Do they have conceptual density?	The relationships between the conceptual understandings were named and through axial coding and selective coding, the concepts densified (see Appendices 10 and 16). Two core categories emerged, each with three major themes.
4. Is much variation built into the theory?	Anomalies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were considered and investigated (see Section 4). These contributed and provided propositions for existing patterns. The analytical and theoretical memos demonstrated how these were investigated (see Appendix 21).
5. Are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon under study built into its explanation?	Differentiations between the principals, such as previous career experiences and knowledge and skill of learning and teaching, and the contexts of accountability expectations, such as national school partnerships, were identified as qualifiers in the theoretical model’s development.
6. Do the theoretical finds seem significant and to what extent?	This research determined that the theoretical propositions could reasonably predict principals ways of enacting accountabilities and the predictions could be applied other policy expectations.

Criterion (pp. 254–256)	Application in this study
7. Has the researcher engaged reflexive processes?	Various types of memos indicated this researcher’s reflexive processes—observational memos after interviews (Section 4: Findings), analytical memos as relationships were emerging, selective coding memos, theoretical memos and storyline memos (Appendices 11, 13, 17, 18, 20 and 21) (See Section 7: The emerging theoretical model).
8. How has the researcher allowed their experiences in the field to contribute to the emerging theoretical propositions?	Acknowledgments of this researcher’s background—personal and professional experiences. Analytical memos were consistently employed to question and hypothesise the principals’ experiences. The memos at times reflected this researcher’s experiences when working with principals and drew on their experiences of their work with literature in the Masters of Educational Leadership program, particularly leaders’ sensemaking and decision-making literature. Reflection on the supervisor’s views of the data and the co-supervisor’s reflections on the theoretical propositions were a consistent back-and-forth movement.
9. How has the literature informed the emergent theory?	Research questions were formed through the literature review. As the data analysis progressed, so too did continual literature comparisons. Comparative memos recorded the ideas (see Appendix 19). The literature was compared with the final theoretical conclusions (see Section 6: Discussion of findings). These propositions were validated, adapted or discounted through comparisons with other empirical works (see Section 6).

Adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1990, pp. 254-256)

The evidence provided in the second column demonstrates that this researcher made provision as much as possible to confirm the findings, particularly through the employment of the systematic procedures and the evaluative conversations with supervisors and critical professional colleagues.

### 3.6.7.2 *Transferability*

Transferability is described as ‘the ways in which the study’s findings may be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice’ (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is nearly impossible in a qualitative study. However, O'Donoghue (2007) offered a different perspective, suggesting that it is possible, when operating in a methodology that generates theories, to develop ‘working hypotheses’. These hypotheses will have meaning to those in the field of inquiry (p. 100). The participants in the validation group were principals. The meaningfulness of the findings was observed by principals from their insights about the key findings and the theoretical propositions. These observations indicated their usefulness. Alfred confirmed, ‘Keep this [theory]—it makes sense ....’ (*Validation Group 2*). It is

anticipated that these findings and the theoretical model will have meaning for principals in general.

### **3.6.8 Section Conclusion**

In summing up, this section has demonstrated that this researcher had a reasonable grasp, as Crotty (1998a) advises, of the approaches to GT before making the decision to adopt the Straussian approach to data analysis. The utility of a core category and its properties for the storyline, along with the notions of the gerund words, were helpful in generating theoretical propositions in the development of the model. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) methods of axial coding in identifying relationships through the coding paradigm and matrices techniques were an exceptional way to identify potential grounded theoretical relationships. Strauss's (1987; 1998) insistence on utilising literature sources to be informed about the phenomenon provided this researcher with a way forward with regard to utilising the literature review and comparing the empirical studies along the way, which determined the final theoretical underpinnings in the model.

### **3.7 Summarising the Chapter**

This chapter has explained and justified the way the methodology and methods adequately addressed the research concern. The research concern was an explanation for the principals' experiences of assessment-focused accountability. This qualitative study, with an interpretivist perspective, adopted a case study methodology and was informed by Strauss and Corbin's GT Framework. These selections in the research design enabled the generation of a GT model. The methods of data collection drawn from case study methodology enabled the case to be defined and the literature to be reviewed before beginning data collection, to generate pertinent research questions to guide the investigation. The methods of data analysis selected ensured that the procedures of analysis were systematic. At the same time, they acknowledged this researcher's own construction of meaning from the participants' perspectives, which favoured an interpretivist perspective. The theory of symbolic

interactionism recognised that the participants and the researcher were co-creating meaning with and through others.

Within this study's context, the case study methodology provided a way for the case to be defined and the boundaries to be set. The definition of assessment-focused accountability, formed specifically for this study, was informed by the literature review. This definition was important because it ensured that there was clarity about what was being researched for both participants and the researcher<sup>12</sup>.

The methodology of case study was employed for this research because it was predicted that the phenomena (principals' perspectives and their contexts, the schools and School systems) would be difficult to separate. The procedures from case study methodology for creating boundaries provided the rationale for selecting which principals would be part of the sample (Yin, 2009). The boundaries for participant selection were secondary principals in two Catholic School systems in the state of NSW. The reasons for this selection were the common levels of governance, common curricula and the same externally mandated assessments.

Leaders tend to react to policy mandates when they are first introduced (Shipps & White, 2009). At the beginning of this investigation, accountability for the results of external assessments was a new experience for primary school principals. As this study was concerned with principals' ways of interpreting mandates and the way these interpretations influenced their enactments, it was important to minimise the possible reactionary effects and focus on the interpretative impact on their actions. This researcher understood from previous experience that because of their years of experience with accountability for the results of

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<sup>12</sup> Assessment-focused learning in this study was defined as a relationship between principal and school system and included the elements of transparency, disclosure, explanation and justification and consequences (Bovens, 2007b; Kuchapski, 2001).

external assessments, secondary school principals would be less likely to show this reactionary effect; hence, they were selected for this study.

The literature sources that informed this study were an important factor in choosing the methodology for this research. Case study methodology, Straussian GT analysis and this researcher's beliefs about knowledge acquisition and generation informed this investigation. The researcher did not come to the research with an empty mind (B. Glaser & Strauss, 1967a); rather, she came with an open mind (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This researcher selected specific literature sources to establish the research questions and to compare and inform the emerging theoretical propositions. As such, this utility of literature sources reflected an interpretivist approach to the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The methods of data analysis drawn from GT principles enabled this researcher to be systematic with the emerging complex processes of the participants' experiences of accountability. As the analysis continued and through the ongoing comparison with the literature, it was apparent that the findings both challenged and extended the current insights about educational leaders' responses to external mandates. The resultant theoretical model (see Section 7) provided this researcher with some levels of certainty that the theoretical propositions could contribute to existing theories in educational leadership because it was grounded in data (see Section 6).

Certain applications from case study methodology were not adopted. While Crotty (1998b) suggested that we do not need to 'feel under any compulsion to wrap our research process in the mantle of an eminent scholar' (p. 216), he did warn that researchers need to have a comprehensive grasp of the methods from which they choose or ignore. This chapter has shown that adopting certain applications over others for this study brought a logical approach to data collection, particularly in defining the case and selecting participants, as well as a thorough approach to data analysis through the use of the systematic applications in Straussian GT.

The Findings chapters (see Chapters 4 and 5) demonstrate in concrete terms the usefulness of these methods, particularly the GT techniques adopted for the data analysis.

# Chapter 4: Findings I: Principals' Understandings of Assessment-focused Accountability

## 4.1 Introducing the Findings

Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings of this study. These findings were guided by the central research question *How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* The two RSQs, informed by the review of literature, have been employed to structure these chapters, with this chapter addressing RSQ1: *How do principals understand their expectations with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?* Chapter 5 addresses RSQ2: *How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of their assessment-focused accountability expectations?* The final section of Chapter 5 (5.4) presents the specific findings with regard to the 'affect' dimension in the central research question, that is, the effect of the principals' understandings on the ways they lead learning.

In this study, pseudonyms were adopted to differentiate between the participating principals, system advisors and the School systems. Identifying features of the school contexts and School systems have been masked for confidentiality. Therefore, although direct quotations from documentation cannot be used in this report, text data from the interviews are used throughout the chapter to authenticate the participating principals' experiences. Bold font is applied to emphasise the salient points made by participants. There is a consistent use of the memoing technique, as described in Sections 3.6.4, to draw out the emerging theoretical understandings.

The category that was derived from RSQ1: *How do principals understand their expectations with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?* was 'Principals' understandings of the assessment-focused accountability expectations'.

Principals' Understandings clustered under three themes (see Figure 4.1), which have been used as the sub-headings in this section:

- Contextualising the School Environment in Light of Assessment-focused Accountability (Section 4.2)
- Prioritising Assessment-focused Accountability—What, to Whom and How (Section 4.3)
- Conceptualising Assessment-focused Accountability (Section 4.4).

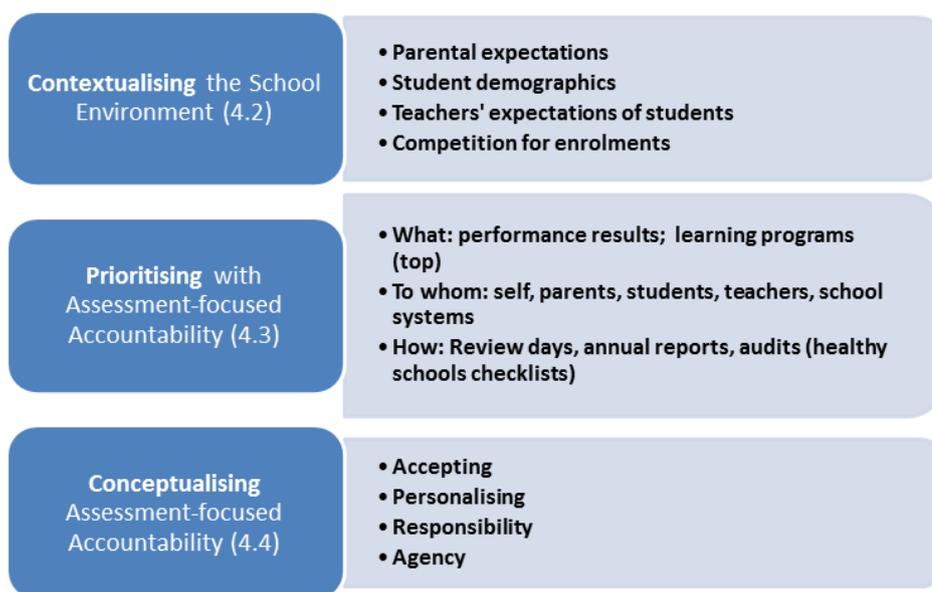


Figure 4.1 Principals' interpretations of assessment-focused accountability.

Principals reported that certain contextual factors from their school environments, such as the demographic characteristics of the students and parents, were important considerations in meeting the accountability expectations. These considerations, along with principals' beliefs about learning and their experiences of teaching, influenced *what* they perceived they should be held to account for, to *whom* they should be accountable and *how* they should be held to account for assessment outcomes. Philosophical viewpoints were like conceptualisations of accountability expectations. However, there were anomalies in each of the themes. These are presented at the end of each section.

## 4.2 Contextualising the School Environment in Light of Assessment-focused Accountability

Without any prompting, the participating principals consistently referred to their interpretations of school environment factors as being influential when asked about being held to account for performances on external assessment tests. Joseph advocated the importance of knowing his students and their families: ‘... big families, poor families, many migrant families, many first-generation migrant families ... **our cultural mix** in the school is pretty much the United Nations ...’. Joseph’s view of his school environment influenced the way he made sense of his accountability: ‘When it comes to assessment-focused accountability, my personal view of it is in this community it’s about **taking kids from a wide range of backgrounds and capabilities** [*cultural mix*], enrolling them, giving them the opportunity here and just **having them as part of the culture** [*success culture*] and systems and protecting the teaching time to ensure **that these kids get the opportunity to be successful** [*high achievement in learning*]. The school environment factors that participants reported as being important included *parental expectations, demographic characteristics of the students, teachers’ expectations of students* and *competition for enrolments*.

### 4.2.1 Contextualising Parental Expectations

While the participating principals’ comments about the parents’ expectations in their schools varied, they described them as being important when being held to account. Compare the views of Patricia and Charmaine regarding their parents’ expectations:

Patricia: Parents ask, ‘Tell me about what percentage of your kids go into universities’ ... accountabilities in the eyes of the parents are **very, very, tricky**. Very important.  
(Emphasis added)

Charmaine: So we have a very articulate, as you can imagine, parent group. Socio-economically, the school is **quite interesting** because almost everybody here is very wealthy. (Emphasis added)

Patricia contextualised her parents' expectations as wanting the option of a university education for their child. Thus, accountability for performance results was challenging ('tricky') for her and possibly needed a strategic approach in response to the parents' expectations. In contrast, Charmaine's explanation suggested a curiosity ('interesting') when parents articulated their expectations. Charmaine explained further that her challenge around the parents' expectations was not the performance results *per se* but in persuading parents about the merits of a new learning structure:

We **have a student structure** where our tutors may not teach the [students] in their tutor groups ... a couple of parents last year expressed a bit of frustration with it because they wanted to know how is [student] doing in maths and you're not her maths teacher, what can you tell me ... **the biggest difficulty with that is your parents.** (*Charmaine*)

The profile of the two schools mentioned in these examples, such as the gender of students, historical data of students' performance results and ICSEA, were not dissimilar. However, the differences between the two principals were in career stage and career pathway, as described in Memo: Patricia and Charmaine: Differences. Why?

As an ECP, Patricia had followed a 'pastoral pathway' (see Section 1.5.6) in her previous leadership positions, whereas Charmaine, a mid-career principal (MCP), had travelled a curriculum pathway in her positions leading to principalship.



**Memo: Patricia and Charmaine: Differences. Why?** I am puzzled about the reasons for these differences between Patricia and Charmaine, which clearly show differences in their emotions and thinking about their parents' expectations. At the outset, their differences could simply be their school contexts; however, there are too many similarities here. The second possibility could be their stage of career. This is a distinct possibility. Patricia shows some anxiety and sees the expectations as challenging, whereas Charmaine seems to be calm, with a sense of curiosity. The third possibility for their differences may be in their career formation. Patricia has been formed (my term) through a pastoral pathway and Charmaine through a curriculum pathway—could these pathways have an influence over how they see learning and ultimately, how they lead learning? I'll hold these ideas until I come to their leadership of learning descriptions—another possible access point for insight.

Parents' expectations were an essential factor in the ways that the participating principals contextualised their accounting for students' performance results.

#### 4.2.2 Contextualising the Demographic Characteristics of Students

Several principals revealed that the demographic characteristics of their students, such as their students' capacities to perform at particular levels, were important considerations when being held to account for their performances. George reasoned, '**... in terms of graduate outcomes, good, solid kids, but not necessarily academic ... all of the indicators say that we're below state average**' (*George*)

Randall and Adrian made compensatory remarks, indicating that their students, described as clientele, were performing as well as they could: 'When they [results] are made public, the various circumstances running in each of the schools is not made public, so sometimes you can't do as well as other schools but **given the clientele** that you've got, they've actually achieved marvellous results. (*Randall*)

Adopting the same term, 'clientele', Adrian evaluated the capacity of his clientele's performance results: 'Now how is it fair or just to make a judgement about the quality of a teacher's performance, or indeed a principal's performance against top 200 schools when you've got **a clientele that's below average?**' (*Adrian*)

Some principals' considerations of the students' demographics acted as reasons for students not performing as well as students from other schools.

#### **4.2.3 Contextualising Teachers' Expectations of Students**

The participating principals' perspectives about teachers' beliefs regarding their students' capacities to perform influenced the ways they viewed and enacted their responses to the accountability expectations. Charmaine, for example, described the teachers' behaviours as loving them but to the possible detriment of student progression:

Charmaine: I suppose what's dawned on me over the last six months or so, because when you come in new to a school you peel back layers of what you're seeing, is that although our [student gender] **do well in the HSC, they could probably be doing better** and that **we love them** all.

Researcher: *You love them?*

Charmaine: Yes, we love them, a bit too much.

While Charmaine noted that the teachers were being overly protective of the students, she believed that the performance results met the community's and the School system's expectations. Privately and professionally, however, she believed that the performance results could be better. Additionally, Charmaine reported that her teachers accepted her as being a leader of learning. She appeared to be humble, explaining that the previous principal had paved the way as a principal who focused on learning: 'Probably because I've come to **somewhere where the staff are more used to the principal being a leader of learning**, if you like to call it that'. These comments suggested that the teachers' acceptance of the principal as a leader of learning was required.

Vanessa also noted that teachers' expectations of students could be detrimental to student progression. In one particular KLA, these expectations were perceived by Vanessa as influencing the outcomes of students' performance results. Vanessa provided reasons for few of her students choosing to study mathematics or performed well in the subject: 'we don't have a lot of our [students] choosing maths. **We don't have a lot of teachers who feel confident** that our [students] can do maths. Our **maths teachers have said our kids can't do maths.**' (*1st interview*)

#### 4.2.4 Contextualising Competition for Enrolments

School enrolments were perceived by some participants as being tied to the public disclosure of results and the ranking of their schools. Patricia, principal of Palermo College, with high levels of competition for enrolments, exhibited a level of anxiety about how enrolments were dependent upon the students' performance results: '... but your **enrolments are very much determined by your results** ... there's that level of accountability in terms of your results ... big thing here is enrolments ... **you've got to keep your enrolments going**'.

Vanessa was also acutely aware, and with some frustration, that fighting for her market share of enrolments was dependent upon her results: 'They **look at the pinks and greens** [NAPLAN] and **then they make their choices**'. Vanessa's results were not viewed as favourable and in her mind, she had been employed to 'fix them'.

Competition for enrolments and its dependence on favourable performances were contextual factors that influenced the ways principals thought and felt about performances in external assessments being used for accountability purposes. Thoughts such as injustices and unfairness and feelings of frustration, anxiety and resignation were disclosed.

#### 4.2.5 Section Conclusion

In summing up, the participating principals reported that the school environment factors were important considerations when they were being held to account for performances in external assessments. Notably, these considerations influenced some of their thoughts and

feelings towards their accounting. However, while some school's environmental factors appeared to be quite similar, as in the case of Charmaine and Patricia, these principals' perceptions of the contexts were very different and they prioritised certain factors over others. The ways the principals viewed their school contexts pointed to the possibility of other influences, such as participants' stage of career and/or their previous leadership experiences. Those in their second principalship and with several years at the school, along with previous leadership positions in the learning and teaching domain, could have very different perceptions of their school environment than less experienced principals.

This theme is labelled *contextualising* and describes the influence of principals' interpretations of their school environments in light of their assessment-focused accountability. *Contextualising* was adopted as a sub-process in the theoretical model (see Section 7.3.2).

#### **4.3 Prioritising Assessment-focused Accountability—What, to Whom and How**

To address RSQ1, the participating principals were asked to describe *what* they accounted for,<sup>13</sup> *to whom* they accounted<sup>14</sup> and *how* they were held to account with regard to their assessment-focused accountability.<sup>15</sup> Twelve of the participating principals identified and prioritised their accountability objects, which did not include the performance results from external assessments. Moreover, these participants reported that while they were ultimately accountable to the School system authorities for performance results, they gave priority to the students, parents or themselves. In other words, the principals in this study

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<sup>13</sup> The object of their accounting, such as joy of learning, growth in performance results and diverse learning experiences.

<sup>14</sup> The subject or social referent of their accounting; that is, students, teachers and parents (TPB: Ajzen, 1990).

<sup>15</sup> As per the definition in the literature review (see Section 2.4.2).

prioritised regarding *what* and *to whom* they were accountable, which was not aligned<sup>16</sup> necessarily with School system expectations. The mechanisms that held the participating principals to account for performance were the School system review days and tools for secondary analysis, such as DeCourcy from the HSC results and SMART data from the NAPLAN results. The findings suggested that principals favoured certain methods of accounting more than other methods.

#### 4.3.1 Prioritising What is Accountable (Objects of Account)

Most of the participating principals reported that they were accountable for performance results from the external tests; however, the value that they gave to this was lower than other priorities. Table 4.1 provides examples of the range of these priorities, with Appendix 15 providing the full representation. Participating principals prioritised objects other than performance in external assessments. Charmaine explained, ‘I’m **more concerned that the [students] do as well as they can as individuals rather than** ... which probably puts me out of kilter a little bit with the system, the **push for [results]** ...’ In this excerpt, Charmaine identified the School system expectations, which had an emotional edge—a ‘push’ for favourable results. Charmaine revealed her priority as individual students doing their best. Describing students as individuals possibly emphasised the importance of the human component rather than a result score. In this example, Charmaine made it known (comfortably) that her priority was not the same as the School system’s priority (‘out of kilter’). Her experience was that her personal accountability expectations and those of the School system were misaligned.

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<sup>16</sup> That is, whether the interpretations and implementations of assessment-focused accountability were prioritised and enacted by the principals according to the expectations set by their school system advisors.

Table 4.1 *Representing the Objects of Accounting*

Object of accounting	Examples (emphasis added)
Performance results	‘So how many <b>Band 6s</b> ... We’ve got to give these kids the <b>best possible chance</b> ... . Every child achieves beyond their capacity.’ ( <i>Damien</i> )
Learning programs and initiatives	‘Your role as a leader of learning is to <b>seek improvement in authentic learning</b> ( <i>Vanessa</i> ); ‘They [KLA coordinators] <b>go to other schools who are doing well</b> in that area. ( <i>Rowland</i> )
Post-school options	‘... the number of students who are getting into <b>the courses post school and the pathways post school</b> that they want to go to.’ ( <i>Paul</i> )
Growth in performance results	‘... review of HSC data more so from a learning gain point of view, <b>a DeCourcy learning gain</b> far more.’ ( <i>Graham</i> )
Teacher professional learning and recruitment	‘... to <b>my teachers</b> to ensure that what I can do in my role maximises their learning environment, <b>maximises the opportunities for them</b> to engage kids.’ ( <i>Joseph</i> )
Working with data; responding to data	‘... how <b>we respond to that data</b> , what <b>implementation of programs</b> have been done. ( <i>Graham</i> ) ‘We had <b>accountabilities for the National Partnerships</b> program—not onerous.’ ( <i>Randall</i> )
Student and school well-being, faith, excluding assessment	‘Ultimately I am responsible ... for his [Bishop’s] <b>mandate</b> ’ ( <i>Alfred</i> ) ‘I’m more concerned that the [students] do as well as they can as individuals.’ ( <i>Charmaine</i> ) ‘ <b>Student happiness is pretty important</b> ; it’s not just about the marks.’ ( <i>Brianna</i> )
School organisation	‘... my <b>role maximises their learning environment</b> .’ ( <i>Joseph</i> )

Other participating principals also gave priority to objects other than students’ performance results. These priorities included considering students’ post-school options, a broad representation of learning experiences and growth in performances on assessments. Participating principals also noted that they accounted for their own practices through their analysis of data and resulting implementation plans and the ways the principals themselves lead learning.

#### 4.3.1.1 *Prioritising students’ post-school options*

When participating principals were asked what they were accountable for, at least four of the principals (32%) indicated that the options open to students after finishing school were part of their accountability. Paul, from Turin Catholic College, described what he held himself to account for: ‘The **numbers of students who are getting into the courses post school and the pathways post school** that they want ... **my primary responsibility** is to the kids, to

**provide them with the best opportunities'**. Graham also held himself accountable for preparing students so that their options were open: '... whether it **be straight into a trade**, whether it **be in a volunteer situation overseas ... having the skills** to be set up for success'. Damien said, 'We've **got to give these kids the best possible chance.**'

#### ***4.3.1.2 Prioritising a broad representation of student learning***

The ways the participating principals described their accountability for their students' learning experiences can be viewed from two perspectives. One perspective is the experiences that the student has while at school (the present state of learning) and the other is learning for a future state. Charmaine revealed the perspective of the present moment experience of learning when she reported that that she was accountable for 'all the other opportunities that they get to learn and **to grow and get experience in a variety of things**'. Brianna signalled several times throughout the interview that '... **student happiness** is pretty important; it's **not just about the marks**'. These two accountabilities revealed by Brianna and Charmaine, of joy and human growth, were situated in the present moment experience of learning as distinct from learning for a future moment. Their beliefs about learning also intersected with their beliefs about the purpose of schooling and in turn, influenced what they believed they should be accountable *for*. Brianna emphasised:

Whilst performance results are important, I think having **happy classrooms** with **happy kids** who want to come to school, who **want to engage with what learning they want** to engage in and be part of what **they want to be part of in the school community is just as important**. If you get that, as they get older, that relationship is so solid that a lot of kids do engage more, I think. That's when you get the performance.

Paul's view of his accountability was also the student's present moment experience; however, his account was couched in terms of success: '... **ensure that these kids get the opportunity to be successful**'.

Principals reminded themselves of their own resolve about what was important when holding themselves to account to ensure that they did not limit their focus to performance results. Graham said:

It's ... an expectation and a requirement of a principal to be accountable and take it on board. You do what you can with it, but **don't lose sight of the bigger picture**, which is **about learning** ... But there are a lot of unheralded heroes of past HSCs of students who never made it to auditoriums to receive prizes, who have achieved results that are extremely satisfying from our perspective and that's because we treated them with the same dignity and respect that the high fliers received and Catholic schools in particular do so well, where **we look out for those students who struggle the most**.



**Memo: Beliefs about Learning and Post School and Accountability.** It seems as if the principals' views of what they prioritise and what they account for is influenced by their views about learning. Charmaine, for example, explained in detail her whole-school wide-learning program, yet provided little explanation about performances in external assessments. She also expressed the belief that: '... if authentic learning was happening, results would take care of themselves.' Charmaine also emphasised that she was accountable for students having enjoyable learning experiences. 'Post-school options' for Charmaine was missing. Was this important? In contrast, Damien was clear about what learning was for—the performance results. He instead emphasised the importance of post-school options. These links are important to the central research questions with regard to the impact question of principals' views in the ways they lead learning. I need to map this (see Fig 4.2).

Graham provided reasons for not losing sight of the learning so that the students who did not gain high performance results were treated with the 'same dignity and respect'.

Graham reasoned that this was about the mission of taking care of students who may struggle:

I don't take much notice of the results ... It's not just about getting a great ATAR in Year 12, **it's about the skills that will sustain them to lead a happy and satisfying and joy-filled life**'.

#### *4.3.1.3 The Anomaly: Damien prioritised performance results*

Damien revealed quite different views about his accountability. His key priority was the performances in external assessments: '**... it's [performance is] their ticket to the future. They only have one chance ... call it my moral imperative.**'

Damien also reported that considerable time was spent in preparation for tests and examinations. This anomaly was important to this study because it pointed to the possibility that the ways the principals viewed the purpose of schooling also influenced their views about learning (See Memo 23/07/14: Beliefs, learning and accountability). These findings show a possible intersection between the principals' views about learning and how they prioritised what they believed they were accountable for. In turn, these views about learning influenced the principals' beliefs about the purpose of schooling, especially the way they reconstituted their expectations, making performance results a lower priority than other aspects of learning because performance results represented their views about learning inadequately (see Figure 4.2).

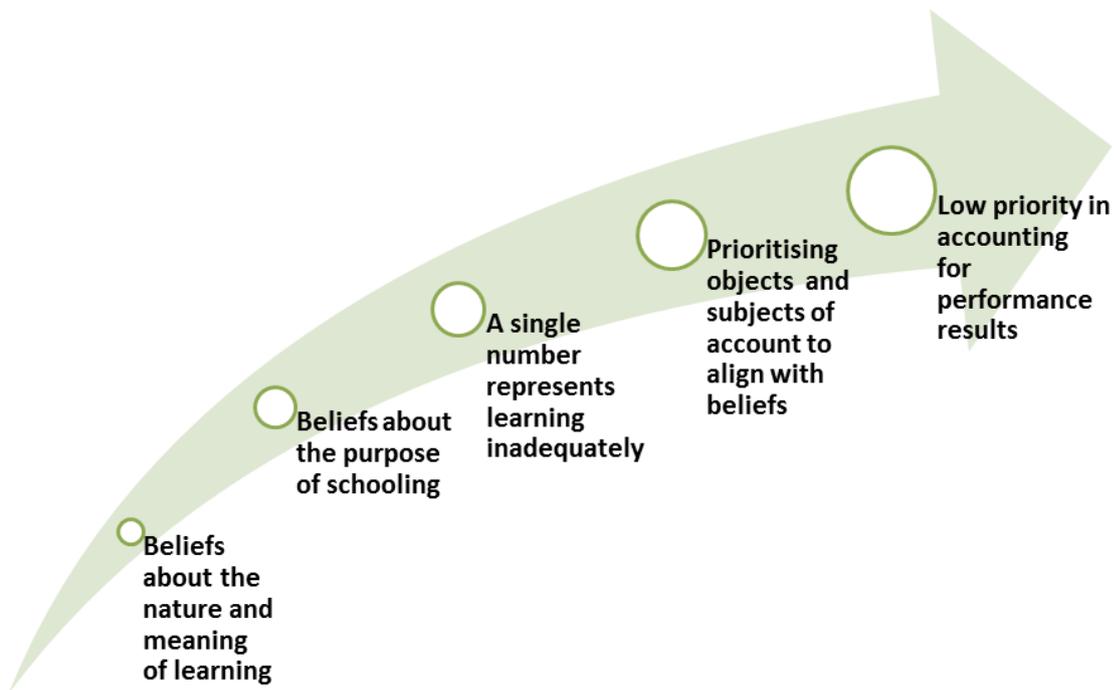


Figure 4.2 Linking views: beliefs about learning, purpose of schooling and objects of account.

#### 4.3.2 Prioritising to Whom (i.e., the Subject or Referents of the Accounting)

The participating principals discussed the idea of to whom they were accountable. While they were ultimately accountable to the directors of their School systems, they held a range of views regarding to whom they accounted, not always to their directors. The principals disclosed in a cursory manner that they were accountable to their School systems; however, they emphasised their priorities to other referents such as students, parents, teachers and themselves. Table 4.2 represents each referent and the frequency of occurrence, along with a display of text data as an example. A full representation is noted in Appendix 15.

Table 4.2

##### *Subjects of the Account: Frequency and Excerpts*

Referent of the accounting	Examples (emphasis added)
Self	‘Holding <b>myself accountable.</b> ’ (Graham) ‘[Accountability is] It’s <b>who you are</b> and who you really are, isn’t it?’ (Charmaine) ‘Key accountability <b>for me</b> is to lead that [Australian Curriculum] strategically.’ (Joseph)
School system	‘Accountable <b>to the School system.</b> ’ (Brianna) ‘I <b>answer to the system</b> far more than I do to government.’ (Graham)
Students	‘So in that sense ... talking now about accountabilities again ... the accountabilities of the

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	teachers are <b>to the students</b> ... it's <b>not to the [School system]</b> .' (Adrian)
	'I think we're accountable to the <b>students</b> .' (Charmaine)
	' <b>I'm accountable to those kids; to each of those students</b> .' (George)
Parents	'What sort of results are you going to get for my daughter?' (Patricia) 'Next accountability is to <b>the parent community</b> , working in partnership with them.' (Joseph)
Public	'... but your enrolments are very much determined by your results ... there's that level of <b>[public]</b> accountability in terms of your results.' (Patricia)
Government— National Partnerships	'We had <b>accountabilities for the National Partnerships program</b> .' (Randall)
Bishop	'Ultimately, I am responsible <b>to the bishop</b> for his mandate.' (Alfred)
Teachers	'Third <b>accountability would be to my teachers</b> , to ensure that what I can do in my role [for them].' (Joseph) 'You know I have a <b>responsibility to the teachers</b> ... to this community to ensure that we are being professional.' (Graham)
Priest	'... he [priest] will be looking, <b>he will ask me ... for HSC results</b> and he doesn't want to know about comparative data [for] the local parish.' (Adrian)

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The high number of participating principals who held themselves to account (i.e., self-accountability) was a point of interest in this investigation. This self-accountability was often interchanged with responsibility and indicated high respect for their relationships in their school communities. For example, Adrian explained his priorities regarding to whom he accounted: 'So ... talking now about accountabilities again ... the accountabilities of the teachers are **to the students** ... it's **not to the [School system]**.' Conversely, Graham explained accountability as '... a **responsibility to the teachers** ... to ensure that we are being professional'. The School system was a necessary 'body' to report to; however, the participating principals consistently noted that their accountability was to the people in their schools; the students, parents or teachers.

The subjects of accounting represented in Table 4.2 do not reveal the feelings of the participating principals. There was a sense of dogmatic resolve and commitment to ensuring that they themselves would keep their relationships—with students and at times, with parents—central to their accountability commitments. Charmaine did '**not care about the Sydney Morning Herald ranking**'; Graham '**quite frankly**' did **not take too 'much notice**

of the results’ and emphasised that he was **more accountable ‘to students in their learning’**.

#### **4.3.3 Prioritising the Methods of Assessment-focused Accountability (Mechanisms of the Accounting)**

To address RSQ1, the participating principals were asked about the mechanisms that were used to hold them to account. The principals’ views regarding the methods of assessment-focused accountability, with the exception of the DeCourcy analytical tool, were generally unfavourable, with the methods being interpreted in the context of the consequences of a particular mechanism.

The principals’ understandings about their preferences for particular methods for assessment-focused accountability clustered under the following sub-themes, which have been used as the sub-headings in this section: Prioritising the DeCourcy instrument of analysis (4.3.3.1); Assessing learning through inadequate measures (4.3.3.2); and Influences on principals’ priorities regarding the methods of assessment-focused accountability (4.3.3.3).

##### ***4.3.3.1 Prioritising the DeCourcy instrument of analysis***

Twelve of the participating principals used tools of analysis to respond to the data from their external assessments. These tools, such as DeCourcy and SMART data (see Section 1.5.4), were esteemed by the majority of the principals because performances could be analysed longitudinally over a two- to five-year period. The DeCourcy tool had an added facility for predicting what could be expected of students’ results, given the past results. Expectations of principals from School systems were to employ these tools to analyse the results of external testing and use this information to develop their implementation plans. Alfred explained the importance of using the data:

We’re **digging deep to ensure that our students at this school** in this context are working towards achieving their potential. It will **be reflected on the cross [the DeCourcy cross chart]** and we have shifted. **We understand where we were** and

where we're going to ... So on **that yardstick**, we're ... which is **what [School system] ask us to look at** ... we know we've shifted a lot, so at this school, we're always **quite high in learning gain between Year 10 and Year 12**. ... But now we're actually moving whole cohorts into far higher and greater levels.

The participating principals revealed that they employed these devices for their own accountability purposes more than for benchmarking bands of scores or to meet the School systems' expectations. Overall, these devices were judged as more favourable than being held to account for raw performance results, because growth was esteemed more than a single cohort of raw scores. Graham conveyed his esteem of the DeCourcy tool: 'We do **spend a lot of time**, we do **exhaustive review of HSC data**, more so from a **learning gain point of view**, a **DeCourcy learning gain far more.**' Moreover, prioritising accountability in growth performances was reported as being respectful of the learner. Graham explained further: 'It's about **treating everyone with respect, it's about learning gain, it really is and I love the DeCourcy data, I love it for that reason, you know.**'

The principals who used the DeCourcy tool also esteemed its value in improving performances: 'I would suggest **that our results over the last couple of years are actually results of efforts that started four and five years ago, where we were examining DeCourcy data.**' (*Brianna*) Brianna professed that '**DeCourcy actually gives us a better acknowledgment of that overall learning growth**'.

While tools such as DeCourcy and SMART helped principals, they also allowed them to meet School systems' expectations regarding accountability for performances. Brianna has been committed to the DeCourcy tool for her own accounting and for meeting the needs of system accountabilities: 'We've shared those results publicly [internal staff members] ... When can we get DeCourcy? ... **and keeps [the School system] off our backs.**'

From a long-term view of performance results gained over several years, devices such as the DeCourcy tool were useful for addressing possible teacher performance problems: 'I

don't need to say much; they [teachers] look at those results and draw their own conclusions.' (Graham)

Overall, the principals' reports suggested that they adopted practices that were beneficial to them, rather than bringing school system expectations into their own practices. Some principals reported a win-win for meeting their own internal school purposes and meeting the school system's expectations. Their purposes were linked with improving learning through the improvement of teacher practice and using data to inform practices. Principals also reported that they were accountable for their practice in the ways they analysed data and resulting plans for implementation.

#### ***4.3.3.2 Assessing learning through inadequate measures***

Participating principals disclosed a tension between their beliefs about learning and the measure that was used to account for students' performance results in external assessments. While there was agreement between the School systems and the participants as to how assessment was regulated, most participants reported disagreements and negative emotions about the measures.

##### ***4.3.3.2.1 Disagreeing with the accountability measures used***

The measure used to account for performance results, notably the NAPLAN instrument, was not viewed favourably by some principals when the instrument's performance results were elevated and its diagnostic dimensions were lowered. Adrian derided the NAPLAN test itself: 'We use **blunt instruments**'. Charmaine revealed a conflict between the test assessing a small part of learning and not the development of the whole person: 'There's **tension there and a conflict ...** you're saying the **development of the whole person and you're only testing this little bit**'.

At various times throughout the interviews, principals referenced the learning consequences of mandated national assessments with their global peers. Vanessa expressed her worry:

My worry is, yes, NAPLAN can diagnostically as a school provide us with information, but I ... I think **we've gone nuts** and we should be learning from what's happened in the UK and what's happened in the US **about an oversupply of ... an over-focus on a particular test.**

#### 4.3.3.2.2 Expressing negative emotions about accountability methods

School systems performed monitoring and auditing processes of students' performances in the external assessment programs. Performative processes occurred between personnel from school systems and the principals and their leadership teams. These processes involved the principals (or delegates for the audit process) spending one to two days per year preparing the documents.

These performative processes were reported to be gruelling and resulted in fear. Brianna, a late-career stage principal, described her emotions and thoughts during the review day: **'I was fearful – I felt grilled.'** Patricia, an ECP, emphasised the numbers of people who participated in the review day and implied challenge: **'You might have three or four people in that meeting, as well your leadership team, and they ask challenging questions.'**

The amount of work precipitated by the system accountability processes also gave rise to negative emotions. Patricia described how the 'system accountabilities are... and sometimes **they can be tedious**', adding working rather than value:

I don't have a problem with the system having an expectation, but sometimes I think the way the information is recorded **can actually add work** rather than value because in a sense, there are different ways that you can present data and sometimes I think the system requires of us an extra layer to what we were already currently doing in schools.

Vanessa was adjusting to the demands as an ECP and wanted to move on with learning. She said there seemed to be superfluous amounts of work in the system's performative processes:

... but then the system **may want a number of different areas of investigation**, which **may or may not be relevant** to us. It kind of fits in but then there's that sort of an **extra layer that may or may not suit us at a particular time**. You can spend a lot longer **making it look the way the system wants it**, versus it being a local plan that actually can be done so much faster, because it's in the language of the people that are using the plan.

While the principals expressed their emotions about the ways that that they were held to account by the school systems' performative processes, these were minimal challenges. There were other challenges reported to be stemming from the school systems' accountability processes.

#### ***4.3.3.3 Influences on principals' priorities regarding the methods of assessment-focused accountability***

##### **4.3.3.3.1 Being judged by a number**

The participating principals reported that students' performance results were used to make judgements regarding the quality of the school and the success of the principal and teachers. Principals in this study revealed feelings of frustration and anxiety when raw results were used to inform these judgements. Some participating principals reported a sense of injustice and pressure to perform because of them. Adrian became indignant when he experienced that the School system made judgements about the success of the school according to the performance results: 'The degree to which the number of **Band 6s drives the thinking about what success is is incredible ... irresistible for the advisors at the [System] to look at results and ... [make judgements about the principal and teachers].'**

The implications of being judged included masking the student story, forming a school image and judging the principal.

#### 4.3.3.3.2 Masking the student story

The public disclosure of performances from the external assessment tests were deemed by the participants as limiting. These performances alone did not tell the human story behind the results. While Patricia reported that the performances were about her leadership of the community, she revealed the limiting nature of public disclosures of results:

Whether you were above or below state average in the various components of NAPLAN ... **it doesn't actually tell the story of your community and the great things that you've done with that community.** Because I honestly believe that that **aspect of growth doesn't come through at all**, in that website [My School] ... People need to know something about your story as well and the sorts of kids that you're dealing with.

Adrian also reported that the judgement was unfair, as it did not take into account the students at each of the schools: 'Saying this school is underperforming now and its results are inferior to, say, [school] up the road is I think **radically unfair because it's not comparing apples with apples**'.

#### 4.3.3.3.3 Forming a school image

The participating principals experienced pressure when their performance results were judged by families making decisions about enrolment: 'I knew when I applied for this job that those two areas were going to be massive and **they were intertwined, essentially ... So the big thing here is enrolments.** You've got to keep your enrolments going. **But your enrolments are also determined very much by your results.**' (*Patricia*)

Interestingly, the pressure of favourable performance results being linked with enrolments was also the experience for principals in schools in which the enrolment patterns were favourable. Damien explained that this continued focus required effort: 'We are almost full capacity now. So that's been a big effort in trying to draw ... **increase the enrolments** ... Along with that, **then you have to maintain good academic results.**'

#### 4.3.3.3.4 Judging the principal

Participants revealed that there was a sense of unfairness when the performance results influenced the outcomes of principal or teacher appraisal processes. Patricia disclosed her anxiety when coming up against her appraisal processes for the first time: ‘We generally set goals as well, as part of that [results]. That’s also **linked into the [principal] appraisal processes.**’

Because he was going to be judged professionally, in a personal sense, Damien justified his reasons for targeting performance results: ‘I’m very acutely aware that **they’re the measures that we are going to be judged by and therefore we have to perform.**’ Adrian registered his sense of disgust in teachers or any principals being benchmarked against the publicly displayed 200 top schools: ‘Now **how is it fair or just to make a judgement about the quality of a teacher’s performance, or indeed a principal’s performance, against the top 200 schools when you’ve got a clientele that’s below average?**’

Being judged according to performance results was possibly the source of the greatest internal conflict by participants. The judgement did not tell a story that they esteemed—notably, students’ growth in other learning areas or teachers’ work with those students. There was also a sense that humans, including themselves, were being devalued to a number.

#### 4.3.3.3.5 Mismatch between principals’ and School systems’ priorities of assessment-focused accountability methods

The principals revealed that their School systems’ and the public’s priorities to esteem raw performance results from external assessment programs over other aspects of learning were at odds with their priorities. The principals instead prioritised quality, authentic or real learning and the broader student experience. They reported that learning was ‘more than results’ (*Brianna*). These misaligned priorities presented certain challenges for participants. Brianna described her thoughts about what was valued when she explained the system’s and the public community’s overemphasis on HSC performance results: ‘**What is counted is**

**what is valued**'. Paul from Turin expressed that 'the **ATAR is the Holy Grail**', yet at the same time was resigned to the inevitable measurement and accountability of performance results. He concluded that where the time was spent determined what was deemed as important:

From a results perspective and results-driven perspective, there is a degree of inevitability around external regimes like NAPLAN, like the Higher School Certificate. That is in no way to criticise those things and say they're not important. They are. My earlier reference to going to principals' meetings and having a focus around HSC analysis, Band 6 performance, ATAR ... My reflection on it though is more to say **the things that are seen to be important are the things that we report on and spend time on.**

The high value that was placed on the performance results created challenges for the principals and teachers when some students were only interested in the credential of the HSC, not their subject results. Brianna demonstrated her (and other teachers') frustration about this and lack of influence with students. This was especially frustrating when a cohort of students did not care about their performances, yet their performances were used as a means of holding herself and other teachers to account:

Kids with no commitment ... you just ... keep **bashing your head and bashing your head against the brick wall** and you try and lift them ... Then you get these ones that think, I've got an HSC, I don't care about my results.

Some principals believed that performance in external assessments did not capture what was important, explaining that learning and student well-being were linked. Brianna placed a higher value on happiness in the student experience than students' performance results and Rowland placed a higher value on maximising opportunities, intertwined with well-being, than students' performance results. Several other principals echoed this frustration regarding students' performance results being given a higher priority than other aspects of

learning. Brianna valued student happiness: ‘Student happiness is more important than any results...’. Rowland emphasised student well-being and learning in providing opportunities for students as holding a higher priority for him than just performance: ‘You **don’t separate learning and well-being** and ... there is **no measure of what we do for kids just to maximise their opportunity in life and that’s measured by more than just learning gain [growth in performance results—DeCourcy]**’.

#### 4.3.3.3.6 Playing tunes to different pipers

The layers and levels of accountability were reported to be overwhelming and confronting at times. Alfred, a MCP, experienced the challenge of the many different layers from the NSW Bishops’ mandates to the national VET accountabilities: ‘There are just so many different layers of accountability’. Adrian described the ‘layers and actors’ as ‘tunes and pipers’: ‘The reality that we live in day by day is that we’ve got huge external accountabilities to a whole lot of different pipers trying to play the tune and those from the [Local Office] to the [Central Office] and the state government almost seem to be a non-player’.

The sheer content, such as the size of what needed to be accounted for, was conveyed as being hard. Patricia revealed the challenges in the enormity of the School system’s expectations and its impact on her: ‘It’s **damn hard**. It’s **so big**. ... Everyone is watching to see whether you’ve got any credibility.’ She disclosed that the levels of accountability were confronting: ‘Coming in as a principal, the **level of accountability** was quite ... yeah, it sort of **hits you in the face a little bit**’. The content and the ‘pipers’ were a challenge for later-career principals (LCPs) as well. Charmaine, in her second principal’s appointment, explained how the expectations were still foreign to her: ‘I have been here [jurisdiction] for **four years now and I am still not used to it** [accountability]’.

Along with review days, school systems mandated learning programs to redress any shortfalls in students' performances in the external assessment programs. These findings are presented in the next section.



**Memo: Numbers on a Page: Faces on Results link with Faces on Data.** I wonder if educators switch off a light when the numbers 'on the page' (*Charmaine*) are associated with students' learning? In their minds, does the presence of numbers signal a depersonalising which causes a possible ethical dilemma when comparing students? I must look up the research about Faces on Data as to why this initiative was introduced. 'Numbers on a page' certainly is a flag for other possible research. I am also seeing links with the research on Maths anxiety—my colleagues conduct research in this space.

#### 4.3.3.3.7 The School system emphasises data from performance results

The participants explained that the personnel from the School system placed a greater emphasis on results than they did. Some participating principals experienced this mismatch of priorities as demanding, unfair and confusing, such as the accountability for Year 7 NAPLAN results. This was alongside the drive from the School system to use data. This was reported as another pressure.

Joseph, in his appraisal of the School system and their over-attention to results and data, revealed that when more attention was paid to school-wide learning, thus minimising the attention to results, was liberating for everyone: 'There's not the same amount of attention given to them [well-being programs and school-wide learning] ... and in reflecting with colleagues around some of the results from the conversations which can take place, it seems to me that if we take a broader perspective on what we think are the critical outcomes from our schools, ultimately that liberates everyone'. Interestingly, Joseph mentions his colleagues and the collegial thinking about results, as illustrated in Memo: Peer relationships.



**Memo: Peer Relationships.** I have noticed several times that principals refer to their peer principals with regard to what they think and their attitudes to performance results. None of the principals reported that they were out of step with their peers; however, some did report how some principals in their system network drive home the results, and practise and drill for tests.

The question of being accountable for NAPLAN results in Year 7 was perplexing for most participants, reporting that they were not responsible for these results. Graham signified that it was unreasonable to be held accountable because **‘we’ve only had those students for three or four months’**. Adrian held this view until the system advisors corrected him: ‘I thought we were not responsible for Year NAPLAN; the School system told me otherwise’. When the School system advisors mined the schools’ Year 7 NAPLAN data, one principal reflected their concern: ‘You get them [Year 7 students] and within two or three months, they’ve got to do their NAPLAN testing. **Then all of a sudden, you’re ... put under the spotlight** to say well you know, what have you done about those results?’

All of the participants specified the importance of NAPLAN as a tool for providing information for diagnostic purposes, yet dismissed its utility as a device for holding people to account: ‘... yes, NAPLAN can diagnostically [be used] as a tool, to **provide us with information, but I don’t think it should be used to hold** [us to account]. I think we’ve gone nuts ... I wish we would focus less on data and more on create.’ (*Vanessa*)

Joseph suggested that the School system advisors would serve schools better if they could **‘get away from a blaming and shaming perception’**. The changing nature of accountabilities set by system advisors was unsettling for principals. Randall noted: ‘... from time to time the ... **I’ll call it the measures ... have moved** ... the **accountabilities do tend to move**. They’re **not as clear-cut**. You can’t just look them up.’

The Year 7 NAPLAN results were not the only area of accountability that some participating principals thought lacked clarity; another area was the ways the principals used their data. Rowland wished that ‘there was less emphasis on data’, revealing: ‘... we are [even] **measured on the ways we use data**’. Rowland’s phrase for being held to account as ‘measured’ was interesting. Possibly, Rowland meant ‘being sized up’, illustrating that the principals were feeling as if they themselves were animated objects to be measured.

There were also contradicting narratives about performance results. The principals reported contradictory messages from senior School system leaders, with the public narrative by the senior system leaders contradicting the School system’s private narrative addressed to schools. The public narrative, found in brochures to parents and system websites, was used to market the HSC results to the broader community: ‘Look, when I meet with a consultant and when the **Director rings up and congratulates us ... it’s always about learning growth and they understand that narrative**. But when it comes to **what’s said publicly, it’s always about state averages and about number of Band 6s** (*Adrian*). This researcher noted in the School system’s newsletter there were four pages devoted to the results achieved in the HSC. Similarly, Randall’s report emphasised such contradictions: ‘**Rhetoric does not always match their [School system’s] actions with regard to what they are really interested in.**’ (*Randall*)

While Adrian revealed that the private narrative concentrated more on growth in performance results than on the raw results, Paul, from Turin College, disclosed that the concentration on one particular assessment tool, such as the HSC, diminished other areas of learning, such as vocational education:

Some of that conversation again was in relation to going along to **principals’ meetings and getting feedback around HSC feedback, HSC analysis, etc., etc. ... No reference ever being made to vocational education and training completions.** ... From my point of view, saying we understand that we don’t have those same sets

of expectations and accountabilities in relation to outcomes related to HSC [would be helpful and transparent].

Paul's experience of the senior leaders not examining the vocational education accountabilities could imply they had a narrow view of learning. Additionally, it could suggest the possible risks that school systems take by maintaining a concentrated focus on students' performances in external assessment tests, to the detriment of other important areas of learning and the work of the students and teachers. For example, Rowland argued that the concentrated focus by school systems and the public on raw performance results in the HSC diminished not only learning in particular areas but also the importance of teachers' and students' work together. Rowland further contextualised the way prioritising performance results diminished access to the curriculum and did not reflect a Catholic ethos of learning: 'It can be measured, but it's not advertised because it doesn't sound as exciting. But in terms of the Catholic **model of learning and teaching and increasing access to curriculum for all, some of the best work happens down with those kids**'.

In summary, the participating principals revealed their frustration and annoyance when performances from external assessment programs were used to account for student learning. The principals believed that this accounting under-represented student learning; the numbers did not represent the full student experience, diminished students' and teachers' hard work and, in setting targets in the form of performance results, led nowhere.

#### 4.3.3.4 *Prioritising: The School system expectations*

Given the variation in views about *for what* and *to whom* and *how* the principals' said they were held accountable, this researcher sought the views of the School system advisors, to provide insights about these variations. The School system advisor from the Penola School System reported: 'When it comes **down to it, performance results are the most important measure**'. Likewise, the advisor from the Mackillop School system revealed that students' performance results compared against state performances mattered more:

So I've **certainly been strong on HSC data is not the be-all and end-all, but it is a measure and it's a snapshot of the health of the school**, particularly in terms of **trends in relationship to state performance** and whether there's a learning gain [growth in performance results] happening at that school. If you're analysing HSC results and over time you can't [any improvement]... principals can't deny that that's a reflection of their leadership of learning in the school.

These Schools Systems' advisors were very explicit about their expectations of their principals.

Researcher: *Would principals be clear about these expectations?*

Penola advisor: Yes, I'm pretty sure they would.

The School system advisors were clear that these participating principals would know their expectations. This finding was surprising, given that the participating principals all held different views about their priorities regarding assessment-focused accountability. Their priorities were not aligned with the School system expectations. Schools Systems were not only the principals' key authority for monitoring and regulating accountability processes, they were also the principals' employing authority. Therefore, it was surprising that the principals in this study did not prioritise the School system expectations highly. This important finding is elaborated upon in the 'Discussion of findings'.

In light of the School systems' explicit expectations, this surprise regarding the principals' priorities in their responses to the accountability expectations provided support for naming this group of findings *prioritising*. The label *prioritising* evolved further to *constraining*, in light of Weick's Sensemaking Framework. This evolution is explained and justified in the theoretical model (see Section 7.3.2).

In conclusion, a key finding in the principals' preferences regarding the methods of assessment-focused accountability was that all of the principals rejected that a number was an adequate measure for assessing their students' learning. Mechanisms that produced only a score from external assessments were deemed to be in conflict between the principals' views of a learning target and what was measured and reported, such as a NAPLAN or a tertiary entrance score. However, there was less concern with the HSC instrument than the NAPLAN instrument, given the favourable capacity of the DeCourcy instrument.

The mechanisms for assessment-focused accountability used by the School systems were reported with negative feelings. These feelings were connected with the ways the School systems carried out their monitoring processes. This would be expected to a certain extent, because the School systems in this study regulated the mechanisms, most of which were regulating outputs.

The majority of principals reported that the leadership team review day, authorised and implemented by School system advisors, was the key mechanism for their assessment-focused accountability. On this day, all evidence through supporting documentation from both NAPLAN and HSC results was presented for system advisors to examine. Participants reported a heavy emphasis on performance results on this day, which was at odds with their views of a learning target.

#### **4.3.4 Section Conclusion**

The findings to this point have presented the principals' priorities of what to account for and to whom, and the accountability mechanisms. The principals in this study accepted

that they were accountable for their students' performance results in external assessments. However, most of the participants (88%) prioritised post-school pathways over performance results, as well as broader representations of learning than performance in external assessments, improvement in the results, teacher development, student well-being and faith. Only a minority (12%) prioritised the raw performance results.

The principals in this study accepted that they were accountable to their schools systems; however, they prioritised being accountable to themselves more often than to any other referent, followed by being accountable to students, parents and then teachers. The principals held common views about the mechanisms that were used to hold them to account. They reported unfavourable views of system review days and public disclosure of performance results and favourable views towards imposed tools such as DeCourcy, because of the usefulness of the data.

Table 4.3

*Summary of Principals' Accountability: To Whom, What and How*

<b>PRINCIPALS' ACCOUNTABILITY</b>		
<b>To whom</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>
Self	Student learning; joy in the school; performance results; growth in performance results; performance results measured against state averages; ways of working with data; comparing school's performance, using DeCourcy data, with other schools in the system	Utilising members of the leadership team to present documentation to School system
School system	Performance results; HSC results; numbers on a page; growth in performance results in NAPLAN and HSC; learning programs; school plans; School system priority areas; number of students in top bands in HSC	Meetings, review days with supporting documentation; i.e., school plans in response to results, appraisal processes with DeCourcy, SMART data tools
Students	Performance results—best chances; HSC results; post-school options; responding to data; authentic learning; responding to students' needs; learning; professional; recruiting the best staff; elements of school life that lead to more authentic learning; using results to find out what is wrong and then implementing solutions	Exit surveys; learning surveys
Parents	Performance results; HSC results; post-school options; responding to data; professional; elements of school life that lead to more authentic learning	Public ranking of top 200 schools; My School; parent meetings
Teachers	Protecting, honouring teaching time; professional reputation; staff learning; professional; responding to data to initiate for teamwork in the professional community	DeCourcy data
Government—National Partnerships	Specific learning outcomes from school goals	Written plans displaying outcomes
Bishop	Students' spiritual development	None identified
Public	Performance results; displaying performance results favourably; number of students in top bands in HSC	Enrolments; marketing materials; media; My School; ranking in top 200 schools
Priest	Performance results	Conversation with expectation of improvement

When taken together, the findings pointed to a central issue: when students' performances in external assessment programs were interpreted as the sole means of accountability, all of the principals in this study were uneasy, disagreed, objected or were affronted with such methods. These disagreements and objections were a result of the implication that the assessment of learning could be represented adequately by these numbers. The principals reported that learning that was measured in this way was narrow and the

measurement used was ‘blunt’ (Adrian). They disclosed feelings of discomfort, annoyance and frustration and reported their disregard of performance results being the only means of being held to account or being given status.

Principals who demonstrated commitment in their pursuit of knowledge and skill with regard to learning reported with less frequency and magnitude the potential challenges of the demands of the accountability expectations. Conversely, the principals who seemed to show indifference, through silence, about the function of leading learning often reported feelings of frustration and resignation (see Appendix 23: Intersections of Self-Efficacy Levels and Learning).

The students’ performances in the external assessment programs, especially those results reported to the public community that disclosed raw scores and not growth scores, were seen unfavourably. These scores masked the student human story and when judgements were made from this narrow platform, the principals said it diminished the significant work of students and teachers. The principals said they found Schools Systems’ senior leaders’ judgements about the principals and the schools’ images disappointing and inaccurate.

Participating principals in both cohorts were annoyed and frustrated with their extra workload and some reported feeling fearful regarding the annual justification of student’s performances in external assessment programs. They mentioned feeling bemusement and confusion with the systems’ contradicting public and private narratives about performances and the principals’ roles. One principal mentioned their objection to School system advisors making inappropriate judgements and diagnoses by using data in isolation. Principals, teachers and especially students being judged by School systems’ advisors and the public according to a performance result was considered an injustice, because it inadequately represented students’ and teachers’ work. Moreover, principals revealed that they felt judged professionally, fearing repercussions in their tenure with the School system, along with their

teachers' reputations. Concern for the school image and consequent enrolments from these public judgements was revealed.

This researcher expected that when principals had unfavourable student performance scores or declining enrolments and yet valued 'authentic' learning, setting performance targets may make them feel they had compromised their beliefs about learning. To the contrary, three principals who reported the school's history of scoring unfavourable results, with consequences of poor school image, declining enrolments and/or staff redeployment, were not tempted to drive for results. They emphasised the importance of evaluating their progress according to the learning journey and their leadership of this with the staff. While one ECP reported some minor anxiety, the others pursued their learning goals and revealed that 'the results would take care of themselves'. In contrast, the principals who reported negative feelings (of being unfairly judged and frustration in being unable to change public views) with greater magnitude and frequency than the others referred more often to improving their students' grades and bands. The principals who disclosed a relentless pursuit in their commitment to know and understand learning (notably Rowland, Graham and Charmaine) reported fewer concerns about being held to account for student performance results. Their need was deeply aligned, in a cognitive sense, with their self and the School systems' expectations of being a leader of learning.

#### **4.4 Conceptualising Assessment-focused Accountability**

The findings from the previous section showed that some participating principals were reflective and internalised their own understandings of assessment-focused accountability and accountability in general. One such indicator was the reference to self-accountability and responsibility. Joseph, for example, points to the self as being the key agent in making sense of accountability expectations. He revealed that his accountability was personal; he needed to understand himself and at the same time, expected others to have their own views about accountability: 'I think it's a **personal thing** how you see accountability. I really do...it's an

understanding of **Catholic education**...what **our purpose** is...I think if you have an understanding of what you're about yourself as a principal, and what's your agenda, then you can somehow **frame accountability** to make sense of it'. Part of Joseph's personalising was embedded in his shared purpose with Catholic education, with both his employing authority and his spiritual counsel. Joseph's use of the term 'frame accountability' portrayed a sense that they were co-constructing their cognitive images of accountability.

The major finding here is that the principals appeared to hold philosophical views about their accountability for students' performances in external assessments. This finding was a surprise to this researcher. Principals explained these views as if they were cognitive and affective phases in the process of coming to terms with what was required regarding accountability. These findings were grouped into four conceptualising sub-themes, which have been used for the sub-headings below: Accepting Accountability, Personalising Accountability, Responsibility and Agency.

#### **4.4.1 Accepting Accountability**

The sub-theme of 'accepting' was defined in the findings as the principal's level of ease in the ways they viewed accountability for students' performances, aligned with their thinking and acting. For example, the way that Graham positioned his accountability showed resolve and ease: '... if a principal can understand and accept and understand that ... accountability is something that I sense is a positive part of our landscape'. Graham advocated '**a place for accountability in the overall broader greater** objective of learning ... ignoring the political point scoring'. Patricia did not like the public ranking of schools but was resolved in the need to be held to account for results: '**Oh look, I think you need to be [accountable]**. I'm not necessarily into things like league tables or anything like that'. Patricia alluded to the point that being accountable for performances on external assessments was a necessary part of their role and the educational landscape. Graham also professed the necessity of accountability: 'I'm sounding like an advocate for accountability and I'm not—and **in one**

**sense it's necessary ...**'. Damien also accepted accountability as necessary: '... it's important and **it's necessary** and really there's nothing I can do about it. I have to do it'.

By accepting their accountability for students' performance results, most of the participating principals held qualifiers, such as the three principals mentioned above: 'Ignoring political point scoring'; 'I'm not necessarily into ... league tables'; and 'I'm sounding like an advocate for accountability and I'm not'. These qualifiers raised questions about the internal work that may have been required for these principals to accept what was being asked of them and to view these expectations positively.

#### **4.4.2 Personalising Accountability**

The participating principals were aware that their views about accountability were their own and that others would hold differing views. When Joseph explained that '**it's a personal thing how you see accountability**', he suggested that he knew of other principals' views about accountability. Joseph also noted, 'Look, I **know others teach to the test**'.

Alfred's idea of personalising was about owning the accountability: 'Yeah, it's **probably owning it in myself** and that sitting not as an uneasy tension'. Alfred's thinking about owning the accountability also conveyed a sense of needing to understand it as a cognitive process. The benefits of owning his accountability helped Alfred to ease his tensions about the expectations.

In contrast, Damien reported that his philosophical views of education did not align with being held to account by external testing. Damien explained:

**I have some philosophical positions on this.** Firstly, NAPLAN, School Certificate, HSC and any other measure you want—the RE test, whatever—I don't believe [it] measures [the] quality of a school. I think it's an indicator of what's happening, but not a measure of [learning]... because education is significantly more broad than a number on tests.

Personalising their accountability meant that the principals had taken the time to reflect on what accountability meant for them in an intrapersonal<sup>17</sup> sense. Their views also indicated that being held to account was not an action that was being ‘done to them’.

#### 4.4.3 Responsibility

Some participants described accountability as a responsibility and some of them distinguished between responsibilities and accountabilities. For example, Charmaine aligned her responsibility with people and aligned accountability with answering to her School system:

**I feel responsible for the [students]. The people I answer to in terms of accountability** are definitely your system leaders, your consultant, your directors, those people and, of course, to the parents ... You’re **responsible to do your best for them [students]** in all ways.

Adrian argued his case for accountability being a responsibility through empirical readings: ‘We’re not really interested in accountability. We’re **interested in responsibility**. It’s interesting Pasi Sahlberg talking about The Finnish Way, the book out now about his work there in Finland. He says in Finland, there’s **not even a word for accountability**’.

Charmaine also engaged reflective practices in resolving where accountability and responsibility fit together for her:

When they **[students] are doing well, I think that’s part of both accountability and responsibility**. because I think you should always want to sit back in a school like this and say, well, we've got 80—what did we get this year—83% of the courses above state average in the Higher School Certificate.

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<sup>5</sup>Intrapersonal knowledge can be described as a means of coming to know self and of coming to know the self as a leader (Dinham, Collarbone, Evans, & Mackay, 2013; Gardner, 2011) (see Section 6.3.2).

Charmaine seems almost to suggest that when numbers are being counted, such as the students' performance scores, she uses the term *accountable*. When she is speaking about students' broad learning experiences, she refers to the word *responsibility*.

Randall also differentiated between responsibility and accountability, understanding that accountability was about the results ('numbers') to the School system ('employer') and yet responsibility was to the parents ('every mum and dad out there'). Randall clarified:

In ... **a numbers system it [accountability] would be to my employer**, which is the [School system]. So I am very **responsible to the [supervisor in my School system]—that would be the person** that I would have to account to for learning. I would say [Name] is the one. It's their team—we would be accountable to the learning team at the [School system office] ... **I think I have a responsibility to every mum and dad** out there to try and get the best results for their kids. I suppose that's what I believe ... **That's more a philosophy ... I feel part responsible to try to get them, to get the best they can** ... Straight-out accountability—I think it's more to the [School system], but I see a **moral purpose** to the **families**. (*Randall*)

Randall's excerpt ended with an interesting twist, describing responsibility to the families as a moral purpose. Charmaine also introduced morality in her interview when she explained her responsibility:

... Suppose I would say morally, I feel **responsibility for the [students]** to ensure that we're doing the best that we can for the [students] ... make a difference out there in the world ... That we're talking about the whole person and so I would see that that's my **moral imperative** if you like. (*Charmaine*)

Both Charmaine and Randall made the distinction that accountability was to the number and responsibility was to the person.

The sub-themes of ‘Personalising accountability’ and ‘Accountability as a responsibility’ may explain the importance attributed to leaders placing ‘faces on data’ at the time of this investigation. ‘Memo: Faces on Data: Faces on Results’ elaborates on this point.



**Memo: Faces on Data: Faces on Results.** As I analysed Randall’s text data I reread some of my observations from the school visit after interview. Randall was so keen to show me his learning hub; a place where all leading ‘learning’ staff was located. Within the learning hub, a space was paved for other teachers to come and learn new skills and to tackle new areas of curriculum. However, the most important visual in the hub was a feature wall with the faces of students with data attached to their names. At the time of interviews, these ‘faces on the data’ were popular among the leaders of learning. Studies at the time demonstrated that teachers were more likely to use data for improvement if the data were personalised. However, my point here is not the data walls but the process of personalising the data—I wonder if Charmaine and Randall both differentiate between responsibility and accountability so that they make distinctions between one that is personal and the other that answers back to the School system (seen as an impersonal body and interested only in the number). I wonder how much the ‘Faces on Data’ practice has found its way into principals’ thinking about personalising the whole student body’s performance results—or for that matter, vice versa. Is this *personalising* a psycho-social process or a way to make sense of their accountabilities?

While the above findings suggested that participants constructed cognitive schemas of accountability as a responsibility, others constructed their accountability as a self-

responsibility. Vanessa argued that she would hold herself to account regardless of whether the system or society was holding her to account:

Irrespective of whether there was a system asking me to do that or not, irrespective of what society or what the system was asking of me; my accountability factor would be high enough anyway, to be asking those questions of myself anyway.

Paul also emphasised that ‘If leader requirements and learning accountabilities are not going well, it is my responsibility to take action’. Both Vanessa’s and Paul’s excerpts demonstrated that their constructing schemata could be described as a disciplined self-responsibility.

Conceptualising accountability as a responsibility was reported by more than half of the principals in the study. Some principals distinguished between the two terms and were clear in a cognitive sense of where responsibility was in relation to accountability: numbers equated with accountability and responsibility equated with broad learning experiences. Moreover, some principals held that accountability was self-responsibility—one that they would have expected of themselves, irrespective of system expectations. Principals’ views that accountability was linked with responsibility signals complex cognitive schemata on the part of principals, who were endeavouring to make accountability more palatable and at the same time making sense of their expectations.

#### 4.4.4 Agency

At times, the principals referred to accountability as a source of energy, a leverage for action and as Graham described, ‘**a positive part of the educational landscape**’. He also understood that others do not necessarily view accountability in such positive terms: ‘So certainly you know accountability can sometimes be interpreted as a dirty word, but **if it’s used for the purposes of responding to a learning need, it’s actually a very good thing to be**—I wouldn’t say subjected to, **but to be a part of**’. Graham’s views here suggested that accountability was a catalyst for action—‘responding to a learning need’. Graham also

clarified that he was not *subjected* to accountability but rather, was part of it. This correction of being an agent—that is, ‘part of’—could suggest the need for principals feeling the need to be in control of the effects of accountability.

Accountability was viewed by some principals as an obligation to act; that is, certain conditions necessitated action. For example, Paul resolved, ‘... I have accountabilities. I have compliance requirements, leader requirements and learning accountability there and if it’s not going well—yeah, **there’s accountability on me and I think, do something about it**’. Paul recognised that when certain elements such as learning were at stake, he was obliged to act. Vanessa described the twinning of accountability with action and consequences: ‘They [staff] know that **if there’s no accountability and they know if there’s no action, we could lose staff as a result of declining [enrolment] numbers.**’

#### **4.4.5 Section Conclusion**

These findings taken together indicated that principals had reflected previously on their expectations and particularly the whole notion of accountability. Most had worked to the point of acceptance and once achieved, had personalised it. Part of their acceptance was that assessment-focused accountability could work for them. The principals in this study were explicit in the ways they conceptualised their accountability as an enabling agency. They revealed that they used their perceived expectations as a positive force for purposes that were meaningful for them, such as a learning need. The specific imagery principals adopted possibly pointed to the importance of wanting to be in control of their expectations—‘to drive it’ (*Graham*), not be subject to it. The principals’ imagery made their views clear that being an agent in carrying out their expectations meant they were likely to make sense of accountability. In this way, the participating principals were constructing cognitive schemata that ensured that they enacted, rather than reacted to, the accountability expectations.



**Memo: Constructing Cognitive Schemata:** This is an interesting development in the interviews. Principals' constructions of personalising through to enabling agency indicate to me that these principals in the study possibly engaged in psychological processes in their interaction with the accountability expectations. Their interaction was not limited to psychological processes. Social processes also occurred where the participating principals were making sense of their account by comparing their experiences with their peer principals, where there was similar thinking because principals had worked together previously. To that end, the participating principals' interactions and constructions of accountability could be identified as a psycho-social process—a Glaser and Strauss term.

Their cognitive schemata demonstrated that they were reconfiguring their expectations of assessment-focused accountability, framing it in a way that was palatable and meaningful for them. Hence, the theme 'conceptualising' could also be described as principals framing their understandings of assessment-focused accountability (see Figure 4.3). This group of findings was named 'Framing' (see Sections 6.3.2 and 7.3.2 for further explanation and justification).



*Figure 4.3* Conceptualising assessment-focused accountability.

## **4.5 Chapter Summary: Findings I: Principals' Understandings of**

### **Assessment-focused Accountability**

This concludes the presentation of findings with regard to RSQ1: *How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?* The findings have presented the ways the participants contextualised, prioritised and framed their responses to the accountability expectations (see Figure 4.4).

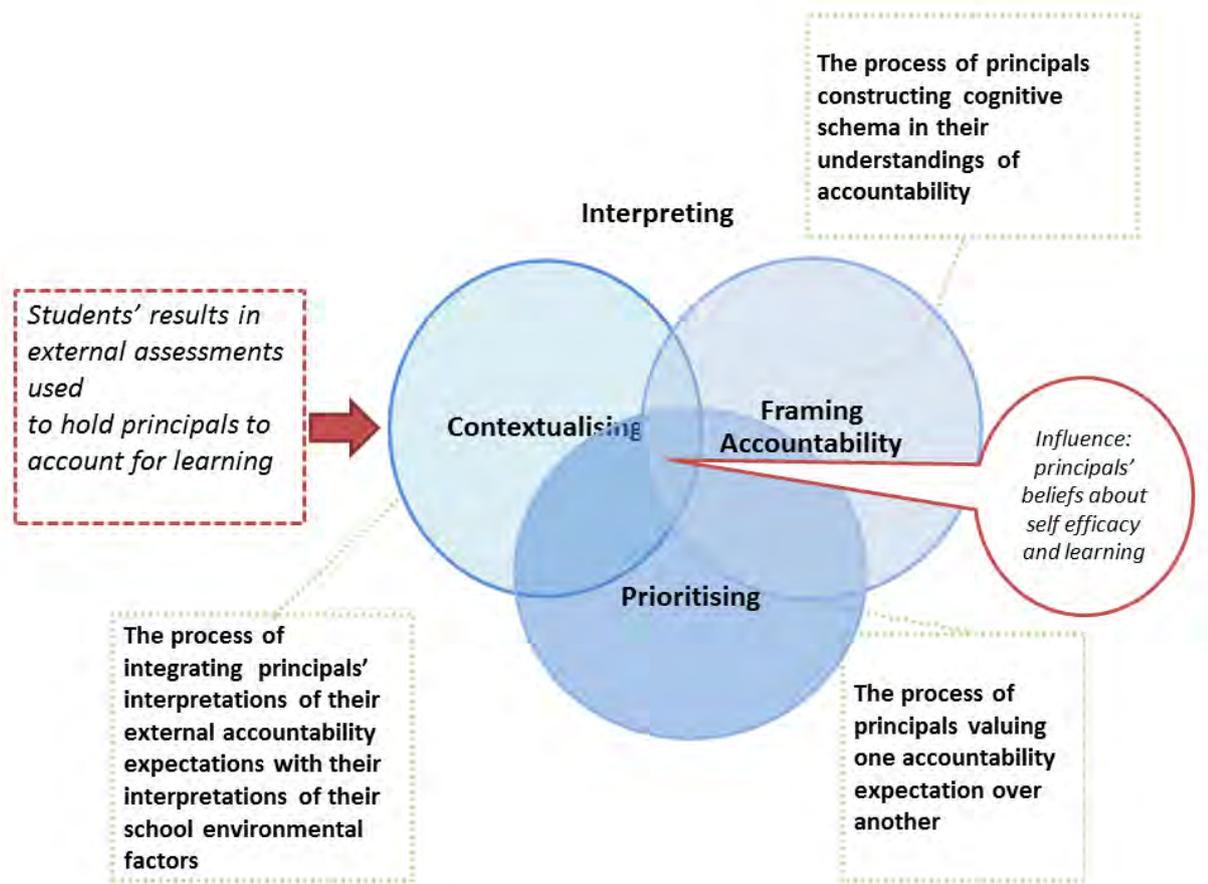


Figure 4.4 Principals' interpretations of the assessment-focused accountability expectations.

It is clear from these findings that the principals' comments about their priorities suggested that they were engaged in broader processes in their understandings of assessment-focused accountability. These understandings were influenced considerably by their own beliefs about learning. The principals' understandings of their expectations were more like acts of *interpreting* and were represented in the themes of *contextualising*, *prioritising* and *framing accountability*.

This study has represented participants' accountability priorities as a process of *prioritising*, defined as the way the principal attached value to one accountability expectation rather than another. The process of *prioritising* was influenced by the principals' perceptions of their school environment factors and their beliefs about learning. The principals' beliefs about learning appeared to influence their priorities more than their views about their school environment factors (see Memo: Patricia and Charmaine: Differences. Why?). Although the

School system was the employer and chief regulator, surprisingly, the principals in this study did not necessarily prioritise their expectations according to the School system expectations. Principals' interpretations of their school environment was represented in this study as a process of *contextualising*, defined as the way the principals created integrative meaning of their interpretations of the external accountability expectations with their interpretations of their school environment factors. The principals' rich philosophical notions about assessment-focused accountability suggested that they may have reflected on this topic over a sustained period. This group of findings was described as a process of *framing accountability*, defined as the way the principals constructed cognitive schema to make sense of assessment-focused accountability.

In response to RSQ1, which sought to investigate principals' understandings of their assessment-focused accountability, the findings suggested that participants in this study made decisions about what considerations they would attend to from their school environment, what to account for and to whom, their views of how they were held to account and how these attitudes contributed to their conceptualisations of accountability. As this was an interpretative process, these findings were grouped as *interpreting*. The themes evolved into the processes of *contextualising*, *prioritising* and *framing*. The participants' interpretations appeared to be influenced by their own beliefs about learning. Most participants revealed that they viewed learning in broad terms, including learning for the sake of the present moment and lifelong learning experiences. These views about learning were important because they were reflected in the decisions they made with regard to their accountability priorities. Notably, participants in this study rejected the view that learning could be adequately represented by a number. This view was central to this thesis and influenced principals' ways of leading, which are presented in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5: Findings II: Principals' Ways of Leading with Assessment-focused Accountability

This chapter presents the findings informed by RSQ2: *How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of their assessment-focused accountability?* Principals were asked how to describe how they best led learning, given assessment-focused accountability. The following three themes emerged and have been used as sub-headings below: Positioning Learning in the Centre (Section 5.1), Persuading Teachers (Section 5.2) and Building Cultures of Coherence (Section 5.3). The relationship between the principals' understandings and their ways of leading learning with assessment-focused accountability was central to this investigation. This 'influence relationship' is addressed specifically through four case examples<sup>18</sup> in Section 5.4 (see Figure 5.1).

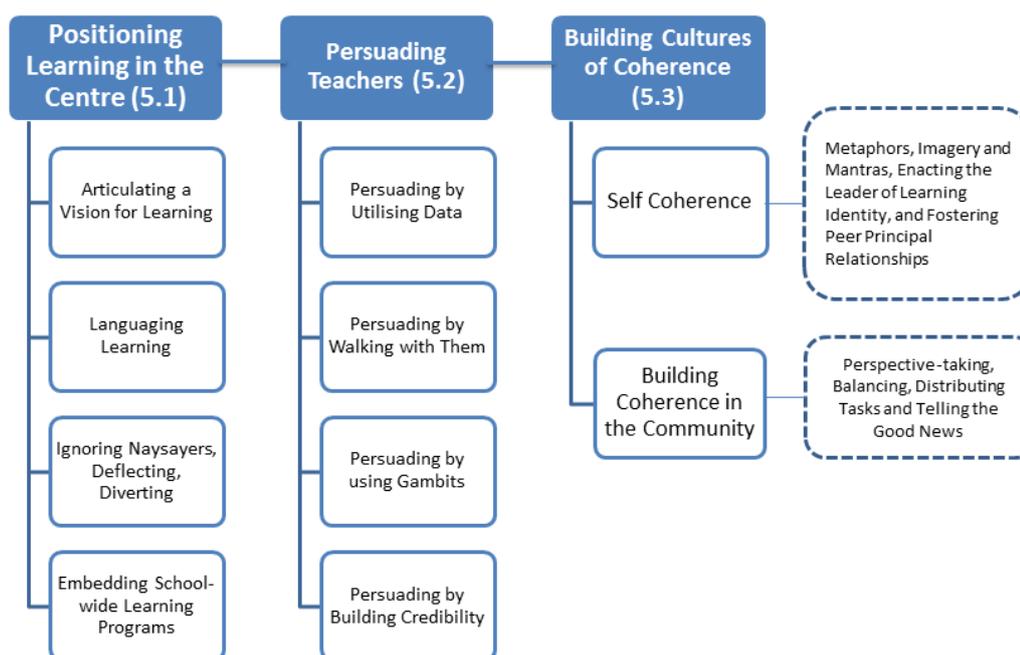


Figure 5.1 Principals' ways of leading with assessment-focused accountability.

<sup>18</sup> Case example in this chapter means to draw on the findings from the four participants and map the way their interpretations influenced their ways of leading learning.

## 5.1 Positioning Learning in the Centre

Participants' descriptions of *Positioning learning in the centre*, which have been used for the sub-headings below, were Articulating a Vision for Learning; Languaging Learning; Ignoring Naysayers, Deflecting and Diverting; and; Embedding School-wide Learning. The anomaly of Setting Performance Targets is presented as the final sub-heading.

### 5.1.1 Articulating a Vision for Learning

In their descriptions of leading learning, the principals reported not only the importance of holding a vision for learning but also articulating that vision. Charmaine explained the importance of having a vision for learning and sharing it:

... [need] **a vision for learning** ... [and] **sharing that** so we, having a school-wide

‘When you talk to parents, it’s about learning. That’s when I’m at my best when I just do that.’ *Rowland*

pedagogy, having a **school-wide vision for learning** and being able to say to parents and I suppose the community as a whole—this is the way

that we see learning here and what we consider to be important. (*Charmaine*)

Holding a vision enabled the principals to articulate to the community the elements of learning that they valued, rather than representing learning as a performance result.

Paul reflected, ‘When you’ve **got the ability to clearly articulate a vision for learning** ... **you articulate the vision for learning**’. Joseph was at his best in leading learning and emphasised the necessity of articulating the vision: ‘I’m at my best ... **when I’ve got the ability to clearly articulate a vision for learning**’. Alongside holding and articulating a vision, enacting the vision was reported as important.

Articulating what learning may *look like* was also important. Graham explained, ‘... sometimes that **learning varies** between the need for a teacher to be **instructional** and **very prescriptive** about what students need to know’.

Positioning learning in the forefront of the internal and external community's thinking was enacted by articulating, broadcasting and pushing mantras. These participating principals reported that while the performance result was an actor, its role was not centre stage.

### 5.1.2 Linguaging Learning

The principals said they were at their best in leading learning when most conversations centred on learning. This researcher named Rowland's persistent emphasis on learning conversations as the 'linguaging of learning'. Rowland explained his persistence as follows:

... the conversation is **always primed around learning**. That **quickly gets around**. When you talk to parents, it's about learning. That's when I'm at my best, when I **just do that**. You've **just got to find the time to make sure you're doing** it ... that's the first point you push—that in this school, **we want more of our conversations to be around learning**.

Rowland seemed to ooze a sense of confidence in carrying out his core work in leading learning (for examples of confidence, see Section 5.2.1). He viewed marketing results as immoral and paid little attention to the raw performance scores. Similarly, Brianna explained that she was at her best when she was having conversations about learning: '... and there is always a **segment in the staff meeting where you're having a conversation about learning**'.

Rowland emphasised that '... in every classroom we have got a **learning conversation**, not a managing conversation' along with Brianna's comment suggested that this linguaging could be a change agent for shaping the norms in the community and served the purpose of keeping learning in its full representation and as the reference point for teachers, students and parents.

### 5.1.3 Ignoring Naysayers, Deflecting and Diverting

Keeping learning as their referral point meant that some principals resolved to ignore teachers who may have attempted to derail the learning focus of the school:

**You waste no energy. I don't waste one jot of time worrying about naysayers. I just work with those people with the capability and the inclination to have a go. I just don't listen** to the others. You have to be **a little bit thick-skinned.** (Rowland)

Rowland's learning focus—and his languaging of learning—helped him ward off worrying feelings and resulted in him remaining steadfast and committed to the broader learning goals. An important point here is the way Rowland described how he needed a thick skin, possibly suggesting that the naysayers were confronting for him and he needed a shield to ward off their criticisms.

Keeping learning as a reference point also ensured that the tensions of being held to account were eased. On leaving the focus group, Alfred whispered: 'Just want to tell you ... **tensions of leadership are eased when there is an understanding of learning ... or clarity about learning**'. (Focus Group 2) Ignoring naysayers, deflecting and diverting were all management strategies that enabled the principals to hold learning as their reference point when being held to account.

#### **5.1.4 Embedding School-wide Learning Programs**

The majority of the principals enacted their leading in the context of their understanding of the accountability expectations as process inputs, rather than as performance outputs (see Section 2.3.4). This made sense because most of the participating principals adapted or ignored the School system and public expectations when being held to account for a result, such as NAPLAN or HSC results (performance outputs). One of the process inputs mentioned was embedded learning through the implementation of school-wide pedagogies. The principals reported a sense of accomplishment when these programs improved learning and teaching and not necessarily the subject content areas (see Section 1.5.5). They also believed that programs such as project-based learning promoted other areas of student learning that were not necessarily measurable. That said, the principals also emphasised that if the school-wide programs were authentic, performances on external programs would also be

favourable. A minority of principals described their ways of leading learning by implementing target setting of grades and percentages.

Charmaine revealed that she encouraged the continuation of project-based learning with several year groups:

So when I look at **project-based learning** ... [it] should be developing ... our girls' **thinking skills, ability to work cooperatively, collaboratively, to think globally**, to do all those sorts of things, then if they've learned that in [Years] 9 and 10, **they're already thinking critically ... if you're doing the right things, that should reflect in their results.**

Charmaine also revealed: 'One of the best things we've done, both in terms of our e-learning and our project-based learning, is to have **some sessions for the parents** ...' and emphasised that success in these programs should bring about the desired performance in external programs.

Rowland advocated picking a certain number of areas of learning that would have an effect on teaching practices and enact these:

... when I've walked into a new setting ... I would **pick the three most important** things that I **believe are central to the way we run** schools now and I **would just push them.** They are our **formative approach to assessment** and the **expert teacher rather than the experienced teacher** ... I would **encourage every team to have a project**, to have an **improvement project that's based on informed understanding of a particular need.**

Randall explained with pride that their school-wide learning scaffold was implemented to improve writing across all subject areas. At the same time, Randall proudly revealed the establishment of a staff learning hub in which teachers met, but not according to subject areas: '... curriculum led ... for the [subjects] and the [specialist leaders] **is all one.** So **they're not in separate spots.**' Randall's College participated in the National Partnerships

program yet downplayed how the students had met their targets. Rather, he emphasised the school-wide pedagogies being implemented and the sense of success their students experienced. He said, ‘... they’re **other aspects of learning that I think have been important without being measurable**’. Randall also showed this researcher the staff hub and there was a demonstrable hum in the space, along with a data wall that they explained proudly. In this way, Randall’s accountability enactments were expressed in term of inputs, not outputs in performances.

To challenge practices in particular KLAs, Vanessa revealed that she adopted a learning philosophy:

... we’re going to focus on Carol **Dweck’s work and mindset**, so we’re going to **interview Year 7s ... [and] get a sense of whether they have fixed or variable mindsets, fixed or growth mindsets** ... How resilient are our kids with their learning? How active or passive are they with their learning?

The majority of principals in this study reported that they were at their best when leading learning when they could represent learning in its most expansive form. That is, *enabling learning* that was beyond the specific subject area or the performance score on an assessment but rather, making learning happen, reflecting the humanity of the student. A minority of cases reported that setting targets was an essential part of their work when leading.

### **5.1.5 Adopting Mechanisms for Broad Student Learning**

When performances from external assessments were given priority by systems, the public community, parents or teachers, the priority created a challenge for some principals. Paul argued: ‘**Learning’s a lot bigger than the HSC and NAPLAN**—always will be, you know’. Charmaine raised the point about numbers not holding much meaning about learning: ‘There is always **that little tension there that you think learning should be about learning, not about the number on the page**’. The topic of seeing of numbers as a challenge

heightened this researcher's thinking about personalising data (see 5.3 Memo 27/04 Numbers on a Page).

Vanessa, a self-professed pedagogical leader, portrayed her account of students' performance results as a limiting experience:

So I think probably it [accounting for **students' performance results**] has **limited me in a sense** that I feel like I've **got to get this right first to tick a box** and then I can start to think a little bit more creatively about where learning might—you know, what it might look like for kids ... You know, I'd love to run a sustainability unit at the end of Year 10 for Year 10 and suspend the curriculum and have kids working on [individual projects]... **but I've got to get those results up.**

Some of the principals noted that focusing on performance results narrowed the learning experiences for students. Joseph explained:

The only contradiction there is **when accountability is weighted so heavily that you're unable then to engage with learning** on the broad spectrum of things; engagement of kids on pastoral issues, discipline issues are all opportunities for learning there. If you're so focused on the HSC results and NAPLAN, you're driven to see the learning as fairly narrow.

Measuring only performances from external tests could threaten building expansive curricula. Vanessa warned that other schools that placed a high importance on accountability could be narrowing the curriculum:

I really believe that we are losing a lot of valuable education because a number of schools know accountability's so important and it's focused on this **very narrow [part] of the school curriculum**, but **we'll make sure we get that right and a lot of the other stuff is going out the window.**

Alongside the School system mechanisms, some participating principals, such as Graham and Damien, revealed that they designed or built on existing mechanisms to develop

their own internal accountability systems. Building on DeCourcy data, Graham held professional conversations with teachers as a matter of course after results were released. Damien designed exit and learning surveys as a form of internal accountability. Foreshadowed here are the participants reported implications of what was accounted and notably, how the mechanisms were employed by their school systems and unintentionally, by the public community. These dimensions were noted in Table 4.3 (see Section 4.3).

### **5.1.6 The Anomaly: Setting Performance Results as Targets**

Even though the decision to set targets was against his beliefs about learning, Damien explained that if ‘we are **going to be judged, therefore we have to perform** ... [in the ways they are judged] ... We need **to set targets.**’

One notable difference in Damien’s view compared with the majority view was the way he explained his ways of leading learning; they were focused on programs leading to external results rather than on learning programs. This focus makes sense up to a point. Damien expressed feelings of resignation and thought that working to performance goals was his only alternative if the number from a performance result was used as a means to judge his competency as a principal and the teachers’ competency.

Likewise, Adam explained the implementation processes of his initiative in setting targets in the form of grades:

... we’ll have parents in and we’ll explain to them a process of **target setting** for their [students], which will take place on [date] where we bring them in and we’ll set a target for every student [Years] seven to 12 for every subject, as A to E **grades.**

These two findings taken together, illustrating Damien’s and Adrian’s pursuit of student performance results, are important. Insights into the reasons for them responding in this way is presented in Section 5.4 through the case example of Damien.

### **5.1.7 Section Conclusion: Positioning Learning in the Centre**

Taken together, these findings have suggested that most principals concentrated their efforts on regulating inputs for learning rather than regulating performance outputs. The majority of participating principals pursued their ways of leading to represent learning in its most expansive form. Their pursuit of expansive notions of learning was to ensure that performances from external assessments were not the only representation of learning. A minority of cases did not hold this view and emphasised target setting to improve results. In this sense, *enabling learning* represented principals enacting broad visions of learning by articulating vision, holding frequent learning conversations, implementing school-wide programs and integrating accountable learning practices.

The next section presents the findings that described the way the principals needed to persuade teachers as a way of leading, in light of their assessment-focused accountability.

## **5.2 Persuading Teachers**

Key to the participating principals' descriptions of being their best when leading in light of their assessment-focused accountability was influencing the actions of their teachers. This sub-theme, *Persuading teachers*, led to the sub-headings below: Persuading Through Utilising Data; Persuading by Walking with Them; Persuading Through Gambits; Persuading Through Building Credibility; Anomaly 1: Not Persuading Teachers but Selecting Students and Anomaly 2: Setting Targets for High Performance Results.

### **5.2.1 Persuading Through Utilising Data**

The participating principals reported that their School systems expected principals to use data from the HSC and NAPLAN results. In most cases, the principals considered that the data were helpful; however, they held a variety of views on the ways they used the data to inform leading learning: To guide decisions; Responding to a learning need; For leveraging; and Holding teachers to account.

### ***5.2.1.1 To guide decisions***

While a minority of cases mentioned that using data was at times onerous, most agreed that data helped *by informing practice to help with making decisions*. Brianna explains that she used data ‘to **make decisions**, it’s about **using data to inform**. You don’t use [your gut]—the gut’s gone out long ago. You go and **look for the data, look for the evidence** that says **either this is working or this isn’t working**’. (Brianna) Vanessa revealed that ‘it’s important that you **use data to guide your decisions**’. School systems no longer accepted that educational leaders could make decisions according to feelings (‘the gut’s gone out long ago’).

### ***5.2.1.2 Responding to a learning need***

Data were reported as helpful in making decisions about needs: ‘... **if it’s used for the purposes of responding to a learning need, it’s actually a very good thing to be**—I wouldn’t say subjected to, but to be a part of ... .’ (Graham) As noted earlier, Graham’s qualifier that he did not want to be ‘subjected to’ the data may have suggested a desire to have control of the data.

Others emphasised that the data pinpointed developmental areas for learning: ‘... with regards to NAPLAN, which then lead on to our HSC results, students were just basically running out of words in terms of writing in-depth responses. Instead of it being something we would focus on in, say, Year 11 and 12, **we thought no, we’ve got to pull this right back to Year seven**. (Brianna) Damien agreed that ‘[we] **use data to inform** educational practice’. Most principals were creative and innovative in integrating the School system expectations of using data to inform their practices such as meeting learning needs.

### ***5.2.1.3 For leveraging***

Some principals indicated that being judged through the disclosure of public results resulted in a decrease in enrolments and a fear of staff loss. However, some participants

disclosed that these public judgements about school image could be used as leverage for engaging teachers in change. One participant explained:

So I have been **fortunate on one level** to walk into a school where we've got declining **enrolments**. So my **staff members have a natural curiosity about how they can improve** what they're doing, because they understand things are slipping and their results are not great ... They **know that if there's no accountability and ... no action, we could lose staff as a result of declining numbers**.

#### *5.2.1.4 Holding teachers to account*

The strategy of holding onto the control of the data (as in Graham's case) was important for other principals as well. Some of them warned that the data should not be used to judge schools. Most reported that if the data were used as part of professional conversations, they could be useful: 'If **it's [data] used** and DeCourcy **uses this** and **I'm trying to use it all the time ... if data are used for conversation rather than judgement there will always be growth**'. (*Graham*)

The principals explained that they were expected to use data to inform teaching practices and were held to account for the ways they used that data. Some participating principals welcomed this expectation and adopted this as a management strategy, to meet the School system's and their own school goals. Graham explained: 'But I find that in **engaging in the accountability there is a lot of useful data and information and evidence that comes from that ...**'. (*Graham, Veneto College*) Charmaine described that the data were best used for analysing them and making improvements: '**That would be us at our best**. Whether that's engaged in **some things that we've done, looking at ... our data and saying these are our students, how do we improve this?**'

A minority of cases reported a strategy of adopting the DeCourcy tool to encourage teachers to self-evaluate from their own students' performances. Some participating principals appreciated the way the tool could help teachers to make their own decisions for their

teaching practices, rather than having them imposed by the principal. These decisions were primarily about whether they should continue to teach a senior class. Graham agreed that teachers should make their own judgements about their students' performances in external testing and choose their own consequences for themselves: 'But **in the end, the teachers bring themselves to their own judgements far quicker than what I can do and it's better that they do it than I do it**'. (*Graham*). Influencing teaching in this way suggested a performative conversation based on results, with the consequences in this case of teachers removing themselves from teaching senior classes, rather than a professional conversation to inform their educational practice and to improve. This response suggests that using performance results to hold teachers to account can hold consequences for development or punishment.

Together, these findings suggested that principals used data to influence teaching in several ways: to meet the School system expectations of using data; to use the leverage that data provided to inform educational practices, such as staffing of classes; and for persuasion through professional conversations to mobilise teachers' thinking and action about learning. In a minority of cases, data were used to hold teachers to account, with consequences for their professional pathways, such as being removed from teaching senior classes.

### 5.2.2 Persuading by Walking with Them

Several principals described the ways they went about the role of influencing teacher practices. Being close to teachers in their own learning was one way. Charmaine explained:

... Yes, it's about getting people on board. **Bringing them, walking slowly with them at times to get them to understand new things.** Helping them to understand, to learn about it and I suppose you try to give them the tools so that they can understand what you're trying to achieve and so that they can have the capacity to get on board with it and **feel that it's something that ..., I suppose, adds value to their own repertoire as a teacher.**

Interestingly, Charmaine's strategy suggested she understood Vygotsky's Zone of Proximity (the importance to the learner, in this case the teacher), thinking that they are in reach of being able to understand and carry out the practice.

### 5.2.3 Persuading Through Gambits

Throughout the interviews, the principals revealed the importance of being able to persuade teachers' thinking and actions. Their strategies varied. Brianna talked about 'going around', which was similar to a gambit to see if the idea was acceptable to her teachers:

I don't even know if it's a challenge and **sometimes I find you've got to go around people to come back and throw an idea around**. Have you thought about where you are at? What are you doing to get a bit of change? **Then the light comes on. It's not so hard. I can do that** and some people would say I don't challenge people. They say, **I don't tell people ... I don't go and say ... this isn't good enough**. That **doesn't honour the person**. It does not honour a human being in any way, shape or form; ... you've got to value the work that people are doing, no matter who they are.

This technique could be termed a 'form of circling', which Brianna believed was a better way to influence someone than by berating them.

The principals also used gambits as a means of 'testing the waters' to see if teachers would come around to their way of thinking (e.g., Rowland). The principals who emphasised the importance of knowledge about learning also demonstrated an efficacy in managing the challenges of accountability, particularly teacher resistance. This sense of confidence about learning appeared important in being able to persuade teachers' practices. Rowland's method was to keep his attention on his languaging of learning, which in turn gave him the confidence to convince others:

It's **simple but hard**. You **need to remember to do** it [all language is about learning]. When they know it's going to be all about learning, they relax but they also get excited ... **I've got the confidence. I have not got overconfidence**. Just that I have

**got the language to convince.** So that helps and [if] I've got enough understanding ... eventually they will come round—they do'.

A standout phrase from the text data for this researcher was one of Charmaine's comments: '**If rich, authentic learning is occurring, the results will follow**'. This phrase signalled confidence. Phrases by Graham, Charmaine, Rowland and Alfred all pointed to broad representations of learning. Some phrases included: 'Ultimately they [**results**] **look after themselves as the conditions for learning are in place at the school ... if you get the conditions right, the results will look after themselves**' (*Graham*); 'I suppose **deep down inside I believe if there's rich, authentic learning the results will follow** and I think as long as you're monitoring so that that's not a fairy land, ... it is actually happening' (*Charmaine*); '**It's a fair bet that if the results were in decline, then the conversation hasn't been about learning, or it hasn't been a productive one**' (*Rowland*); 'Getting to **understand how we teach, why we teach it, just understand learning is going to give us the results that they're [School system] saying you will get**' (*Alfred*).

Likewise, Damien showed confidence in being able to persuade teachers, albeit for different reasons. He built an internal story, with reasons as a strategy of pushing for performance results. He then wrapped these reasons around a moral imperative that he articulated to the staff. His gambit was:

'I am trying to get **my staff to understand the reasons why we need to do this.** We could do this because the [School system] says so or we could do it because we want to improve our enrolments. We could do it because we want to be seen as better than other schools or whatever ... But I don't think they are very good reasons. ... so **we have a duty for these kids** to ensure that that's what we are doing for them ... **I call it a moral imperative** ... I think that you stand to **gain a lot more long-term support** ... But **no-one is going to argue with you over a moral imperative** ... if we are coming from that.'

Damien's use of the word 'argue' could suggest some tension between himself and teachers in changing their thinking about teaching for performance results. This raises the question of the level of confidence that principals reported in their perceived power to influence teachers.

The level of confidence to persuade teachers was teased out further with Rowland:

Researcher: *So you have a reasonable level of confidence in your capacity to persuade teachers?*

Rowland: ...[Yes] **Only because ... I will do the work to find out what the experts are saying** and I will take the time to find a setting where it has worked. That whole notion of let's just sit around and plan something here based on looking at this site for the last 10 years—no.



**Memo: The Power of Influence for the Right Reasons.** Both Rowland, early career principal (ECP), and Damien, middle career principal (MCP), seemed determined to influence teachers' thinking. My gut says that Rowland would be more influential than Damien. I questioned my thinking around this because my judgement has the potential to influence my thinking about many other aspects of this thesis, namely that being centred in holistic learning rather than performance results is the 'better' way to handle the tensions/challenges of accountability. Damien holds a pragmatic view—'let's perform to what is measured', whereas Rowland holds a learning paradigmatic view—'keep the results out of the conversation'. I admit that I do lean towards Rowland's views, since beginning this study. This is my bias. Damien's moral imperative comes from a place that would be a minority view with teachers; that is, getting the best results for 'a ticket to the future'. Hence, little influence: great tiredness: 'I am not sure how long I can do this job ... you know you get tired' ... 'I don't bulldoze ... well I suppose I do sometimes'. Whereas Rowland, while an ECP with energy and vitality, reports a quiet sense of determination and confidence of success in influencing teacher thinking: '... but we will get there eventually'. In my mind, Rowland's learning paradigm would be more consistent with the majority of teacher thinking (than Damien's views) and hence, hold more influence, with less

In this case, Rowland revealed that his confidence was a result of what the experts say. Rowland defined the experts as academics and researchers.

While both of these participants displayed a sense of confidence in their approaches, their reasons were different. Rowland, an ECP, with a seemingly unproven record indicated high levels of confidence about his influence with teachers, whereas Damien used language of

needing to bulldoze, to sell his ideas. These examples evoke the power of influence as a determinant for principals in their ways of leading learning.

#### **5.2.4 Persuading by Building Credibility**

A common view held by principals new to their schools (not just ECPs) was their need to build credibility with their teachers, to be able to influence them. Building credibility meant building relationships first:

My science coordinator will say, ‘Sorry, I don’t think much of DeCourcy data; I don’t think that’s valid.’ ‘What do you think is valid then? We do have to measure growth and value add ... .’ I’ve had **to do a bit of relationship building in those things ...** before you do those things. But I think we’re **now ready to take on some of those**, to **sit down and look at the things that DeCourcy** talks about, asking the hard questions. (*Charmaine*)

As well as indicating that relationships need to be developed before conversations about utilising data can be had, Charmaine’s excerpt may also signal that holding conversations about the teachers’ performances based on students’ external test results may have been difficult for the participating principals.

#### **5.2.5 Anomalies 1 and 2**

##### ***5.2.5.1 Not persuading teachers but selecting students***

One principal reported that the reasons students from other schools achieved better results than their school was because of the type of student they attracted. The consequence of this principal’s belief was that the principal reduced the expectation that teachers would improve students’ learning. The principal explained:

When you **have got the numbers, you can then set a cut-off quota** and then you **cherry-pick the best students. That’s how schools improve** and every [Catholic] school that you could quote to me ... in **this district that has improved its results** in

recent years, has [done so] **because they have got better-quality cattle than this school and that's how they have improved, they cherry-pick.**

#### ***5.2.5.2 Target setting for high performance results in the HSC***

As an internal mechanism of accountability, some principals set targets in the form of students' performance results in HSC. The teachers at Randall's school were completing the end of their implementation phase of a target-setting program. Randall noted that once the targets had been met, that there was confusion in terms of where to head to next. His particular concern was situated in the hard work that teachers had undertaken to reach particular performance results:

So somewhere, if we've **gone along a grades journey** there has to be a sort of **upper limit** to that journey ... Yes. I want the learning growth, I want the improvement, but I've also got to accept **there's got to be some sort of plateau** ... I've got to come to terms with how do we celebrate that, because that's just as good.

In contrast was the frustration some principals felt when they themselves were focused on improving the raw performance results but the teachers and those in middle management positions were not. Damien felt frustrated when performance results were not improving and he had attempted to solve the problem: 'We've tried [for] two or three years now to address what I could see was a **problem and it's not improving**'.

Several points need to be made here to shed light on these consistent minority views. First, 'cherry-picking' students to improve results may have been possibly linked with this particular principal's levels of confidence in leading teaching: '... now **how to do it** [leading teaching] is **another matter**'. This principal consistently referred to the School system's expectations and public judgements about the students' performances, comparing these with other schools in the region. These references were reported with feelings of injustice. The principal perceived that other schools' results were more favourable because those schools could select their students. As a response, this principal's school had set up their own internal

target setting in the form of grades. This finding confirmed the findings presented in Section 4.3, with participating principals developing quite sophisticated (yet possibly unconscious) cognitive schemata to justify their actions or inactions in their responses to accounting for student performance results.

Second, this principals' level of confidence appeared to be high from the outcomes of the target grade-setting initiative: '**I challenge anybody to tell me that's not [expletive] brilliant**'. This principal's sense of confidence may have stemmed from their greater control over the process of target setting for results than from their confidence in influencing the teaching and learning processes. Target setting for grades was reported to occur through the pastoral groups and as such, these principals would be able to influence and carry out this initiative relatively easily, possibly with minor resistance from teachers.

The third point is situated in these principals' previous leadership experiences, which were predominantly pastoral, and as such, possibly more influential with pastoral/year advisors than with curriculum coordinators. It follows that implementing such an initiative at a practical level could occur more easily than interventions with teaching and learning programs. This case illustrates that initiatives possibly need to be within the principal's reach, both in practicalities and in skills.

### **5.2.6 Section Conclusion**

The participating principals reported that they were at their best leading learning when they could see indicators that they were influencing the teaching processes: 'Then the light comes on. It's not so hard. I can do that.' (*Charmaine*) Within the influencing process, the principals advocated the importance of working closely with teachers, bringing them along, circling and going around, using data for leverage and holding teachers to account, developmentally or punitively. In a minority of cases, they tried to influence teachers to strive for performance results. These cases were silent about influencing the teaching and learning process.

The findings in the theme *Persuading teachers* have shown that there were often two divergent views. The principals who emphasised the importance of confidence in *Persuading teachers* were the same principals who emphasised the importance of the nature and meaning of learning and being leaders of learning (majority view). One principal reported particularly high levels of confidence in being able to influence teacher thinking. This same principal ignored public judgements about the results of external testing and regarded marketing via performance results as ‘immoral’. Two principals (minority view) who were silent about teaching and learning revealed the strength of certain elements affecting their ideas about accountability: the effect of competition on enrolments and their comparison of their results by the public and system, with conclusions drawn about the school image and themselves as principals (see ‘Influences’ in Section 4.3.3).

Table 5.1

*Diverging Views: Persuading Teachers*

<b>Element: Persuading teachers</b>	<b>Elements of Influence</b>	<b>Ways of leading</b>	<b>Reported levels of confidence in ways of leading</b>	<b>Points of reference</b>	
<i>Participants</i>	<i>Majority view</i>	Getting teachers to focus on learning and working in teams	All foci and conversations on learning	High	Learning Leading learning through empirical research
	<i>Minority view</i>	Judgements made based on students’ results in external testing	Silent about positioning learning in the centre and influencing teachers	Low	Injustice of being judged via students’ performance results (see Section 4.4) Cherry-picking students (see Section 5.2.5)

### 5.3 Building Cultures of Coherence

The third theme that emerged from principals’ descriptions of leading learning in the context of their assessment-focused accountability was the importance of building coherence for themselves and with their communities. These findings were grouped into two sub-themes. One represented principals’ interpretations of themselves as accountable ‘Leaders of

learning’ (named in this section as a process of *Building self-coherence*) and the other was principals’ enacted sensemaking with their school communities (named in this section as a process of *Building coherence in community*). The process of *Building self-coherence* included Creating metaphors, imagery and mantras; Enacting the ‘leader of learning’ identity; and Fostering relationships with peers. The process of principals’ *Building coherence in community* included Perspective taking and balancing; Distributing the leadership tasks; Telling the good news; and the Anomaly: Building aspirational and performative cultures.

### **5.3.1 Building Self-coherence**

#### ***5.3.1.1 Creating metaphors, imagery and mantras***

In meeting the conflicting views between the principals’ ideas of a learning target and what was measured and reported, more than half of the principals described their ways of leading through metaphors, imagery and mantras. This researcher was interested and surprised when the principals in the first round of interviews spoke about themselves in particular ways to make sense of the conflict. For example, Adrian described himself as a ‘human shield’ to guard and protect the teachers from the School system expectations. This researcher pursued this line of inquiry with the following question: *What kind of metaphor or image describes how you manage being the leader of learning and being accountable for performance results?* Table 5.2 summarises the types of metaphors and images that the principals in this study reported that they adopted to manage the dual expectations.

Aligning principals’ metaphors with their other data provided several insights. For instance, the teachers in Joseph’s school were inclined to be over-focused on the number of high performance bands<sup>19</sup> they would attain in the HSC. Joseph created images of

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<sup>19</sup> A student’s HSC mark for each course will fall within one of six performance bands, with the highest achievement Band 6 (90–100 marks) and the minimum standard expected 50 marks. Each performance band is aligned to what a student at that level of performance typically knows, understands and can do (NSW Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards, 2016b).

sensemaking several times during the interview. Joseph explained that he needed to help teachers see that using results for improving for the next year was good enough and that the results needed to be made sense of, rather than be used as target setting.

Table 5.2

*Metaphors, Imagery and Mantras of Leading Learning with Assessment-focused*

*Accountability*

Metaphor	Imagery	Text example
Perspective taker	Building balance	'Facilitator of perspective taking'; 'I don't think our balance is too bad here'; 'Need to build it'; 'I think I'm comfortable that we've got the balance right'
Filter	Sifting what comes into the school	'I see the role of principal as a filter ... what is a priority and what isn't a priority ... . The filter part is about basically saying yes and no to certain things'
Buffer, human shield	Protecting teachers	'I suppose I do see it as ... a buffering system'; 'I am the human shield between the [School system and the teachers]—the buffer'; 'He said, my job is to be the human shield, which protects the teachers from the excesses of [the accountability regime]'
Coach	Preparing for a race	'... teaching to the test. If that's your measure, you are not going to fire a 100-metre sprinter at the Olympics doing 800-metre training. They'd be doing 100-metre sprints'
Protector	Honouring	'So it's about saying no to a lot of that to protect what's going on here'
Cheerleader	Part of the team, on a journey	'So I know at times you feel like you're the cheerleader'; 'I like to work with them when they have professional opportunities'; 'Bringing them, walking slowly with them'
Juggler		'... a juggler ...'; '... So here you are one minute—and my day will be one minute ... I will go from you to a meeting with a parent who has booted his daughter out of home and wants me to boot her out of school at the same time'
Bulldozer	School is the vehicle, need to drive	'I never bulldoze. Or maybe I do sometimes'; 'Just need to drive for the results'
Sensemaker	Building on	'... we will improve [results] for the next year and build on that ...'; '... there is a need to make sense of it [performance results]...'
Salesperson	School offers a future	'It's like the old story where the encyclopaedia salesman used to knock on the door and say to mum, do you want to give your son and your daughter the best chance possible in life?'
Lantern	Torch—Lady of the Light	'I am the [lady of the light], whatever, the torch or the little flame or whatever'; 'Need to hold the lantern up ...'

Charmaine, for example, worked with her teachers closely in their professional learning, with no indications of monitoring or accountability. She championed their successes and 'walked with them', slowly when needed—her metaphor was cheerleader. Damien, who used performance results as targets, described his behaviours as bulldozing at times because

he experienced resistance by some leaders in middle management positions to using data to inform practices. These metaphors, while showing diversity in the participants' leadership styles, also suggested some of their motivations when dealing with the dual expectations.

The principals also developed mantras to align their internal voices with their public voices. Graham, by integrating instructional leadership for results and students being responsible citizens, explained his mantra: 'We are **pushing the mantra here**'. Damien revealed the importance of a mantra for his role: 'So I think when you sort of articulate those things really clearly ... **learning as a mantra** all the way along and you've just got to chip, chip your way'.

#### ***5.3.1.2 Enacting the 'leader of learning' identity***

Deflecting other distractions to ensure that the core purpose of their leadership (leading learning and teaching) was enacted was reported as an effective management strategy. Joseph, in his comparison with other principals, explained that he needed to keep focused and to focus on others in improving learning: 'Your role as a leader of learning is to seek improvement in learning. ... so I see my role is to seek improvement in authentic learning'. Rowland revealed that he compared himself with his peers and the importance of leading the community around learning and teaching:

Those **principals who have to micromanage every element** of their complex organisation can't possibly do their key job, which is to **lead the community around learning and teaching. You can't be at your best if you're being drawn into these** [other] areas ... so you know you should be spending time on this ... but at times you know you have to spend time on this if you can let it go a little bit in the future.

While Joseph and Rowland both stressed the importance of their focus on the leadership of learning, they also revealed how they were constructing their identities—in comparison with others.

A common view among the participating principals was to remain steadfast in pursuing their visions for learning. As such, principals in this study reported that they themselves were best placed to make decisions about learning, not the School system. In response to school expectations for achieving favourable student performance results, Charmaine reasoned that learning was her moral imperative, not numbers on a page.

The **responsibility to be a leader of learning is I think within your school community** ... to the students. The **accountabilities are** certainly there with this **system**. [But] I suppose I would say **morally I feel responsibility for the** [students] **to ensure that we're doing the best that we can for** [them]. ... I mean, **we've got our vision and we're sending them out to be who we say they're going to be** and to make a difference out there in the world. Then **that's not achieved just by excellent numbers on the page**. ... we're talking about the whole person and so I would see that that's my moral imperative, if you like.

Vanessa noted that her role was to be centred on learning, irrespective of what the School system expected: 'I love pedagogy and **I consider myself a leader of learning** ... So **irrespective of whether there was a system asking me to do that or not** ... my accountability factor would be high enough anyway'. These findings, taken together, suggested that school systems' expectation of principals carrying out the 'leader of learning' function was reasonably well aligned with the majority of the principals' thinking about this function. This is an important finding because the alignment was evident in the ways most principals could recall how they were enacting this function in their ways of leading. Some of these enactments were evident in their metaphors, such as the lantern, the cheerleader and perspective taker.

### ***5.3.1.3 Fostering relationships with peers***

The participating principals were exploring their position as leaders within their understandings regarding the accountability expectations, in and through their collegial

relationships with other peer principals. Comparing and reconstructing their identity helped them to manage the challenges associated with a range of impacts.

Fostering and maintaining peer relationships with other principals in the School system were reported by some principals to lead to like-minded thinking. Rowland explained the processes of arriving to common understandings in his system:

... **Working with** [a principal in the region] and then myself and [another principal in the region] **you find an ally**, or **similar-thinking person** who probably blocks you from looking to see [another viewpoint] ... **next is the team** [secondary principals' regional team] **that work together**, share data. If that happens, I imagine that **those views of principals in this little team would become more similar**.

Four of the participants had worked together as assistant principal and principal, in each of the cohorts. They all held similar views about the position of student performance results in their representation of learning. One principal was acutely aware of their 'like-minded' views.

Principals also had similar professional learning experiences; for example, three principals in one cohort travelled internationally to visit other School systems. Interestingly, these experiences did not lead to common thinking; rather, the visits enabled disclosure in which they could compare their thoughts and practices with each other honestly. In doing this, they came to conclusions and commitments about their own decisions about leading learning within their accountability environment.

These findings suggested that principals compared their own views with others and in this way were co-constructing and settling their beliefs about assessment-focused accountability, either through agreement or disagreement.

### **5.3.2 Building Coherence in the Community**

Principals noted that it was important when accountability demands were high to build coherence with the school community members.

### 5.3.2.1 *Perspective taking and balancing*

Some participating principals indicated that they positioned themselves deliberately as being responsible for providing leadership in making sense of the accountability expectations. Joseph explained that he wanted the teachers to focus on improvement and in this way, they needed to make sense of the expectations, rather than focus on the measure: ‘My **language is deliberate about how can we improve it, not how can we get them above a state average** ... I’m not putting the pressure on that we want that, **that is a measure there** ... Mine is about improvement ... **improve for the next year and build that** ... there is a need to **make sense of it.**’ (*Joseph*) Another participant described their position of keeping the expectations in the right perspective: ‘... Yeah, so you’re trying in some ways to inspire them to want to continue the authentic learning and you want them to see the relevance to some extent of the testing that’s happening that’s external but to keep it in the **right perspective** ... . To **not give in to just ... teach to the test in NAPLAN.**’ Randall proudly acknowledged his school’s practices as making sense and keeping results in a balanced perspective: ‘Here there are really good processes and systems and a culture that **makes sense of it**—keeps it on the agenda but **keeps it in perspective**’.

### 5.3.2.2 *Distributing the leadership tasks*

A minority of principals explained that they restructured their leadership teams to ensure that all aspects of learning and teaching, including data, were kept in focus: ‘I’ve got **people in charge of those different pockets**, but they are **now the data team.**’ (*Vanessa*)

Randall held a sense of self-efficacy when describing his best at leading learning, which was located in new staff restructuring:

I try and make sure **I’ve got a very good team of people around me.** The example would be the [position description]. We have a staff development day this week—**they will lead** that conversation. I will be part of it because I will probably introduce it, I may even conclude it ... . The term people probably use would be a distributive

leadership. I think they **see me as being in charge of the learning**, but my role in that is to make sure that we've got the **right people doing the right jobs**.

Randall's ideas about his leadership being distributed were important insofar as he also saw that there were 'others who can do the learning better than me ... I leave that to them'. As the School systems' expectations of being a leader of learning increased, so did principals' need to review their identity and work out ways to meet these expectations—staff restructuring and team building were part of their strategies. The point here is that most principals weighed up or evaluated how well they thought they could be a leader of learning. For example, if they thought that the tasks involved were beyond their reach (in this case, Randall thought so) then they recruited others for the role.

### ***5.3.2.3 Telling the good news***

The 'good news' was framed by one principal as public story telling. Adrian described it elaborately when he communicated to the community the students' performance results in favourable terms:

So in **the public story telling** that we have to share from this place, it's got to **be telling that story about hospitable, welcoming** ... I can point to that in the data, in our great NAPLAN learning growth in School Certificate before it was abolished. In the Higher School Certificate we have got the fastest growing number of subjects above state average ... This is about **finding the statistics that tell that story which is real, ... it's not dishonest**. It's not in any way dishonest but it's what [previous mentor principal] taught me. You have **got to find the good news story** and having established that, here is high-quality education, but it's open to your [child] even though your [child] is not an absolute brain box. **Then tell the story, here's how we do it.**

Similarly, Alfred positioned Basilicata's results favourably. Even though he prioritised student happiness and holistic learning over performance results, when Alfred was being

compared, he ensured that their results were given an equal and esteemed voice to the public: ‘Publicly ... well, **the local paper gets in quick and so we make sure that we push our results in the best light** we can and **the results for the last few years have shown continual improvement**’.

Patricia reported her story telling when she promoted the growth in performance results and held a special awards ceremony to acknowledge the students who had achieved growth in NAPLAN results: ‘... **the growth** was something that we saw as **a cause for celebration**’.

Some principals were more measured and warned that the public story telling needed data that were not based on folklore: ‘So that’s been a big effort in trying to ... increase the enrolments. Along with that, then you have to **maintain good academic results**. But **you’ve got to tell the good story**. You **can’t just build enrolments on folklore**. You’ve **got to have some data back it up**’.

Randall proudly described how they could now hold their heads high on the public stage:

The biggest growth probably in most recent years is that we can go to other schools and our **kids are now no longer frightened**, probably the wrong word ... when we went to [private independent single-gender school] **our kids’ heads would go down** and think, ‘we are **not worthy** to be in their sort of space ...’. [Yet now] ‘...we went to the [NSW] Award the other day. We had a very good young fellow at the Award. **Our reader had practised** here at school **over and over**. He **practised at home**. So when he got to the [place of the Award], **well, he read really well** ... . Once upon a time, you’d go, oh well, [you would not expect of a XXXX] kid, [so] we wouldn’t go onto the big stage. Now **we’re never left behind any more**.

Together, these findings provide insight into the various ways that principals managed their dual expectations. They adopted roles such as public story tellers to describe the best that

their students could do, which in their reports was much more than reporting the students' performance results. They illuminated and rewarded growth in results. They used other criteria to draw out important growth points, such as the number of subjects with above-average achievement and continual improvement in overall school performances over a number of years. Moreover, these findings showed that these principals managed the judgements by positioning their reference points in learning in their communities.

#### **5.3.2.4 The anomaly: Building 'aspirational' and performative cultures**

One principal explained their school-wide initiative of building an aspirational culture in which students set their targets for the grades they want to attain for their work each year:

... getting to the point about **negotiating that public discourse, about league tables**, we say, well **we are not buying** into that ... if we **can be really, really clear** about what every [students'] aspirational target is, then we don't have to give a toss ... If [XXXX] gets a B when they set an aspirational target for a C and they were operating as a D last year, I challenge **anybody to tell me that's not** [expletive] **brilliant**.

*(Adrian)*

At various times throughout the interviews it was revealed that principals knew that other principals encouraged practices of 'teaching to the test'. 'Wisdom would be **perhaps I should [teach to the test] and say that's the measure we want. Some [principals] would do that I suppose.**' (*Joseph*) Charmaine reported, '... and I know that there are some schools **around here that teach to the test in NAPLAN and we don't**'. Only one principal openly acknowledged using this practice of 'teaching to the test'. The principal acknowledged that while teaching to the test was unpopular among educators, they could justify this practice as a moral imperative:

Coming back to when I said **about teaching to the test. If that's your measure** ... you are not going to fire a 100-metre sprinter at the Olympics doing 800-metre training. They'd be doing 100-metre sprints. The **specificity is a key criterion in**

**performance. So, if you are going to perform in the HSC in this exam and this is what it looks like, then you've got to then give everything towards that.** Now ... I can hear the cries of people complaining with teaching to the test. But the reality is, if you don't, the kids perform poorly. So, I'm sorry. **The moral imperative is to provide the kid with the best opportunity and no matter what your philosophical position is, I don't care.**

### 5.3.3 Section Conclusion

RSQ2 investigated the principals' descriptions of leading learning within the context of assessment-focused accountability. The three themes presented from the findings suggested that the principals were engaged in leading within the context of integrating their internal learning agendas with the external learning accountability expectations. A phrase that captured this broad finding was *Leading accountable learning*, which represents the three themes: *Positioning learning in the centre*, *Persuading teachers* and *Building cultures of coherence* (see Figure 5.2).

The theme *Positioning learning at the centre* presented a process whereby principals aimed to keep learning central to their responses to assessment-focused accountability. They enacted their broad visions of learning by articulating a vision, holding frequent learning conversations, implementing school-wide programs and integrating accountable learning practices. Within the demands of being accountable for performance results, most of the participants in the process of *Positioning learning in the centre* ensured that learning was not diminished, that it was fully represented when being measured and consequently when being held to account for this measure. The participating principals reported that they worked closely with their teachers and some placed constraints around their leading by situating their conversations only about learning. A minority of principals were silent about their actions to enable learning.

This pattern of the minority and majority views continued to be mirrored in the findings through the process of *Persuading teachers*. This theme represented the ways principals built credibility, used persuasion and influence and used data for leverage for initiating learning practices and holding accountability conversations. The majority of principals, particularly those who embraced the leader of learning function, emphasised the importance of this aspect and reported a sense of confidence in *Persuading teachers*.

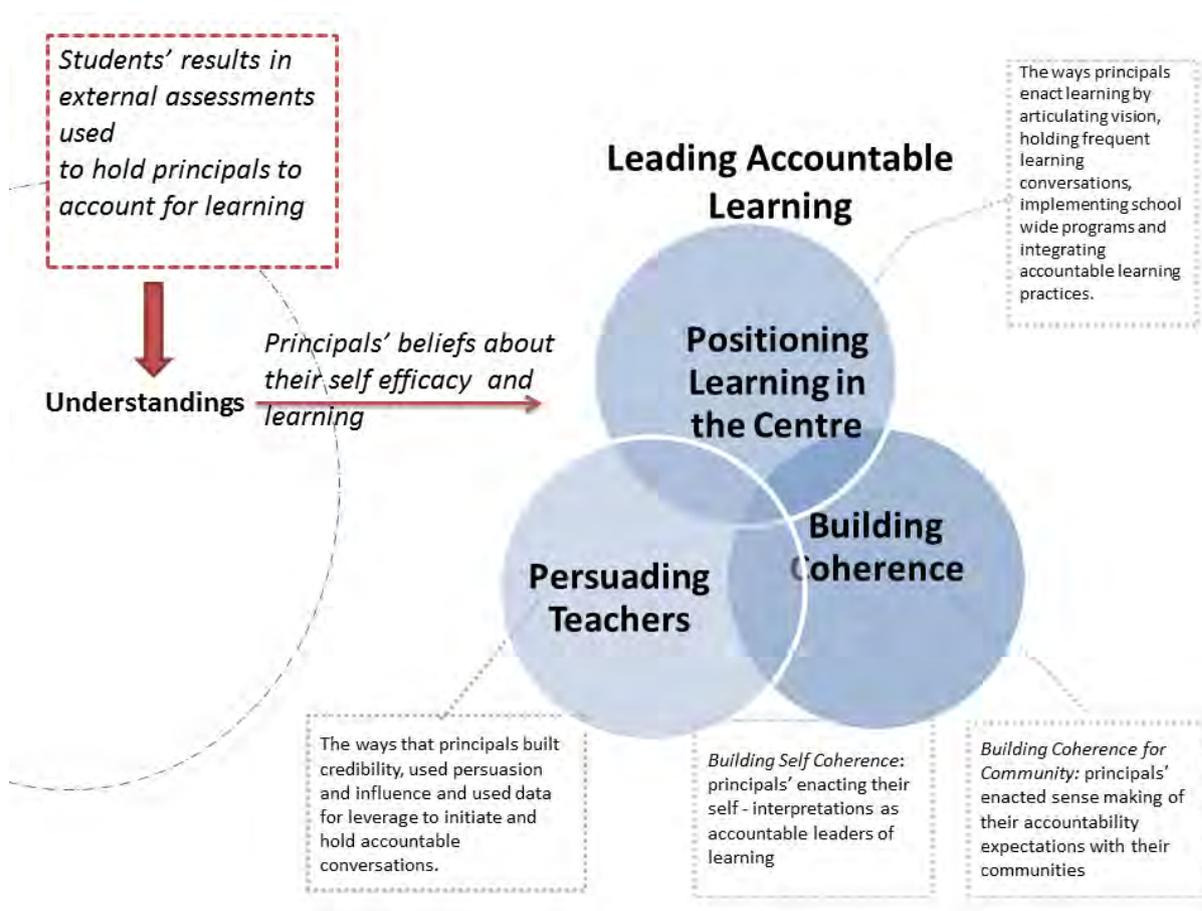


Figure 5.2 Principals' ways of leading.

The principals who reported this importance of learning, such as remaining contemporary in order to be leaders of learning, were also confident in their leadership. Rowland, for example, who held this view, also reported high levels of confidence in being able to influence teacher thinking. Conversely, a minority of participants reported working towards target setting in the form of grades and number of bands on the HSC. These participants promoted practising for tests, with one participant suggesting that they needed to

‘bulldoze’ teachers for better performance results at times. One possible reason for this minority view could have been their own confidence about leading learning—‘How to go about it, well that’s a different matter’—which raises the question of the impact of previous leadership experiences.

Based on these findings, the principals’ processes of *building cultures of coherence* were organised into two sub-themes: *Building self-coherence* and *building coherence in the community*. The sub-theme *Building self-coherence* represented principals enacting interpretations of themselves as accountable leaders of learning, regularly comparing their ideas and practices about their responses to the accountability expectations. They discussed the School systems’ expectations of being leaders of learning and were interested to know how others enacted these dual expectations. An interesting finding was the way the principals created metaphors and images to build their own sense of coherence in their identity. These metaphors and images provided a rich lens on where they wanted to be in their roles as leaders of learning within the accountability expectations. These findings suggested that while this process is internal, it is active and seemingly required principals to enact sensemaking strategies to gain self-coherence.

The findings suggested that the principals in this study emphasised and actively engaged in *building coherence in the community*. This sub-theme represented principals’ enacted sensemaking of the accountability expectations within their communities. They reported perspective taking, especially when teachers were overemphasising performance results. They delegated leadership tasks so that senior leaders could take responsibility for some of the accountability expectations or take a role in leading learning. The principals reported the good news about their results and they developed internal mantras about learning and performance results. A consistent anomaly in the findings emerged quite significantly with this theme. Two principals were very prescriptive in the ways they went about building their aspirational and performance cultures. Most of their reports were about their work with

teachers to set targets for themselves and their students in the form of grades or bands in performances. This finding, taken together with the other findings from these two principals, demonstrated ways of leading learning that were quite different from those of the rest of the principals. This divergence was a point of interest and prompted a question about what was common to both of these principals. There were several common elements. One was the magnitude and frequency of thoughts and feelings about being judged professionally by the School system from the results that their students achieved. Another was their apparent lack of emphasis on the importance of learning and teaching processes as a means to improve learning. This meant there were few findings about their internal learning school goals, in a broad sense.

In a circuitous way, the findings from the two RSQs addressed the central research question. However, a more explicit presentation of the findings with regard to the actual influence of the principals' understandings of accountability on the way they led learning was needed. A comparative analysis of four case examples was used to gather this information.

#### **5.4 Influence of Principals' Understandings on the Way They Lead Learning**

The central research question that guided this investigation was *How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* The findings presented thus far have been a collective set of findings for each of the RSQs. To this point, the findings from the RSQs have addressed part of the central research question. However, they have not addressed specifically the relationship between the influence of the principals' understandings and the ways they actually lead learning. To address this aspect of the investigation, the following findings have been presented in terms of four case examples. Case examples in this study are defined as comparing and contrasting the findings of four participants to map the way their interpretations of assessment-focused accountability influenced their ways of leading learning. The case study participants were Graham,

Charmaine, Adrian and Vanessa, who were selected to maintain a balance of gender, career stage and *pro rata* representation of School systems. The trail of evidence for these findings is detailed in Appendices 25–32: Case Studies.

These four case examples, as summarised in Table 5.3, illustrated the ‘effect dimension’ of the research question; that is, how principals’ understandings (of the accountability expectations) *affect* the ways they lead learning. The case examples are compared and contrasted to draw out the ‘effect’ dimensions.

#### **5.4.1 The Commonalities Between the Case Examples**

In their understandings of the accountability expectations, all four principals agreed that a number was an inadequate representation of their students’ learning. Hence, the instruments, the public disclosures (such as the My School website and newspaper rankings) and the consequent judgements from such disclosures influenced their views. While a number was viewed as an inappropriate accountability sole referent, all four principals showed an unfavourable attitude towards the NAPLAN results, more so than towards the HSC results. Adrian provided some reasons for this, commenting that the students were only in the school a short while before the testing (i.e., Year 7 students). Other possible reasons are detailed in the discussion in Section 6.2.3.

All principals in the case examples spoke in metaphors, imagery or mantras, aligned with their ways of leading, to make sense of the expectations with regard to assessment-focused accountability. For example, as described earlier, Adrian used the words ‘buffer’ and ‘shield’ and one of his ways of leading was to protect his teachers from the School system initiatives.

One other common element was that the principals’ thoughts and feelings towards assessment-focused accountability appeared to be influenced by their previous experiences of and confidence in leading learning and teaching. The principals who could integrate the expectations were more likely to have reported high levels of confidence in leading learning

and teaching, to have revealed how to place learning in the centre, with detailed ways of doing this, and to have noted the importance of persuading teachers.

#### **5.4.2 The Contrasts Between the Case Examples**

In trying to make sense of their public accountability, the principals either integrated to a point or magnified the expectations. Graham, Charmaine and Vanessa used their interpretations to arrive at cognitive settlements of generative integration, whereas Adrian's areas of disagreement were magnified with feelings of anger and resignation. Graham explained that he needed and accepted accountability and his strategy was manifested in the way he used accountability as leverage for data use and the professional growth of his staff. Charmaine disagreed with the number assessment and she ignored it: 'I don't care about the *Sydney Morning Herald* marks'. She firmly believed that if authentic learning was happening, the results would take care of themselves. This sensemaking strategy was manifested in Charmaine's quiet persistence in pacing her work with her staff. Vanessa's sensemaking strategy was to prioritise her responsibility for the students' happiness and the teachers' value in adding to student learning, over students' performance results. This strategy was manifested in the way she targeted specific areas for growth and worked on building staff confidence, through staff restructures and distributing specific leadership tasks to enable improvement. In contrast, Adrian's understandings were reconstituted into anger and injustice at being judged by students' performance results. He appeared to be paralysed in his anger, resentment and resignation about the accountability expectations and how the students' results did not meet them. His sensemaking strategy was keeping the School system at arm's length, and controlled by him. This sensemaking strategy was manifested by boundaries being placed on teachers and their interactions with the School system and by developing goal-setting programs that focused on internal grades rather than the results of external testing. To ease the perceived pressure from the School system, he ensured that students practised for the external tests.

Table 5.3

*Relationship Between Principals' Understandings of Accountability and Their Ways of Leading Learning in the Context of Assessment-focused Accountability*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Understandings</b>	<b>Enactments</b>	<b>Metaphor/Image</b>	<b>Influences</b>
Graham (ECP-MCP)	HSC results not a priority; prioritised skills that would sustain; accountability a positive part of educational landscape; need it and needed to accept it; results look after themselves if the conditions for learning are in place	Scoped the internal learning landscape on arrival; supported teachers' passions; high use of data to implement plans for professional growth and learning growth and accountability; staff restructures to support learning	Leader learner: 'don't sweat the small stuff'	Confident in using accountability as a leverage aligned with learning; undertook research studies in deep learning; own understandings grew with the school development
Charmaine (MCP)	Not used to the School system accountability expectations; tension with external tests only assessing small section of learning; authentic learning leads to favourable results	Viewed self as being a leader of learning; vision for learning not achieved through performance results; worked with resistance; paced progress with teachers 'Bringing them, walking slowly with them'	Cheerleader/journey: 'Bringing them, walking slowly with them'	Worked alongside teachers in all professional learning matters; deep understandings of curriculum; previous professional experiences—curriculum pathway
Adrian (MCP)	Lack of esteem for the NAPLAN instrument; accountable to the students, not the School system; felt the pressure to achieve high performance results from School system—how many Band 6s	Explained the performance results through story telling in the market place; practised for NAPLAN test; introduced school-wide goal-setting program focused on individual student grades	Buffer, shield: protecting	Teaching experiences—delivery model; not clear about own ability to lead teaching and learning; believed the student demographic suffered from residualism; student 'leaves overs'
Vanessa (ECP)	Accountable for student happiness, teachers value adding; accountable to self, system and parents; reliance on the numbers on the performance results limits curriculum development; valuable education is lost	Aimed to find a synergy between internal and external pressures—working harmony; confidence to work as a collective with staff; school will achieve-will turnaround; targeted areas and distributed tasks in the leadership of learning	Lantern: holding up the light to check the progress in the realisation of the vision	Positive beliefs about self in leading learning

The link between the principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability and the influence of these on their leading of learning may seem to be obscure. However, the influence can be seen when comparing Vanessa's and Adrian's understandings and ways of leading via the assessment-focused accountability lens.

#### **5.4.3 Influences are Key to the Relationship's Effect**

Understandably, one may question whether Adrian's descriptions of his school environment ('student left overs') were the reasons for his depth of feeling; however, Vanessa, as an ECP, was seemingly facing equal if not greater inhibiting factors with loss of enrolments and low staff morale as a result of staff losses. Therefore, if the school environment factors are removed from the equation, what is left is their belief about learning and their self-efficacy in leading learning in somewhat difficult conditions and pressures. Clearly, Vanessa's previous leadership experiences (pedagogical leadership) had prepared her well for the task in front of her. Adrian acknowledged that he could not identify how to improve the learning and teaching processes in the school and did not recall his previous leadership experiences. Hence, in comparing these two case examples, it is reasonable to suggest that Vanessa's previous pedagogical experiences equipped her to deal with the high-level consequences from her assessment-focused accountability, in contrast with Adrian's previous experiences and reported low levels of self-efficacy in this area. Pursuing this line further, Vanessa appeared to be clear with a plan regarding ways to integrate the expectations for results and the school's learning agenda. Adrian was silent on this detail.

#### **5.5 Summarising Both Findings Chapters (4 and 5)**

The principals' ways of leading learning were influenced by the ways they contextualised and prioritised what to account for and to whom, named *contextualising* and *prioritising*, respectively. These influences also were evident in the principals' conceptualisations of accountability, which they developed in consideration of expectations. This conceptualisation, called *framing*, reflected their views about their knowledge and skills

regarding learning and teaching processes and their capacity to build coherence within themselves and their communities, which were named *Building self-coherence* and *Building coherence in the community*. See Table 5.4 and Figure 5.2 for a summary and representation of these.

Table 5.4

*Summary of Findings*

<b>Question focus</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Influences</b>
Understandings	Contextualising	Interpretations of student demographics, teacher receptivity, parental and School system expectations, enrolments, performance results, competition	<i>Beliefs about learning, previous leadership experiences, peer principals' views, their ongoing framing of accountability</i>
	Prioritising	Decisions about what principals account for, to whom they account and how they account, a function of principal's role as a leader of learning	<i>Beliefs about learning, interpretations of their school contexts (contextualising), School system expectations, peer principal relationships, self-efficacy in carrying out the leader of learning role and their ongoing framing of accountability</i>
	Framing	Personalising accountability, accepting accountability, accountability as a responsibility, accountability as agency	<i>Their views of their contexts (contextualising), valuing one expectation over another (prioritising) and the ways they perceived themselves a leader of learning, including their creation of metaphors and images</i>
Ways of leading learning	Positioning learning in the centre	Articulating a vision and languaging learning, ignoring naysayers, deflecting and diverting, embedding school-wide learning programs	<i>Teacher receptivity, enrolments, result patterns, identity as a leader of learning, views, skill and knowledge about teaching and learning and the ongoing ways they framed their understandings of accountability</i>
	Persuading teachers	Utilising data, persuading by walking with them, adopting gambits, building credibility	<i>Teacher resistance, principals' and teachers' expectations of students, principals' self-efficacy in understanding learning, principals' self-efficacy in leading learning, principals' motivation to seek knowledge and skill about learning and teaching</i>
	Building cultures of coherence	Self-coherence: fostering relationships with peers, leader of learning identity; creating metaphors and images. Community coherence: taking perspective and balancing, distributing, telling the good news, developing mantras and building aspirational and performative cultures	<i>Reconciling beliefs about learning and accountability expectations of learning, self-efficacy in the leader of learning role, views about learning, previous leadership experiences, ways of enacting metaphors and images, and narratives and mantras</i>

The principals' knowledge and skill regarding learning was a consistent reference point for the majority of the principals in this study and determined the ways they enabled

learning, influenced teaching and stated their capacity to build coherence within the context of the accountability expectations. Table 5.4 and Figure 5.3 represent these relationships.

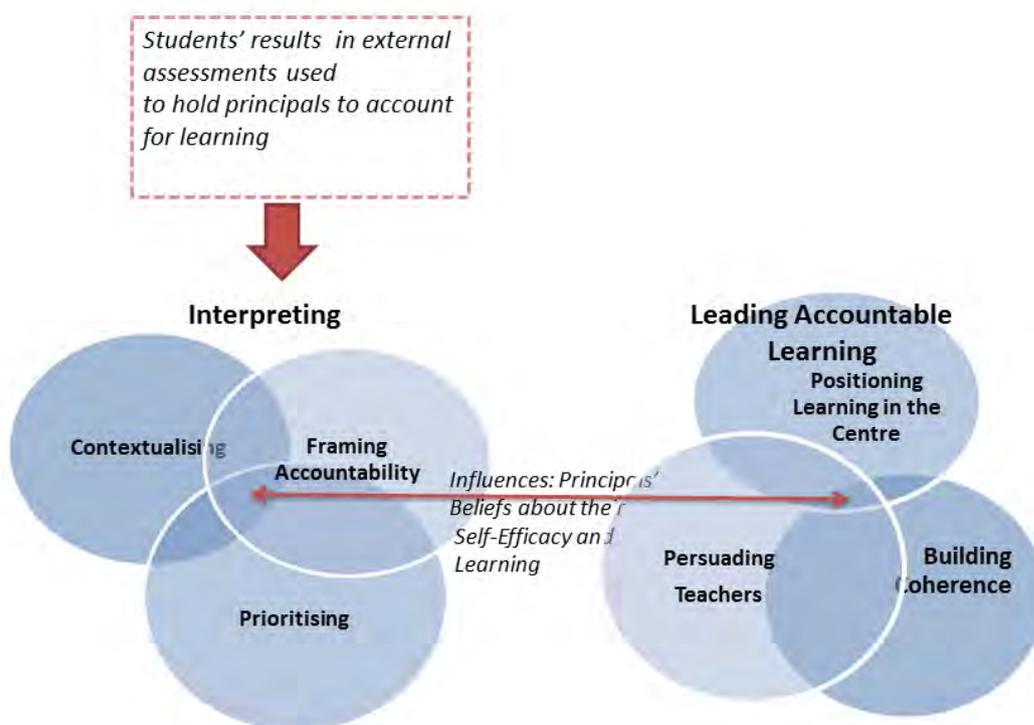


Figure 5.3 A framework: principals' understandings of accountability and the influence of these on their ways of leading learning.

This chapter summary has synthesised the sectional conclusions of both Findings chapters, foreshadowing the planks on which the theoretical model was built. The principals interpreted their school contexts in diverse ways that signalled their skills in being able to evaluate and act on the multitude of contextual factors in their school environments. This process was termed *contextualising* and described the principals' active pursuit of aligning their thinking about learning and teaching in their school environments with their thinking about the accountability expectations. While the principals revealed that they were clear about the expectations placed on them by the School system, they placed their personal priorities elsewhere. As such, the majority of principals reported that they were accountable to themselves and to their students in the first instance, to enable broad student learning

experiences. For a minority of principals, their priorities were to improve students' performances in external testing. This researcher named the value that they gave to one expectation over another as *prioritising*. The principals revealed their philosophical views about the notion of accountability, which suggested they may have engaged in self-reflective processes, comparing themselves, their school environments and their own beliefs about learning with those of their peers. In this way, they could be co-constructing their identities and accountability environments with their constructs of learning.

This researcher interpreted the principals' conceptual views of accountability as *frames* of accepting and personalising accountability as a responsibility and as an agency, enabling them to construct cognitive schemata about the accountability expectations. These schemata, represented as frames, pointed to principals 'setting up' their accountability environments, considering their school environments, their priorities regarding accounting and their understandings about the nature and meaning of learning.

The majority of the principals noted that they were at their best in leading learning when they could articulate a vision for learning and implement school-wide learning programs in which pedagogical practices were central, rather than subject content. Most of the principals revealed that to meet assessment-focused accountability expectations, *Positioning learning in the centre* was key to resolving the conflict between their conceptualisations of productive learning and of what was measured and reported through a NAPLAN score or an HSC band.

Most of the principals provided detailed explanations about learning in the context of assessment-focused accountability. Their beliefs or constructs implied a solid platform for 'Persuading teachers'. Both of these processes managed the accountability expectations, making sense of them and keeping them in perspective. The principals' descriptions of influencing the teaching process were diverse, such as not knowing how to go about it, devolving this function to others, and being an agent in teachers' professional learning

processes, 'walking with them and bringing them along'. The majority noted that credibility with teachers was needed to influence the learning and teaching processes. The principals measured their credibility against their current knowledge and skill regarding learning and teaching. ECPs who had reported pedagogical expertise and were new to their schools acknowledged that time was needed to build this credibility. They actively pursued development for themselves in the area of learning and teaching processes.

Most of the principals described their ways of leading learning with reference to their commitment to the 'leader of learning' function. Their commitment held implications for their identities. Principals reviewed themselves, critiquing their previous leadership experiences and evaluating their ways of leading according to system expectations and their relationships with their peers. To make sense of the accountability expectations and at the same time meet the expectations of being leaders of learning, the principals created metaphors, such as 'cheerleader' and 'shield', and images such as journeying and sensemaking. Their narratives to their school communities were persuasive and told positive stories (good news). These narratives were described by the principals as their mantras, implying a desire by principals for a shared language in the school community. These sets of findings were represented as principals' *Building self-coherence*.

Principals who emphasised the importance of understanding learning reported also feeling confident to represent learning in an expansive sense. In contrast, those principals who reported their ways of leading more in terms of teachers performing to measures and target setting paradoxically experienced external pressures more forcefully and described their ways of leading as 'buffering', 'filtering', 'pushing', 'needing to work hard' and 'driving themselves and their teachers'. This finding was also apparent in the ways the principals described how they influenced their staff's teaching processes. The principals who detailed their way of leading in their teacher working relationships (and in one case, with a high level

of confidence in being able to persuade teachers' thinking) emphasised the importance of knowing learning and at the same time, took little notice of performance results.

The key factor that affected the principals' views of assessment-focused accountability was that the broad representation of learning could not be represented by a number. When numbers from external assessments tests were given higher priority than other aspects of learning and were adopted as a means to hold principals to account, most of the principals were affronted. While the principals acknowledged that accountability was necessary (and for one, 'a positive part of the educational landscape'), they believed that learning that was measured according to a single performance score 'diminished some of the most significant work of students and teachers'. They described the mechanisms used as 'blunt' and an inadequate measure of 'what counted'. The participating principals in both cohorts were annoyed and frustrated by the workloads associated with the accountability layers. Some reported feeling fearful of the annual justification of students' performances in external assessment programs. They reported bemusement and confusion with the School systems' contradicting public and private narratives about students' performances in external testing.

The principals disclosed feelings of discomfort, annoyance, frustration and disdain when the school's image, teachers or themselves were judged or compared on the merits of students' performance results. A minority of the principals revealed that they feared repercussions with their tenure in the School system, along with their teachers' reputations. They also showed concern and for some, anxiety, about their school's image and the consequent flow-on effect for enrolments that could result from these public judgements: 'I don't sleep at night'.

At the same time as being held to account for students' performances in external testing, principals were expected to function as leaders of learning. The implications of taking on this function were unexpected. The decision to enact, devolve or remain indifferent to this function seemed to be influenced by the frequency and magnitude of the challenges the

principals experienced in being held to account. Some principals acknowledged a deficit in their leadership formation if their previous career pathway had forced them away from the learning and teaching processes and as such, they needed to remedy this deficit or devolve this function to others.

This researcher expected that when principals reported unfavourable student performance scores while also being committed to notions of ‘authentic’ learning, that they would feel compromised regarding their beliefs about learning. However, one ECP who reported the school’s history as scoring unfavourable results, with consequences of poor school image, declining enrolments and staff redeployment, noted the importance of keeping true to their beliefs about learning and their self-belief in leading learning and teaching. Two other principals with similar school demographics mentioned their pursuit of their learning and teaching goals and also exuded confidence that ‘the results would take care of themselves’. In contrast, the principals who mentioned negative feelings about being rated on students’ performances in external programs more strongly and more frequently said they felt unfairly judged and frustrated by not being able to influence public views. They referred to learning in the narrowest sense as being about improving grades and bands. They were silent about their identities as ‘leaders of learning’.

These findings suggested that the principals who were relentless in their pursuit of learning were injected with a sense of confidence, which enhanced their influence in the learning and teaching processes with students and teachers. The more they identified as leaders of learning and created metaphors of perspective takers and cheerleaders and images of sensemaking and balancing, the less likely they were to be affected negatively by the external expectations of assessment-focused accountability. These findings suggested that the more the principals internalised their identities in liberating ways, the more likely it was that they would take control of their accountability environments, accepting and personalising their responses to the expectations and using these as leverage to build coherent cultures that

reflected their own conceptualisations of productive learning. These principals used the accountability contexts as a construction, rather than finding them as distraction.

The next chapter discusses these findings in light of the literature.

# Chapter 6: Discussing the Findings

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from the previous two chapters. The discussion is carried out through three major sections: Interpreting the Accountability Expectations (Section 6.2), Principals' Ways of Leading Learning (Section 6.3) and the Effects of Principals' Interpretations on their Ways of Leading Learning (Section 6.4). The findings are compared with the pertinent bodies of literature and specifically using Weick's Sensemaking Framework and Ajzen's determinants of planned behaviours as referral points.

## 6.2 Interpreting the Accountability Expectations

The findings from this investigation suggested that principals' understandings of the assessment-focused accountability could be grouped as *interpreting*. As noted earlier, the three sub-themes that emerged from the data were principals' *contextualising*, *prioritising* and *framing* with regard to the accountability expectations (see Figure 4.4).

### 6.2.1 Principals' Contextualising of the Accountability Expectations

The theme of *contextualising* referred to the group of findings that described the ways the principals interpreted their school environment factors in the light of the accountability expectations. These factors included their interpretations of their student demographics, enrolments, students' performance results, competition with other schools for enrolments and teacher receptivity. The principals in this study consistently referred to these factors: 'So having given all that context we are in a situation now where we want an A-grade school' (*Adrian*). The principals' explanations for some of their actions as being situated in their interpretations of their environments were consistent with contingency leadership theories (Fiedler, 1964; G. Morgan, 2006), which privilege leaders' contexts as determinants of their actions (Bush, 2010).

The principals in this study did not simply adopt their School system expectations, but evaluated their own school environment factors in light of those expectations. Patricia explained that factors in her school environment needed to be considered before complying: ‘Before this [accountability question] we need to consider what is going on here ...’. This finding was supported by several studies: the research by Stephen J Ball, Maguire, Braun, and Hoskins (2011), which found that a principal’s own ‘take’ on policy was important; Ozga’s (2012) findings, which showed that leaders were not limited to the situated necessities of the policy; and Spillane, Diamond et al.’s (2002) findings, which showed that leaders may adopt, adapt or ignore imposed policy. Educational leaders weigh up the broader contextual organisational factors, such as ‘culture or ethos’ in light of external mandates: ‘... a school may look like it is straightforwardly adopting a number of policies, [but] schools have different capacities for “coping” with policy and assembling school-based policy responses’ (Ball et al., 2012, p. 586). In this study, the principals’ interpretations of their school environments possibly influenced their own take on policy.

The ways the principals in this study interpreted their school environment factors were dependent upon the level of difficulty that they perceived in their school environments and their belief in their capacity to resolve these challenges. For example, Vanessa acknowledged that a priority for her was to stop the loss of staff, which was caused by shrinking enrolments, were influenced by poor student performance results in external testing. While the task of resolving this dilemma was difficult to address quickly, Vanessa believed that it was within her and her key leaders’ capabilities. This finding was consistent with Fiedler’s contingency model, whereby there is a relationship between the individual’s leadership style and their attitude (in this case favourable) to the situation. The leader perceives the situation as favourable if the dimensions are high (Fiedler, 1964). These are explained and applied to Vanessa’s experiences below.

The first of Fiedler's dimensions describes the leader as being accepted by their followers. In this case, Vanessa's acceptance by the school and community was high; she had built credibility within a short time, which was reported to be important in improving students' performance results. She reasoned, 'I think they are happy to work towards it because they know we don't have choice because we are losing staff'. Fiedler's second dimension is the degree of success with the task structure—it is high if the plan is well structured. Vanessa revealed that the School system employed her at this school because she was 'a pedagogical leader'; so she used this style of leadership to set up her plan which was focused on a learning and teaching growth plan in literacy and numeracy. This finding was consistent with Fiedler's third dimension of the leader's positional power, with the context seen as favourable when a great deal of authority and power is formally attributed to the leader's position. As all three dimensions were in the high range in Vanessa's case, she would be likely to view her context in favourable terms. Although Vanessa could have seen her context in negative or desperate terms, she disclosed informally in the validation group, 'we are going well now and we are in a better space than we were when you last saw me'.

Conversely, Adrian's ways of *interpreting* were low on two of Fiedler's dimensions. He was silent on the second dimension with regard to having a well-structured plan to lift results and the third dimension aligned unfavourably when Adrian reported a sense of resignation and despair about his diminished power over declining enrolments. Irrespective of the ways principals in this study viewed their environments, the amount of planning to meet their internal needs were considerable for principals and similar to Morgan's (2006) findings that principals needed to have significant management skills to meet the internal needs as well as adapt to the circumstances of the environment.

The principals' expectations of students changed the outcomes. For example, the principals' beliefs about what their students could and could not achieve appeared to have follow-on effects. Joseph's mantra of 'just one more mark' meant he expected students to

improve, whereas another principal's attitude was that their students would do as well as they could, given that they '... will never be anything better than average in terms of the students' capacity overall', because of the student clientele (low SES) (*Adrian*). This last finding (*Adrian's*) supported the finding from Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin (2012), in which principals who were expected to add value to student achievement in schools with low SES, were likely to lower their expectations of their students' performances (Branch et al., 2012).

The disclosure of HSC performance results in a metropolitan newspaper was reported to be an influence on the ways the principals in this study contextualised the accountability expectations. Surprisingly, no studies were found with regard to principals' views about the accountability demands around the HSC and the annual public ranking through the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper, even though all of the principals in this study referred to the disclosure often.<sup>20</sup> Two studies about the HSC were situated on effective teaching; however, one recent study by Manuel, Carter, Locke, and Locke (2015) described the context as a high-stakes, external and standardised testing regime and they challenged normative definitions of assessment. The second study by Ayres et al. (2004) also referenced the HSC as a high-stakes examination. The paucity of research on the topic of the impact of the public ranking of HSC results on leaders and educators in general was of interest for this study.

In contrast, there have been many research studies on the impact on educators and principals of the public disclosure of NAPLAN results through the My School website. MacBeath et al. (2006) found that 'Schools will continue to compete for pupils in order to gain advantage in league table positioning' (p. 27). McGuire (2012) found that 54.2% of principals felt an increased sense of competition with other principals: 'My School has significantly increased negative competition ... why would a "like" school achieving better results than me want to support us?' (p. 46). The differences between the number of research

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<sup>20</sup> One possible reason for the consistent conversation about HSC ranking was that the first round of interviews occurred in February, when the HSC rankings were presented in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a metropolitan newspaper.

studies on the impact of NAPLAN and HSC results (albeit that the latter is a state-based instrument) is significant. One possible reason is that the HSC has become a normalised accountability device.

However, the findings suggested that the real high-stakes consequences for students and educators from the HSC results were the students' post-school pathways and the teachers' career pathways (respectively). The tools for analysis of HSC results are more available, with School system expectations that they will be used and be integral to the learning processes and structures within schools. School system expectations are holding principals to account not only for the students' results but also for their implementation plans and the resulting outcomes. A decade ago, this was not happening: 'It's probably been 10 years now since we were first introduced to DeCourcy—it's just a matter of course now' (*Brianna*). The effect of this system-wide and state-wide (Catholic) analytical tool (DeCourcy, 2006) was evident in the findings, with all of the principals using the DeCourcy tool as 'a matter of course'. It was not only a common practice but also a common language between principals and School systems. As such, data analysis with implementation plans followed by evaluation appeared to be normalised processes for both principal cohorts. This raised the question of the extent to which all School systems across Australia place such expectations on principals or senior leaders, how principals respond to these expectations and how leaders in School systems navigate such responses if they are not as School systems leaders intended.

The findings in the theme of *contextualising* were influenced by the principals' views about teacher receptivity (and being judged on performance results) and their career stage. In this study, teacher receptivity was described by principals as teachers' willingness to utilise data or take them seriously, specifically the data from NAPLAN assessments. Some principals used system expectations as leverage to hold teachers to account. This finding was consistent with the study by Dulude, Spillane, and Dumay (2015), which found that school actors (principals) use policy mandates as a tool to make known logical and authoritative

expectations and to clarify conflicts between the external expectations and their own internal schemas. This current study and Dulude et al.'s (2015) work aligned with Weick's (1995) property of social context, whereby the leader seeks sensible meanings through support as well as consensual validation and relevance with their communities.

In this study, the more acutely the principals thought they were being judged publicly by their results, combined with their low levels of self-efficacy, the more likely they were to prioritise performance results as their referent and the more likely they were to report negative feelings regarding the expectations of the School system. While no studies about such a link could be found, McGuire (2013a) found that 62% of principals were morally outraged with regard to their students' performance data being made public. Their reasoning, similar to the principals in this current study, was that a single number did not tell the student human story; moreover, these public judgements did not respect and represent students' and teachers' work. These levels of self-efficacy could be aligned with Weick's property of personal identity, with the individual recognising threats or enhancements in their school contexts (Weick, 2001).

The participating principals reported in their early stages of principalship that the multi-layered demands of accountability were overwhelming. This finding was consistent with the findings of Oplatka (2012), with ECPs' experiences coming as 'some sort of surprise, reality shock, [with] high levels of stress' and they needed to learn how to diagnose the school culture and the environment quickly, along with working out ways to develop their capabilities to manage the diagnosis (p. 129). Similarly, Spillane and Lee (2013) found that novice principals experienced major reality shocks regarding their ultimate sense of responsibility in their first years.

The influence of the principals' interpretations of their schools' environments on their behaviours has been of keen interest in this discussion. While some leadership studies in the past have privileged the influence of context as one of the most important influences over leaders' behaviours (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996), the literature over the last 20 years

has shown that this influence had less effect on leaders' behaviours than expected (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). In this study, while the principals' interpretations of their school environment factors could be shown to influence their ways of leading, what was of interest were the *influences on these interpretations*. It was of interest because these influences could explain the variations between principals and to some extent, could predict their behaviours. These influences, such as principals' beliefs about the representation of learning and their self-beliefs about leading learning, affected the ways they interpreted their school environment factors in light of the external accountability expectations.

### **6.2.2 Principals' Prioritising of the Accountability Expectations**

The theme of *prioritising* referred to the group of findings that described the ways participating principals attached worth to the issues of what they accounted for and to whom. In this study, the principals' views and actions did not reflect the system expectations. Similarly, Leithwood, Riehl, Firestone, and Riehl (2005) found that the way principals responded to accountability expectations was by attending to certain expectations and disregarding others, balancing competing demands and making choices. The findings in the current study showed variations and inconsistencies about the way the message of the external expectations was received by principals, as if no single line of authority or message was being conveyed by their school systems. Studies such as Seashore Louis, Knapp and Feldman (2012) and Spillane, Reiser, et al. (2002) also found that the implementers did not necessarily decode the policy message accurately, that is, the intent of the policy makers.

Some participating principals gave more weight to diverse learning experiences for students over performance results and to parents' and students' expectations over school system expectations. Broadly, the principals' priorities could be aligned with Weick's property of *Ongoing projects* and *Social context* (1995) and Ajzen's *Subjective norm* (Ajzen

& Madden, 1986). Weick’s property of *social context*,<sup>21</sup> with the individual making sense by seeking consensual validation and relevance, aligned with this study’s findings, particularly Vanessa in the early, urgent phases of change and Adrian in his appeal to teachers and students for aspirational grade setting. *Ongoing projects* described how the individual makes sense of their environment by placing boundaries on external stimuli. The principals in this study placed boundaries around what they would account for and to whom. In their processes of *prioritising* their expectations, they could be aligned with Ajzen’s determinant of the *subjective norm*, in which the individual places value on certain social referents over others

... predictors of principals’ self-efficacy have shown that principals’ pre-service studies influence their sense of confidence in carrying out their role (Fisher, 2014).

(Ajzen & Madden, 1986). All of the principals in this study appeared to interpret the School system expectations in different ways, which was consistent with the research studies by Spillane (2009; 2014; 2002) and his colleagues (Firestone & Shippis, 2003; Firestone & Shippis, 2005). They found that educational

leaders not only varied in degrees of aligning between the different levels of accountability but also with regard to what they were accountable for. Spillane (2006), in the context of educational leaders interpreting and implementing policy explained:

What is paramount is not simply that implementing agents choose to respond to policy but also what they understand themselves to be responding to ... individuals must use their prior knowledge and experience to notice, make sense of, interpret and react to incoming stimuli—all the while constructing meaning from their interactions with the environment which policy is part of (p. 5).

<sup>21</sup> Defined as sensible meanings of accountability, in which principals seek support and consensual validation and relevance with their communities. These are the social anchors in making sense of accountability expectations (see Table 6.1).

Spillane adopted Weick's sensemaking words here: 'prior knowledge and experience' (retrospect) and 'to notice' (salient cues). As Spillane explained, and similar to the experiences of the principals in this study, they first needed to understand what the expectation for accountability was asking for, which was dependent on their knowledge and past experiences of such expectations. At the same time, they were working at ways of 'constructing' their environments and evaluating<sup>22</sup> the implementation processes, their ways of leading them and their self-efficacy in doing so.

An important discussion point is the reasons for the principals' priorities. These appeared to be linked to their understandings about learning. For example, the principals who placed a higher priority on diverse learning experiences for students over growth in performance results (e.g., Charmaine) appeared to be well versed in research about learning and in research about leading learning. This aligned with a study by Robinson (2011), which found that effective leaders of learning needed to be close to the teachers' professional learning. At the same time, Charmaine believed that authentic learning experiences would provide favourable results. No studies could be found that were specifically consistent with this finding. However, there are studies that support the relationship between self-efficacy of leadership and knowledge and skill.

When comparing the general leadership literature on self-efficacy, it can be argued that as a self-referent construct (Ajzen, 1991), self-efficacy can be described as a leader's level of confidence in their knowledge and skills to behave in the way they desire (Schwarzer, 2014). Consistent with this study's findings, the research by McCollum and Kajs (2007) found that the self-efficacy construct was relevant in a broad sense to principals' abilities to lead schools, notably their confidence in their knowledge base and skill (McCollum & Kajs, 2007). In terms of the influence of the relationship between leading learning and principals' self-efficacy, Lovell (2009) study suggested that further research was needed to examine the

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<sup>22</sup> Similar to Ajzen's *attitude* determinant of the evaluation of outcomes (Ajzen, 1990).

relationships between principals' levels of self-efficacy for instructional leadership. Studies in predictors of principals' self-efficacy have shown that principals' pre-service studies influenced their sense of confidence in carrying out their role (Fisher, 2014). This current study also found that the principals' reports of leading learning were influenced by their current studies, professional reading and post-graduate tertiary studies. Those who acknowledged the importance of professional reading and study were also building their knowledge and skill base about student learning specifically: '... do you know where I can do a course on learning?' (*Participating principal*)

Another influence on the ways principals prioritised was their judgements about the norms, values and behaviours of their leader of learning function. While all of the principals reported that their School systems expected them to be leaders of learning, their interpretations of this function differed. These differences are to be expected, given that a principal's role identity is integral to their occupational socialisation (Spillane & Anderson, 2014). Another influence was how the principals compared themselves with other principals by esteeming others as well as by identifying behaviours they would not adopt: 'I know some really prepare and drill their students for the exams, we don't do that here'. (*Charmaine*) At times, it could be interpreted as competition. The theories of teachers' social identity supported to a limited degree the current findings, with the principals comparing themselves and at times competing with each other (Danielewicz, 2014). In this way, they were determining their identity construction, through talking about their identity (Marsh, Waniganayake, & De Nobile, 2013; Starr, 2011).

ECPs in this study, in particular, illustrated how they were in the process of being socialised. George, for instance, asked, 'Can I say that [about the system]?' and Vanessa, at the focus group after being in the system for 18 months, said, '... I have been truly systematised. I am not sure if that's a good thing or bad thing'. The act of principal socialisation is about how ECPs make judgements about the norms, values and behaviours in

their collective system group (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This finding supported Weick's property of *social context* (Weick, 1995), in which sensemaking takes place with multiple actors. Rowland, in particular, envisaged with excitement that the more the group of principals worked together, the more aligned they would be in their thinking about aspects of school life, such as accountability. There was excitement in building common thought communities, which was consistent with Zerubavel's (1997) explanation that there are types of groups that influence individuals' social identities. What is important here is that the peer principal relationships influenced principals' making sense of their expectations. Weick's property of *social context* aligned with this finding.

The ways the participating principals in this investigation described their ways of leading learning held similar characteristics to the descriptions about the leadership for learning explained by Marsh (2012), Marsh et al. (2013) and Marsh et al. (2014) as well as the revised notion of the 'instructional leader' (Fullan, 2014; Neumerski, 2013; Robinson, 2011) and the 'educative leader' (Bezzina, 2011). In this investigation, however, the leader of learning expectation, along with the accountability expectations, seemed to leave some principals feeling somewhat unsure about fulfilling both functions. For example, one principal was resigned to their belief that they were not leading quality education and another principal devolved this function to others who 'know more about that than me'. These findings were similar to those from the study by Shipps and White (2009), in which the principals compromised their own professional commitments for the sake of meeting the accountability expectations and the studies whereby secondary school principals regularly devolved or distributed the tasks before them (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2011; Spillane, 2006).

The principals' beliefs about the nature and meaning of learning, in the accountability context, influenced the ways they prioritised the accountability expectations. The principals who saw the results as merely one aspect of the learning process were likely to consider the accountability for students' performance results a less important referent. The closest

comparative literatures that were consistent with this finding concerned the general influences on implementers' interpretations of policy. Some studies showed that the active process of interpretation was determined by the implementers' knowledge base of beliefs and attitudes, not necessarily cognition (Zajonc & Markus, 1985; Rumelhart, 1980).

Summing up, the principals, in their processes of prioritising the accountability expectations, were not simply giving preference to one social referent over another. Their *prioritising* appeared to go further than interpreting cues and was consistent with the position of Spillane and Anderson (2014), in which principals notice and bracket these cues in their environments. In this study, the principals, through their spontaneous creation of metaphors and images, were taking control with an internalising reconfiguring action, based more likely on beliefs than reasoned cognition and with their *prioritising*, they were possibly 'authoring' as much as 'interpreting' (Weick, 1995, p. 8).

### **6.2.3 Principals' Framing of the Accountability Expectations**

The theme *framing* refers to the group of findings in which the participating principals constructed schemas about accountability. The principals' revealed that they created stories that could be described as frames of accountability. Frames appeared to be sensemaking devices. The principals own personal beliefs and constructs about learning and schooling, along with their beliefs about leading learning, were reflected in the frames. *Framing*, in turn, influenced their ways of leading. For example, Charmaine reported a distinction between accountability and responsibility: 'I answer to the [School] System for results and other things but I'm responsible to the students [for their learning]'. Charmaine's predominant course of action that followed this schema was her pursuit and implementation of learning programs, rather than results for the School system. Steinbauer, Rhew, and Chen (2015) advocated a similar proposition, in which plausible stories, resulting from conscious sensemaking, led to cognitive schemas that leaders over time unconsciously adopted to make sense of their environments. Generally, principals make sense by developing coherent stories (Elmore et al.,

2013) about their expectations and in the current study, these were often reported as mantras. Weick's property of *plausibility* noted that stories hold certain levels of credibility and reasoning for the individual (see Table 6.1). In this study, stories appeared to be expressive forms of a principal's schema of accountability.

Schemas represent understandings of complex ideas for everyday objects and events (Rumelhart, 1980). In Spillane et al.'s (2006) investigation of educational leaders' views of external policy mandates, they found that leaders used schema, which they described as specific knowledge structures that linked together related concepts, enabling leaders to make sense of the world and make predictions.

As far back as 1995, MacPherson, in helping educators to come to grips with their demands, called for 'urgent rehabilitation' in the conceptualisation of accountability (Macpherson, 1995). The schemas that participating principals constructed—'First you have to accept that accountability is part of life'—supported the research by Cairns-Lee (2015), which found that effective leaders developed their own internal models in their leadership development. Cairns-Lee proposed that models minimise external influences or interpretations. Lakoff and Johnson (2008) similarly asserted (and extended Cairns-Lee's proposition) that using models was the difference between leaders being effective or ineffective. Darling-Hammond (2010) specifically advocated the importance of principals adopting mental models specific to accountability, such as 'reciprocal, intelligent accountability' (p. 301). Likewise, Kuchapski (2001) advised educators to develop a framework of accountability. Importantly, this study's findings were supported by these empirical and theoretical studies. The principals who constructed sophisticated schema of accountability, with high levels of specificity, seemed to be less likely to experience negative feelings stemming from the effects of the accountability expectations. Conversely, those who did not speak about accountability in stories or schemas reported thoughts and feelings such as being grilled, indignation, fear and anger from being judged by performance results.

The participating principals' most consistent frame for assessment-focused accountability was the rejection that a number on a single test was an adequate representation of students' learning and this was viewed as unfair. This finding was consistent with studies by Biesta (2004) and Siegel (2004), who found that when performance results were the single measure used to rank and compare schools, they were interpreted as morally inadequate educational ideals by teachers (Biesta, 2004; Siegel, 2004). Similarly, McGuire's (2012) study found that 69% of Australian principals questioned the relationship between NAPLAN results and the school's overall performance; 66% reported feeling anger when NAPLAN performance results were the only representation of their schools. NAPLAN, in the minds of the participating principals, lived up to the predicted consequences as purported by Rowe, who warned test scores with performance indicators tend to be focused on a comparative ranking of schools rather than on identifying factors which explain school differences (Rowe, 2000). However, NAPLAN was an academic annoyance rather than a serious influence.

While NAPLAN was occasionally cited as a source of annoyance, the participating principals' main unease was situated with the elevated importance of the HSC by the School system, the public and for a minority of principals, the parent body. The perceptions of the examination by these referents appeared to be misaligned with the educational philosophies of principals and their educational communities. Although this unease and misalignment was relatively widespread with principals, no studies were found with regard to principals' or teachers' views about the accountability demands related to the HSC or the annual newspaper publication of ranking secondary schools. Some references to the HSC being a high-stakes examination were found, such as Manuel et al. (2015), who described the context as the HSC sitting within a high-stakes, external and standardised testing regime and they challenged the normative definitions of assessment. Ayres et al. (2004) was the only study that referenced the HSC as a high-stakes examination. However, no studies were found that had findings similar to those of this study about the impacts of the HSC on leaders and teachers or the learning

processes. The paucity of research into the impacts of the HSC on leaders and educators in general is of interest here, particularly because some people view the HSC as a high-stakes educational event.

The participating principals revealed that public disclosures of performance results were an annoyance, but not to the extent of being a dilemma for them in the long term. This finding seems to contradict several influential studies in educational leadership, such as Burford (2015); Duignan, Burford, d'Arbon, Ikin, and Walsh (2003). These studies found that Australian educational leaders experienced an ethical dilemma regarding the tension between their visions for education and being accountable for students' results. The findings from this current investigation were surprising, as this researcher anticipated that the participating principals would experience some form of ethical dilemma because of the current educational leadership literature regarding ethical dilemmas involving accounting for performance results (Pettit, 2010) and the myriad of purposes facing principals (Burford, 2015). One explanation is that the participating principals, with the added layer of NAPLAN testing, may have become normalised to an accountability culture; another explanation is that these two cohorts of principals may have refined their sensemaking strategies.

In this study, the principals who had cultivated internal school accountable learning processes reported fewer feelings and thoughts of anger and despair about the external expectations than other principals. The principals measured and evaluated their own student learning as part of their routine processes and were explicit about their learning agenda (e.g., Graham and Rowland, who reported less anxiety, frustration and resentment regarding the external expectations of being held to account than the other principals did). One study showing the progress of a learning improvement agenda, including the responses to environmental pressures, also demonstrated active engagement with what the environment offered, as distinct from a reactive compliance (Knapp, Feldman, & Ling Yeh, 2013). Similarly, findings by Seashore Louis and Mintrop (2012) showed that when schools have

their own internal accountability processes in place they can align with external accountability systems whereby they easily reorder their goals. Carnoy, Elmore, and Siskin (2003) also found that principals with their own internal accountability systems in place reported in detail the ways in which they adopt and adapt system programs to ‘fit’ with their current programs (Carnoy et al., 2003). Carnoy et al.’s research supported later studies by Elmore (2005a) and Roche (2004), which demonstrated that the stronger the internal evidence and accountability systems within the schools, the less conflict and clashing of priorities is experienced when external expectations need to be met.

The methods used by systems to hold the participating principals to account was concerning for some. For example, several principals revealed that they felt grilled, ‘on edge’ and ‘fearful’ and that the accountability was ‘onerous and imposing’. This finding was surprising, given that these principals did not consider the consequences high stakes. Some empirical research found that the stakes level determined the level of emotion for educators (Klerks, 2013). However, the reactions by the principals in this current study supported the findings of Penninckx, Vanhoof, De Maeyer, and Van Petegem (2015), who examined the ‘low-stakes’ inspection context of Flemish education. They found that when engaged in strategic activities to produce a better image of the school, the staff members suffered from severe emotional side effects due to the inspectorial methods. These side effects were affected by the principals’ attitudes towards the inspection, by staff perceptions of inspectors’ behaviour and by the inspection results (Penninckx et al., 2015). Taken together, their findings, along with the current study, suggested that the accountability relationship between school leaders and those carrying out the accountability, such as system leaders, could be an important influence on the possibly detrimental effects of accountabilities for learning. Principals’ attitudes towards annual review days, the way system personnel conduct themselves and the processes they employ were of interest to this study and will be described in the final chapter (see Chapter 8).

Finally, *Framing* is a common strategy used by educational leaders (Rumelhart, 1980; Spillane, 2006). In this current study, the schemas evidenced by plausible stories aligned with Weick's property of plausibility (Weick, 1995). Creating models for explaining their understandings of accountability was also an effective leadership strategy (Darling-Hammond 2010; Kuchapski, 2001). Most of the principals framed the public disclosure of the results as an annoyance rather than a cause of despair or resignation. The stronger the principal's own internal school accountability processes for learning, the less impact the external accountability expectations had and the better the expectations could be integrated. This finding aligned with other studies (Seashore Louis & Mintrop, 2012; Carnoy et al., 2003; Elmore, 2005b; Roche, 2004). A puzzling finding, similar to the findings in the study by Penninckx et al. (2015), was that the principals who viewed the HSC results as low stakes nevertheless reported concern with the ways they were held to account.

#### **6.2.4 Section Conclusion**

The discussion to this point has drawn out significant points from the findings related to principals' *contextualising*, *prioritising* and *framing* the accountability expectations and aligned these with the literature. The principals' ways of interpreting the accountability expectations raised the question of which of these processes was having the greatest influence on principals in their ways of leading. In this study, the principals' interpretations of their environments appeared to hold less influence on their leading than their prioritising. However, their ways of *framing* accountability were interwoven with their priorities, making it difficult to ascertain this aspect's level of influence. This important finding was consistent with the research by Pennings (1975), which examined the interaction between organisational structure, environmental uncertainty and aspects of performance, finding that 'contingency' held minimal influence.

Taken together, the themes in the group of Findings called *interpreting* suggested that the principals in this study had not adopted the expectations of their School systems. This lack

of adoption and principals making their own interpretations was consistent with the findings of other empirical research, that educational leaders in general do not adopt policy as policy makers intend (Spillane, Reiser, et al., 2002).

Principals' interpretations of accountability expectations hold implications for system leaders. Principals in various studies, including this current one, have been found to pay more attention to some factors in their contexts than to others (Obstfeld, Sutcliffe, & Weick, 2005; Spillane & Anderson, 2014). Spillane and Anderson explained novice principals' sensemaking as follows:

Situations of ambiguity and uncertainty—as well as change, contrast, surprise, discrepancy and so on—interrupt ongoing flows of experience and automatic processing, thereby prompting people to extract puzzling clues from their environment in an effort to reconstruct their understandings of a situation (Mandler, 1984 in Spillane and Anderson, 2014, p. 4).

In this current study, concept of sensemaking was powerful in describing the principals' ways of *interpreting*. Table 6.1 presents a summary of the way Weick's sensemaking properties aligned with the way the principals interpreted their expectations.

Table 6.1

*Aligning Weick's Sensemaking Properties with the Study's Findings*

<b>Property</b>	<b>Operational definition</b>	<b>Examples from the discussion of findings</b>
1 Social context	Principals make sensible meanings of accountability, seeking support, consensual validation and relevance with their communities. These are the social anchors in making sense of accountability expectations	Vanessa in the beginning and urgent phases of change and Adrian in his appeal to teachers and students for aspirational grade setting
2 Personal identity	Principals make sense of who they are in relation to the accountability events, whereby they recognise the threats or enhancements in their school contexts, which may determine their sense of efficacy, with 'judgments of relevance and sense' emerging (Weick, 2001, p. 462)	Principals' representations of learning and levels of self-efficacy in leading learning in light of the accountability expectations and their school environment factors
3 Retrospect	Principals notice elapsed events, going back and remembering what they doing in making sense of the accountability expectations. For example, principals can draw upon the past year's student performance data to make sense of current experiences	Principals reported in detail their past performance results and where they would like these results to be in the future
4 Salient cues	Principals use their resourcefulness to pick out indicators (Shipps, 2012). They shore up stories (Rigby, 2015) about the accountability expectations (Koyama, 2014). When these stories become contradictory (e.g., poor parallels in education systems), the grasp of making sense loosens	Principals drew upon empirical research about the negative consequences of national testing in other countries
5 Ongoing projects	Principals make sense of the accountability expectations by placing boundaries on what they account for and how (Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002) and/or by updating their actions and interpretations of the accountability expectations. They may negotiate and appropriate external accountability in innovative, sometimes savvy, ways (Koyama, 2014)	Principals varied in what they accounted for and to whom they accounted. These variations indicated the boundaries that they were setting to make sense of their expectations at the same time as constructing (Spillane, 2006) ways of implementing these expectations
6 Plausibility	Principals make sense by developing coherent stories (Elmore et al., 2013) about their expectations. These stories hold certain levels of credibility and reasoning. The principal's level of coherence in the story is constrained by the agreements of their communities, their own stake in the expectations, familiar scenarios, action and credible effects Over time, these developments could become unconscious (Steinbauer et al., 2015)	Principals developed cognitive schemas or frames about assessment-focused accountability. Their accountabilities for performance results were transformed into plausible frames: personalising, accepting, being responsible and an agent
7 Enactment	The principal takes action to see what they may be up against, tries negotiating an idea or makes a declaration (possibly with regard to the policy makers expectations)	Principals provided examples of how they enacted their sensemaking, such as Adrian ignoring the Year 7 NAPLAN results and speaking of such to the system advisors

**6.3 Principals' Leading Accountable Learning**

The findings in this study about principals' descriptions of their ways of leading were grouped as *Leading accountable learning*. The principals appeared to have established

internal learning goals and processes that were adaptable and flexible in being responsive to external expectations. They implemented practices that were plausible and credible in the eyes of their social referents: self, students, parents, teachers and school systems (Ajzen, 1991). The principals' work included establishing and utilising multiple data sources to enable data analysis, synthesis and implementation, resulting in a common data access point for teachers (such as data walls and digital repositories).

The themes that emerged from their descriptions were *Positioning learning in the centre*, *Persuading teachers* and *Building coherence* (see Figure 5.2).

### **6.3.1 Positioning Learning in the Centre and Persuading Teachers**

The themes *Positioning learning in the centre* and *Persuading teachers* refer to the ways the participating principals persuaded and mobilised their teachers' thinking and actions with regard to being held to account for students' external performance results on one hand and meeting their schools' internal learning goals on the other. These two themes are discussed together in this section because they overlap. A plethora of empirical and theoretical studies (Dinham, 2005, 2008; Robinson (2011); Hattie (2015); Le Fevre and Robinson (2014); Sun and Leithwood (2015)) have drawn indirect parallels with regard to educational leaders' ways of enabling learning and influencing teaching (Dinham et al., 2013). In this current study, direct parallels could be drawn regarding the principals' styles and expressions of leadership, such as instructional leadership (Bendikson et al., 2012; Brown & Chai, 2012), accountable leadership (Elmore, 2005), pedagogical leadership (Male & Palaiologou, 2012) and data-informed leadership (Pettit, 2010). Notably, Pettit's research and ongoing work, set in NSW/ACT Australia, has opened a research stream on the topic of educational leaders' use of data from external assessment programs. The expectation by Catholic NSW School systems of their principals is that they are 'Leaders of learning'. Integral to this function is the expectation that principals will be accountable for learning and

utilise data to inform this accountability. However, Pettit (2010) study suggested that principals did not meet these expectations.

The findings in this section, while offering an extension on Pettit's work, demonstrate insights by drawing out significant points in the findings and comparing and contrasting them with the extant literature. These points are a. managing the external accountability expectations simultaneously with leading learning; b. building credibility with teachers; c. conversations of accounting; d. articulating a vision for learning; e. using data to inform learning and teaching plans; and f. the impact of self-efficacy on leading learning.

a. Managing Expectations Simultaneously

Some principals seamlessly integrated their external expectations with their internal school learning goals. These principals noted the importance of gaining collective agreements from teachers and simultaneously being responsive to the current sets of data and their analytical tools. This finding indicated that the principals needed to have sophisticated integration skills to build coherence between what was being asked of them and meeting their own existing school commitments. Most principals ignored the pressure to set performance results as their target and replaced this with broader learning goals. Leithwood et al. (2005) found that the way principals managed the external and internal expectations is by attending to some concerns and disregarding others, thus balancing competing demands and making choices. They may reorder their goals (Seashore Louis et al., 2012). In this current study, the principals appeared to have developed sophisticated integration skills in the face of increasing accountability demands and expectations to implement School system-imposed programs.

Koyama (2014) found that principals negotiate and appropriate external accountability in innovative and 'clever and savvy' ways to meet multiple demands. Being competent in understanding information and being able to integrate this to the current situation is an essential leadership strategy. Thiel et al. (2012) asserted that one essential strategy for leaders who are making decisions is their capacity to integrate information from their environments.

Understanding yet suspending their expectations may allow adequate information integration, which enables educational leaders to be considered, yet creative, in their approaches.

b. Building Credibility with Teachers

Finding ways to influence teachers and their teaching requires principals to build credibility with their teachers, to encourage and work beside them and to know them. The principals in this study reported that to meet the accountability expectations for learning (both external and internal) they needed to be able to influence teachers and their teaching. Principals may have carried out this role either directly or indirectly. Raymond, for example, delegated this function to others. This delegation is not unusual, as secondary school principals regularly devolve or distribute the tasks before them (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2011; Spillane, 2006). A plethora of literature describes how educational leaders influence (or do not influence) teachers and teaching as well as students and student learning (Hattie, Masters, & Birch, 2015; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). However, there is little literature that refers to a leader's agency in influencing teachers and teaching in the context of accountability and learning in Australian education.

The sub-theme, *building credibility*, referred to the degree to which principals in this study could influence teachers' thinking and actions. Building credibility was reported as being essential in influencing and persuading teachers in their thinking and acting, to meet the external accountability expectations yet remain true to the schools' internal learning goals. The level of principals' credibility was reported in terms of the benefit teachers saw in meeting the expectations for favourable student performance results and at the same time as pursuing their own commitments regarding teaching and learning. As such, the degree of credibility could be said to be determined by the teacher yet influenced by the views and actions of the leader(s) or leadership. The importance of building credibility with teachers and their teaching was mentioned often by ECPs and those new to their school communities: 'They don't know me so I am not sure of my creds yet'.

Some principals built credibility by understanding their teachers' work. Working beside teachers provided opportunities to not only be in close working relationships but also to know and remain current about the teachers' work. Charmaine described herself as 'a hands-on leader' and she attended staff professional studies days, along with the teachers, as a part of the team on. In this way, Charmaine was building and maintaining relationships through common tasks with equal power relationships. Educational leaders working beside teachers aligns with Hersey's and Blanchard's (1988) behavioural task of *participating*, which is described as shared decision making with regard to task accomplishment and fewer requests for a task to be completed, while maintaining high relationship behaviour. Similarly, Hargreaves (2015) asserted the importance of working together to remain strong for a common purpose. Franken, Penney, and Branson (2015) found that teachers were more likely to be influenced when they perceived that their middle leaders understood their aspirations and needs. Importantly, Robinson's (2011) study found that the characteristic of being close to teachers and their learning resulted in better student outcomes. This research of working besides and being close to teachers, participating in the team and knowing teachers aspirations and needs, suggests possible transference for educational leaders when tasked with being accountable for learning.

c. Conversations of Accounting

Knowing teachers' needs and motivations creates opportunities for the leader/s or leadership to influence teachers and their teaching. Conversations based on inquiry are avenues to help leaders' understandings. However, a study by Le Fevre and Robinson (2014) found that principals demonstrated low to moderate capacity to hold conversations about performance; they were more skilled in advocating their own viewpoints than being able to inquire into and check their understandings of the views of the teachers.

In this current study, DeCourcy data were esteemed by the participating principals, possibly because it can be accessed easily, it is not complicated and it has few items to

analyse, as well as because of its teacher accountability function. The majority of principals in this study used DeCourcy data for not only the provision of a different analysis from the HSC results but also as guide for questions to conduct during review conversations with teachers. While only one principal in this study reported that they held conversations focused on teacher developmental issues with regard to unfavourable performance results, Graham revealed that making the time and a structure for these conversations, even when they were difficult, resulted in positive outcomes. Le Fevre and Robinson (2014) found that one reason for educational leaders' reluctance to address poor performance issues was owing to their tendency to avoid negative emotions. However, addressing issues of performance is important. The implications of not doing this were noted in Bryk and Schenider's study (2002), which found that teachers' (and parents') trust of leaders is diminished when leaders avoid dealing with poor teacher performance or deal with it inadequately (resulting in no change). Hence and possibly ironically, if principals avoid holding their teachers to account, this may decrease trust in their leadership. There has been little research on the topic of the DeCourcy tool's function as an analytical tool and as a guide for leaders' questions. Given its widespread adoption by NSW Catholic secondary schools, this could be a future research area, particularly the impact of the DeCourcy guide questions.

#### d. Articulating a Vision for Learning

In this study, the principals who revealed that articulating a vision for learning was essential in their enactments of leading learning spoke about their knowledge about learning, different curriculum designs, working closely with teachers on learning projects and the learning processes more often. In Hershey and Blanchard's (1988) leadership framework, selling is a behavioural task. In this current study, 'selling' a vision for learning and informing people about it were often couched in persuasive terms and as a 'selling' task. These same principals reported negative impacts of external expectations less frequently, which may

suggest that being able to articulate a vision of learning is also one step in influencing teachers.

The principals in this study revealed that they pursued their knowledge of learning and teaching through formal post-graduate study, including doctoral studies, analysing empirical research about learning, reviewing other curriculum designs, schools and School systems (national and international) and engaging in peer leader conversations through meetings and conferences. While there appeared to be no definitive pattern regarding the impact of these activities on principals, the principals who sought out specific professional readings on learning outside of any formal study program were more likely to enact these learnings in their relationships with teachers, with reported influence: ‘When it comes down to it, it’s about learning. You can’t argue with that’. (*Graham*) These same principals noted that students’ results in external testing were not the full representation of learning. No studies were found to support this finding.

e. Using Data to Inform Learning and Teaching Plans

The majority of principals were expansive about what data could offer, such as leverage for persuasion and notably, the way data informed teaching and learning practices. Empirical research was also considered data. Most of the principals described the importance of using and personalising data (Kaufman et al., 2014; Sharratt & Fullan, 2012), acknowledging the influence of educational research on their understandings of learning and the impact of teaching on student learning (Bendikson et al., 2012; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Richmond, 2007; Timperley, 2007). Other principals only used data to inform performance target setting. Koretz’s (2008) study found that in regimes with higher stakes consequences, accountability in driving for performance results gradually superseded the ‘diagnosis of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students’ learning’ (p. 47). In this current study, the principals who employed data for the purpose of performance target setting were also the principals who believed that the external expectations were a tool for judging and being

measured themselves as a principal. This was an important finding, validated by Koretz's study. The higher stake in this case was the principals' thinking that their competency was being judged according to the students' results in external testing. In this instance, these principals set targets for students' performance results and grades.

The teacher needs to see a benefit for themselves in changing a teaching practice or using data from performances (Dinham, 2008). Teachers are more likely to see a benefit if implementation plans have been established collectively and agreed by community members. Principals in this study who demonstrated their pursuits in solo (I and me) terms were more likely to demonstrate frustration and anger regarding their attempts to either persuade or influence teachers or to shield or buffer system expectations. One principal reported their solo pursuit as exhausting: 'I have been going in this job now for [XX] years I don't know how I will continue'. (*Damien*) Finally and importantly, the students need to know clearly where the expectations for performance results reside in their school, with a unified approach from all teachers across all their subject areas.

Principals in this study reported that students' performance results were part of their learning goals, but only a small part. Joseph 'tried a whole school approach—it's a great scaffold for writing—so it will help in all subject areas but also should improve our results'. There were many studies about data informing leadership practices to address results, from *No child left behind* (Anderson, Leithwood, & Strauss, 2010; Stobart, 2008) and OfSTD (Earl & Fullan, 2003) to NAPLAN (Carter, 2015; Harris et al., 2013; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2011) and there was one study about the HSC (DeCourcy, 2005). While the principals who were in the National Partnership school program verbalised the processes that they used to measure their performance growth, they also reported more esteem for the incidental learning that occurred and more about the difficulties when students' performances were the only targets. This finding suggested that targets other than students' performance results were needed. Other principals in the study carried out their evaluations according to their own

learning goals, rather than basing them on improvements in students' performance results. This represented an increase in data informing practices, with the principals needing to present evidence of not only their implementation plans but also the evaluations and outcomes of those plans. This magnified the level and specificity of data and accountability. Being capable and confident in their capability of utilising data to inform leadership practices and evaluate accordingly appeared to be linked to principals' levels of self-efficacy.

#### f. The Impact of Self-Efficacy on Leading Learning

Investigating the principals' levels of self-efficacy was not an immediate goal of this study. However, this factor seemed to influence their ways of leading learning. In turn, the findings suggested that the principals' levels of self-efficacy in leading were influenced by their confidence levels with regard to understanding learning. Self-efficacy is an important determinant for behaviour in educational leadership. A study by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) found that self-efficacy influences principals' efforts, persistence and resilience in managing demands and expectations. McCollum and Kajs (2007), for example, found that the self-efficacy construct was relevant in a broad sense of principals' abilities to lead schools. In comparing general literature on self-efficacy, this study could describe principals' *levels* of self-efficacy as a self-referent construct (Ajzen, 1991) and describe *self-efficacy* as a leader's confidence in their knowledge and skills (Schwarzer, 2014). While Lovell (2009) study found some relationship between leading and leaders' levels of self-efficacy, he suggested that further research was needed to examine the relationship between principals' sense of efficacy for instructional leadership and their sense of efficacy in enacting, particularly in secondary schools. However, no studies were found in the literature about the influential relationship between principals' processes of meeting accountability expectations and their self-efficacy.

In this study, the greatest influence in the principal's agency in leading learning was found to be the principals' perceived knowledge and skill about the teaching and learning processes. George, for example, disclosed, 'I don't know much about that [learning and

teaching]’. Graham reflected on his past: ‘Look, when I first came into the job I was told that [learning and teaching] was an area I needed to develop—and I did’. There appeared to be a dependent relationship between the comfort or confidence in being accountable for results and leading learning with the principals’ knowledge regarding learning and teaching. Several studies point to similar dependent relationships in principals’ leadership. A study by McCollum and Kajs (2007) found that the self-efficacy of principals was related to their confidence in their knowledge base and skill (McCollum & Kajs, 2007). Likewise, Nelson and Sassi (2005) and Stein and Nelson (2003) found that a barrier to more effective instructional leadership is the adequacy of leaders’ knowledge of teaching and learning processes. They found that leaders who demonstrated lack of confidence were likely to be reluctant to observe teachers and give them feedback. However, Spillane and Seashore-Lois (2002) found that if leaders do not demonstrate knowledge and confidence, their chances of being influential with teachers are not high. If principals are to be influential in leading assessment-focused accountability (*Leading accountable learning*), then they need to be confident and convinced in enacting their own knowledge and skills regarding teaching and learning.

When tasked with leading learning and meeting accountability expectations, principals need to balance competing priorities (Leithwood, 2005), reorder goals (Seashore Louis & Mintrop, 2012) and be creative in integrating information (Thiel et al., 2012). Many studies on the topic of leader effectiveness in student learning outcomes offered insights for this current study (Hattie et al., 2015; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Robinson et al., 2008). However, as noted earlier, there are few studies on the topic of the influence of educational leaders’ agency on teaching and learning while at the same time being accountable for results. As already described, building credibility was seen as being essential to leading learning in the principals’ accountability contexts. Other leadership actions that were likely to build credibility with teachers were being close and working beside teachers (Robinson, 2011),

participating in the team (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988), being the cheerleader (Charmaine) and understanding teachers' aspirations and needs (Christopher M Branson, Franken, & Penney, 2015). Only one principal in this study mentioned that they conducted conversations with teachers in terms of accounting for students' results in external testing. Avoiding such conversations risks trust with staff being diminished (Bryk & Schenider). Articulating a vision of learning and personalising and merging data use into the learning and teaching processes were two key enactments that enabled the principals in this current study to influence teaching. Their self-efficacy levels were affected by their knowledge of learning. Therefore, these findings, alongside the literature, suggested that if educational leaders were to have influence in leading assessment-focused accountability, they needed to feel confident and convinced in enacting their own knowledge and skills in teaching and learning.

### **6.3.2 Building Coherence**

The theme *Building coherence* refers to the findings where principals find plausible ways to enact their accountability. The terms 'plausible' and 'enact' align comfortably with two of Weick's seven properties: *plausible* meaning that speech acts are credible and convincing, rather than being accurate; *enactment* means that the individual takes action to see what they may be up against, tries a negotiating gambit or makes a declaration (see Table 6.1) (Weick, 1995). In the context of leaders attempting to align external and internal expectations, Elmore (2005) described coherence building as 'moving from an atomized state to a more coherent organizational state' (p. 135) and in another study, described coherence as 'a school's capacity to engage in deliberate improvements in instructional practice and student learning across classrooms over time as evidenced by educator practices and organizational processes that connect and align work across the organization' (Elmore et al., 2013, p. 4). In this current study, the principals created metaphors and images to support their self-coherence and used mantras, narratives to bring about coherence for their communities. Their

descriptions of their ways of leading aligned their teachers' work, in various degrees and substance, with their interpretations of the external expectations.

In this study, the principals' *Building coherence* was not aligned to student learning outcomes. A study by Carnoy et al. (2003) found that schools in their internal accountability 'default mode' may exhibit a huge degree of alignment around student performance results or may organise itself around behaviour management with little or no coherence with their academic goals (p. 5). 'Default mode' in this sense was a school's encultured practices. Similarly, in his explanation of the importance of a leader's skill in building coherence, Duignan (2010) was silent about the effect of this on learning. However, and congruent with this current study's findings, Duignan asserted the importance of creating coherence as leaders' establish a sense of order, creating patterns of predictability and ensuring feelings of calm.

Some ways the participating principals reported that they were *Building coherence* included constructing cultures of perspective taking; integrating external expectations with internal processes and goals; embedding a culture of learning; and performance setting

The lantern as a metaphor: *Novel and creative perspective taking, she becomes (Panzer, 1989) the lantern, shedding light on the direction to take.*

cultures. The principals revealed that to 'manage' the external accountability expectations, they built cultures that encouraged teachers, parents and students to keep the students' performance results from external programs in perspective. Perspective

taking—seeing the other person's view (Grant & Berry, 2011)—is a powerful skill. When employees are 'guided by prosocial motivation (for example being encouraged by leaders), to take others' perspectives, they will channel their intrinsic motivation towards producing ideas that are not only novel, but also useful, thereby achieving higher creativity (Grant & Berry, 2011, p. 74). Ku, Wang and Galinsky (2015) described perspective taking in similar creative terms as an imagining the world from 'another's vantage point or imagining oneself in

another's shoes to understand the visual viewpoint' (p. 79). When educational leaders faced with difficult external expectations offer perspective taking to their school communities, the community may engage and offer novel and creative solutions in meeting their own needs at the same time as meeting the external expectations.

Embedded throughout the findings of this study were the ways the principals built coherence between their responses to the assessment-focused accountability expectations and meeting the leader of learning expectations. Principals needed to work out ways to integrate the external expectations with their core business of the school, leading learning. One participant declared that they 'would have this [leader of learning] expectation of themselves anyway' and Rowland's resolution was to set up cultures of learning in which he limited his conversations to learning conversations and paid little attention to the market forces from student performances in external assessments. Consistent with these findings was the working theory of Carnoy et al. (2003) in the ways that educators conceive accountability. They held the assumption that schools (educators) embed their internal accountability into the patterns of their day-to-day operations, which significantly influence the way the teachers deliver education. Their assumption was that principals and teachers must solve the problem of accountability in some way or another, to carry out their work. Rowland's narrative solved his problem of accountability through embedding all works as a learning act; on attending an interview following a student's suspension, 'the parent breathes a sigh of relief when the conversation is about taking up the offer of learning'. (*Rowland*) As few studies could be found on the impact of principals being expected to be leaders of learning and at the same time being held to account for students' results in external tests, this current study contributes to the field of Australian educational leadership research.

The principals in this study revealed that part of their work was to manage judgements made about the school image and their students resulting from the disclosure of their students' results in external assessments. Principals built coherence by ensuring their school looked

positive, such as presenting their performance data in their annual report in the best possible light: ‘... well, I present the data to represent the school as best I can’. (*Alfred*) This finding was consistent with Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) study, which found that principals always present the best data available, even at times with ‘deception or manipulation of data [in order] for a school to look good’ (p. 276).

The various influences that affected the ways the principals in this study built their cultures of coherence were clarity of School system expectations, self-coherence and styles of leading. The principals reported that in meeting the system accountability expectations, their school priorities clashed with the system priorities. These clashes created anxiety and frustrations, apparently because the accountability system was also their employer. Marks and Nance (2007) found that principals were likely to perceive the influence of the state negatively when states used mandates, regulations and sanctions as policy levers. However, Carnoy et al. (2003) found that educators perceived assessment-focused accountability negatively where there appeared to be an absence of their own internal accountability systems. In the current study, the principals who reported a greater negative effect of system accountability expectations were the same principals as those who spoke the least about their responses to accountability from a learning perspective, such as the utility of data and influencing teaching.

One aim of external accountability systems is to push low-performing schools to do better (Ministerial Council for Federal Financial Relations, 2009). One may predict that schools that are least aligned internally would obtain the greatest benefits from the imposition of external accountability. However, Carnoy et al. (2003) found that it was precisely these schools ‘with non-aligned internal accountability systems that were least likely to be able to respond coherently to the external accountability demands’ (p. 8). Their research supported previous studies by Elmore (2005b) and Roche (2004), which found that the stronger the internal evidence and accountability systems within the schools, the less conflict and clashing

of priorities is experienced. Additionally, and similar to the current study, Carnoy et al. (2003) found that poor integration between external expectations and internal processes and goals was exacerbated when the external system expectations were not consistently strong. Likewise, Pettit (2010) found that school system expectations were essential for educational leaders to meet the regulated accountabilities, to take data seriously and to use data for implementation for change in student learning. For example, in the current study, one principal was unsure about why the School system nominated their school as a National Partnership school. This study (as well as studies elsewhere) suggested that School systems needed to be clear about their expectations in order to help schools. This stance may be surprising, given the current empirical research (Comber, 2012; Comber & Cormack, 2011; Smeed, Bourke, Nickerson, & Corsbie, 2015) and discourse (Lingard et al., 2013) about the negative effects of NAPLAN and PISA testing on the work of teachers and principals. This stance will be explored further in the final chapter.

Principals' capabilities in *Building coherence* may have been influenced by their self-coherence. In the context of *Building coherence*, self-coherence could be described as the individual's intrapersonal knowledge and skill. Intrapersonal knowledge can be described as a means of coming to know self and of coming to know the self as a leader (Stephen Dinham et al., 2013; Gardner, 2011). This domain of leadership is important in an educational leader's growth and development and in particular, when complex events or episodes need to be managed. Hibbert and Cunliffe (2015) noted that responsible management and leadership depend upon engaging in regular and consistent reflexive practices. Taken together, that is, Hibbert & Cunliffe (2015) and this study's findings it is hypothesised that the more a leader knows themselves, the more likely they are to demonstrate a secure sense of confidence in building coherent communities that can integrate their external expectations with their internal expectations. In this current study, the levels of confidence shown by principal's leading was observed through their narratives and mantras. For example, the following mantras indicated a

secure sense of their own views in which results were not the priority: 'I don't pay too much attention to the results' (*Graham*); 'I don't listen to the naysayers, if it's not about learning' (*Rowland*); 'It's immoral the way schools use results to market their schools' (*Rowland*); and 'If authentic learning is happening, results will take care of themselves' (*Charmaine*). Behind these mantras were metaphors that described the principals' ways of leading. It is posited that the creation of metaphors and images are a reflexive enactment and require that principals have already behaved in certain ways and have 'looked back' (*retrospect*, Weick, 1995) and having acted, named their behaviours metaphorically. These are reflexive actions and can be indicators of the principal's own intrapersonal knowledge and skill, which is then reflected in their capacity to build coherence.

The use of metaphors and mantras cannot be underestimated in how the principals in this study built self-coherence and community coherence. These findings were not evident in studies that investigated principals' reactions to external expectations of accountability, such as Shipps (2012), Shipps and White (2009), Firestone and Shipps (2005) and Spillane, Diamond, et al. (2002). In this current study, the metaphorical thought and types of narratives specified how the principals enacted their responses to the accountability expectations, an aspect that has been absent from other research studies.

As noted earlier, few studies were found on the topic of the effect of principals being expected to be leaders of learning while also being held to account for students' results in external tests. Even though coherence building was a little different among the participating principals, their ways of building coherence could be witnessed when they were 'becoming' their metaphors (Panzer, 1989) and as they orated their mantras. This is a new research finding in educational leadership in Australia, with respect to the way principals create metaphors and develop mantras to build coherence within themselves and within their communities. Although there were some studies that shed light on principals' dilemma of

increasingly being accountable for a single number on test results (Ehrich et al., 2015), there were none in the context of enacting the leader of learning function.

#### **6.4 The Effects of Interpreting on Leading Accountable Learning**

The discussion in this section explores the findings that refer to the relationship between the principals' understandings and how these understandings affected their ways of leading learning. As explained in the literature review (see Section 2.8), this discussion employs the TPB to explore this relationship (Ajzen, 1991, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The TPB was an appropriate lens because of its capacity to provide explanations for and predictions for behaviour (Ajzen, 2012).

Ajzen premises that behaviour is influenced by intentions, which as such, are predictors of behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) (see Section 2.6.3). Ajzen's three determinants, which are the predominant influences on intention, are *attitude*, *subjective norm* and *perceived behavioural control* (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). These three determinants have been employed to 'tease out' the relationships between the principals' understandings and ways of leading learning in their accountability environments. The explanation utilised the sample data predominantly from five participating principals: Vanessa, Adrian, Charmaine, Damien and George.

The first of Ajzen's determinant to align is *attitude*. In this study, the principals' interpretations of their school environments and expectations were being evaluated in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable' terms. These evaluations, following Ajzen's proposition, determined their intentions in the ways they would lead learning. Vanessa and Adrian were employed as two case examples to demonstrate how identifying the attitude to the outcome makes it reasonable to predict a principal's intention to act.

Vanessa reported that if she ignored the performance results on NAPLAN, their results would remain the same or become lower. Vanessa also revealed that school enrolments were dependent upon performance results: 'Parents will choose. They will look at our results. They

will look for the pink on that map or the green ...'. Staff members were being deployed elsewhere due to the loss of enrolments through poor student performance results; therefore, Vanessa saw these performance results as unfavourable and her intention was to improve them. However, she regarded teaching to the test and working only towards performance results as limiting the curriculum for students: 'NAPLAN can narrow curriculum and diminish all the interesting aspects of kids' learning'. To avoid staff losses (favourable outcome), Vanessa reported that she would implement short-term intervention strategies (intention) to improve the performance results (favourable outcome). Vanessa summarised her intention as follows: 'So I said we're going to have a year of basics ... we're going to go focus on improving literacy and improving numeracy in the areas that our kids need ... I've got to get those results up'. Her attitude to the behaviours, both favourable and unfavourable, had a direct effect on her intentions.

Adrian perceived that poor results in students' performance in external testing could lead to unfair comparisons of schools by the community and School system advisors, which could be harmful for prospective enrolments (unfavourable outcome evaluation): 'It does get up my nose a lot when, as often happens in schools—that always happens, in fact—the job of comparing apples with oranges happens'. Here, being compared was also an unfavourable outcome evaluation. Even though it may be difficult to predict Adrian's actions exactly, it could be predicted that Adrian's intention would be to find ways of reducing these comparisons. Adrian's metaphor of 'buffer' and 'shield' was a window into the ways he acted to diminish the comparisons by the School system. The public narrative was a mantra that these students achieve above what would be expected. He initiated a school-wide change, persuading the students and teachers to focus on internal school grade growth rather than public performative measures: 'So you could go in as I've done today with the regional director, wander through classrooms and say, "Cooper, what's your target for science?" "It's a C, sir." Says the regional director, "How did you arrive at a C?" [Cooper] said, "Well, last

year I was a D.” So it was the aspirational and achievable target for that child’. Clearly, Adrian’s attitude to the behaviours of being compared was an unfavourable outcome and creating his internal accountability of grade setting was a favourable outcome. Hence, Adrian’s outcome evaluation established his intention of internal grade setting, which in turn influenced his ways of leading learning (behaviour).

Ajzen’s second determinant of intention, the *subjective norm*,<sup>23</sup> was applied to the case examples of Charmaine and Damien. The *social referents* (i.e., to whom the principals were motivated to prioritise their accountabilities), were identified as parents, students, School system personnel or themselves. The *object referents* (i.e., what principals were motivated to account for) ranged from the students’ happiness in learning or the students’ results in external tests.

Charmaine’s social referents were the students, the parents and herself, followed by the School system. She explained, ‘I care about our kids. I care about their parents. Obviously, I am accountable also to [the School system] for the performances of the school but ... I think we’re accountable to the students.’ Her object referent was the type of learning she considered she accounted for. She explained:

Yeah, okay, Band 6s are important but it’s more important that they’re all getting the best that they can get ... That’s not just about results, is it? I mean, learning is about everything else that’s happening in the school as well, all the other opportunities that the girls get to learn and to grow and get experience in a variety of things.

The referents that Charmaine revealed influenced her intentions directly. She reported that as a leader of learning, it was important to articulate a vision for learning, to work closely with teachers in their professional learning and to maintain broad pedagogical learning

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<sup>23</sup> Refers to an individual’s ‘perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behavior’ (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Ajzen suggests that the social pressure is more often individuals and refers to them as social referents (Ajzen, 2012).

programs that continued to engage the students. As such, Charmaine's intention was demonstrated through a longitudinal school-wide pedagogical program.

Damien's object referents were high performances in the HSC exam, whereby he explained that the results from the NAPLAN, HSC and Religion Test were the measure and 'that's the measure and we need to perform in that regard'. At the same time, his social referents were his teaching staff, whereby he needed to persuade them to aim for high percentages for student results and the students were, in one sense, another social referent group: 'I never bulldozed. Or maybe I do sometimes. But the times are tough when you have to ... I said to them I want to know what are the targets we are aiming for and this was the whole diatribe that came back ...' Damien's two referent groups determined his intentions.

Ajzen's well-tested theory recognises that intention precedes behaviours (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The perceptions of Charmaine and Damien, with regard to their referents, influenced their intentions. As with Ajzen's factor, *attitude*, the more favourable the referent, the stronger was the principal's intention reflected in their ways of leading.

Ajzen's third determinant of intention is *perceived behavioural control*.<sup>24</sup> As influencing behaviour indirectly, through intention, perceived behavioural control has been shown to have a direct effect on behaviour (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). George has been employed as the case example because of his explicit explanations of his intentions and reasons for his ways of leading learning. George revealed that his past professional experiences were formed through pastoral and well-being career pathways in middle and senior leadership experiences. These experiences did not necessarily prepare him for the principal's role, which held expectations of being a leader of learning. Perceived behavioural control is most compatible with Bandura's (1977) concept of perceived self-efficacy, which concerns judgements of how well an individual can execute courses of action required to deal

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<sup>24</sup> Refers to the individual's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and is assumed to reflect past experiences as well as anticipated challenges (Ajzen, 2012).

with future situations (Bandura, 2006). In George's case, his interpretations of the accountability expectations appeared to lack clarity. He seemed unsure of his object referent: 'I mean I think growth, yeah, look, to me it's more—yeah, learning growth is probably the most important—is the most important thing ... but I suppose to me, that should include being above the state average. Can I say that?' Lacking clarity in his own mind possibly influenced the ways he believed he could lead learning. He reported that he did not know the ways to influence teaching and learning processes because he explained that it was not a strength area in his formation:

Primarily **my role** is to work with the staff to **lift their learning and teaching practices** to help facilitate the students on learning. ... my focus is around **leading that learning and that requires of me** to be **competent enough to be able to help facilitate** that ... a lot of my formation in terms of leadership was around change and not so much about learning and teaching ... I'm **not the expert in learning and teaching and probably never will be.**

At this point, it would be reasonable to predict to a degree some possibilities in George's direct courses of action. First, it would be *unlikely* that George would make claims of his knowledge and skill in learning and teaching with his staff and it would be *likely* that he would engage others' help or be paralysed and not act at all.

In this study, Gavin's ways of leading were to devolve to others: 'to me it's about facilitating that discussion and trying to make sure that the learning and teaching coordinator or where we're going in the learning and teaching team or as a leadership executive—that it's facilitated through the staff and led through the staff ... we have a really good teaching and learning director here'. Following this, George introduced a qualifier: 'one day I would like to see myself as a facilitator of learning'. George's case example demonstrates how his lowered levels of self-efficacy about his knowledge of teaching and learning formed his intention of

allowing others to lead learning and this intention was realised when others engaged in a lead role in the leadership of teaching and learning.

As with the determinants of *attitude* and the *subjective norm*, the determinant of *perceived behavioural control* exposed the relationship between principals’ understanding of accountability (favourable outcome evaluations and social referents and self-efficacy), with this determining their intentions. As with Ajzen’s hypothesis, these intentions influenced their leadership behaviours. The ‘more favourable the attitude and the subjective norm with regard to a behavior and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger should be an individual’s intention to perform the behavior under consideration’ (Ajzen, 1991, p. 189). Through the demonstrations of these case examples, all three predictors made independent contributions to understanding the principals’ ways of leading (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Madden, 1986).

The application of the TPB, using the five case examples, suggested that when being held to account for students’ performances in external testing, these principals prioritised their referents, evaluated the outcome of certain behaviours and made judgements about their self-efficacy in leading learning. These priorities determined their intentions and behaviours, as shown in the summary in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

*Application of the TPB to Case Examples*

<b>Determinant</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example findings</b>
Attitude	The degree to which the principal has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question	Vanessa unfavourably evaluated the loss of staff as being due to loss of enrolments, which resulted from poor student results in external testing. Her evaluation of outcomes formed her intention to improve the students’ results
Subjective norm	Ajzen (Ajzen, 2012) suggests that often, the social pressure is individuals or social referents. In this study an internal pressure by principals to perform or not perform a behaviour was the priority that the principals gave to the object referents	Charmaine’s social referents were identified as the parents and students, with her object referents identified as authentic learning. These referents determined her intentions of ensuring that students’ results in external testing was low priority
Perceived behavioural	Principals’ perceived ease or difficulty of	George predicted it would be difficult to

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control	performing a behaviour, assumed to lead learning and account for this, given reflect past experiences as well as his previous leadership experiences anticipated challenges (Ajzen, 2012)
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## 6.5 Summarising the Chapter

A key finding in this investigation was that the principals in the study rejected that a single number could be an adequate measure of learning. Their rejection appeared to originate from their beliefs about learning and the way the measure was adopted to rank schools and judge their competency as a principal. Other studies have also found that educational leaders object to performance results being used for ranking, competition and marketing (McGuire, 2012; Stobart, 2008), for judging their professional competency (Perryman, 2009) and the types of instruments used for assessment (often termed blunt) (Goldschmidt et al., 2005; Perryman, 2007). The principals in this study framed the accountability expectations in ways that aligned with their own beliefs about learning, reporting the importance of responsibility, personalising and acceptance. They desired a more meaningful relationship to the accountability expectations. Similar to Darling-Hammond's (2010) and Koyama's (2014) conceptualisation of accountability, they imagined a reciprocity and a creative integration of external and internal relationships.

Consistent with the empirical findings that educational leaders do not adopt policy as policy makers would intend (Spillane, Reiser, et al., 2002), the principals in this study did not adopt the expectations of their School systems. They prioritised the focus of their accountability environments (Obstfeld et al., 2005; Spillane & Anderson, 2014), which could be explained as a sensemaking process. The application of Weick's sensemaking properties in this discussion has illuminated reasons for principals' choices in what they adopted and did not adopt regarding accountability expectations.

The principals created metaphors and developed mantras. 'Becoming' the metaphor (Panzer, 1989) was a novel and creative way for the principals to make sense of their expectations (Ku et al., 2015). Orating their mantras offered plausibility to themselves and

their communities (Weick, 1995). This finding offered a different perspective in Australian educational leadership, with the principals' use of metaphors and mantras employed as a coherence device for themselves and for their communities when faced with the need to implement external expectations. Similar to the findings of Carnoy et al. (2004), Elmore (2005b) and Roche (2004), *Building coherence* was less complicated when there were existing internal evidence systems informing the learning processes.

No other studies were found to shed light on the principals' dilemma of being increasingly accountable for performance results while also being required to enact the leader of learning function. Given that most NSW Catholic systemic secondary principals have this dual function, the findings from this study offered a contribution in 'teasing out' further the implications of this dilemma.

If educational leaders are to be influential in leading assessment-focused accountability in their teaching and learning processes, they need to be convinced about their own beliefs and knowledge and confident to enact these in their leadership. Expressions of these enactments were described as *building credibility*. This included articulating a vision (Venus, Stam, & van Knippenberg, 2013), being close and working beside teachers (Robinson, 2011); participating in the team (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988); being the cheerleader (Charmaine); and understanding their teachers' aspirations and needs (Christopher M Branson et al., 2015).

The principals needed to balance competing priorities (Leithwood, 2005), reorder goals (Seashore Louis & Mintrop, 2012) and be creative in integrating information (Thiel et al., 2012) when meeting the accountability expectations. While a plethora of studies pointed to leader effectiveness in delivering student outcomes (Hattie et al., 2015; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Robinson et al., 2008), there were few studies demonstrating the way the principals' interpretations of the accountability expectations affected their agency in leading teaching and learning.

In this discussion, Ajzen's TPB was applied to five case examples. This application demonstrated the 'effect' relationship central to the major research question: *How do principals' understandings of their assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* The application of the examples was premised on Ajzen's assertion that an individual's intentions determine their behaviours (Ajzen, 2012). That is, the way the principals interpreted the accountability expectations would determine their intentions. Ajzen's *attitude*, *subjective norms* and *perceived behavioural control* were analysed for how the principals evaluated the possible outcomes of their intended actions (e.g., making decisions whether or not to target for results), prioritised their referents (e.g., placing a higher priority on teachers than on the school system) and made judgements about their self-efficacy (e.g., being able to lead learning in light of their expectations). This application and analysis demonstrated the principals' intentions, which in turn were shown in their enactments.

One striking enactment, in the form of an absence, was the principals' lack of reporting that they held their teachers to account for the students' results in external testing. While the lack of individual conversations to hold teachers accountable for student performances was striking, it was not surprising, given that all of the participating principals reported that the results of single tests were not an adequate measure of learning.

This discussion on the findings, particularly the application of the TPB, has revealed the importance of how the principals' interpretations of the accountability expectations, under certain conditions, were likely to determine their intentions. Knowing a principal's interpretation is key to determining their intentions and their likely ways of leading learning. This study and others (Eacott & Norris, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2013; White, 2006) suggest that principals' interpretations of the accountability expectations are dynamic, organic and unique to what the principals themselves bring to the expectations, such as their professional experiences; knowledge and skill regarding learning and teaching; contextualising within their school environments; and peer and school system relationships. Throughout this investigation,

this researcher was struck by the novel and sophisticated ways that the participating principals had adapted and evolved in actively making sense of the accountability expectations. The principals in this study, in response to the accountability expectations, had much in common with the mature Australian Eucalypt, uniquely adapting and evolving their structures, as if integrating the 'weather' to become part of them.

## Chapter 7: Generating a Theoretical Model

... the final theory that is constructed grounded in data is a representation of both participant and researcher. Another researcher could take the same data and by placing a different emphasis on the data construct a different theory. However, that does not negate the validity of the theory ... whatever theory is produced is grounded and that ... gives another insight and understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014, p. 29).

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter has two main aims. One is to explain and justify how the findings of this study and the ensuing discussions have been employed to generate a theoretical model. The second is to evaluate the quality of the research process.

A theoretical model is useful, as it provides a compass in what could possibly be difficult terrain in the ever-increasing expectations placed on educational leaders by policy makers in the Australian context. Moreover, this model, being grounded in data, offers educational leaders a sense of practicality for the current challenges. Finally, generating a theoretical model grounded in data contributes to the methodology of Australian educational leadership research (see Section 8.3).

The generation of the model employed the well-recognised analytical strategies of Corbin and Strauss (2014). The model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of and Integrating* Accountability Expectations' met the third purpose of the study of generating a theory whereby providing answers to the 'what, how, when, where and why of something' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 55). This model explains and describes how educational leaders may interpret their policy expectations and the ways these interpretations are likely to have an influence, under certain conditions, on their intentions to enact the accountability expectations.

The theoretical components of the model are substantive. They have been developed from the findings yet need to be considered as part of these participating principals' environments. Therefore, the components are best viewed only from the intention to explain comparable educational leaders<sup>25</sup> who are in comparable environments<sup>26</sup> with comparable policy expectations<sup>27</sup> (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Formal theory, as different from substantive theory, is developed from researching a phenomenon such as accountability in a range of situations in which the theory may have a broader application (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). As such, this theoretical model can be described as substantive, not formal.

The model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Accountability Expectations', was the culmination of the interpretations of the participating principals and this researcher's experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Therefore, the evaluation of this research has been situated in the interpretations of the participants' experiences, as represented in the findings. Additionally, the research has been evaluated by comparing these findings with this researcher's interpretations of the literature. The evaluation adopted the criteria designed by Corbin and Strauss and determined the extent to which the research represented the participants' and the researcher's experiences adequately. The evaluation demonstrated that the research uncovered and captured the interplay of the relevant conditions with the participating principals and this researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Importantly, the research process offered insight into the principals' experiences of assessment-focused accountability (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

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<sup>25</sup> An example would be the educational leaders who are ultimately responsible for interpreting policy expectations while also having the responsibility of making decisions about their implementation.

<sup>26</sup> Where the school environment factors and the level of stake have some similarity.

<sup>27</sup> Similarities in the level and content of the regulation imposed on the educational leaders.

This chapter begins with an explanation of the genesis and emergence of the model (see Section 7.2), followed by the explanation of the model (see Section 7.3). It then moves on to an examination of relationship between the two core categories (see Section 7.4), followed by an evaluation of the research process (see Section 7.5) and concludes with the chapter summary (see Section 7.6).

## **7.2 The Emerging Model**

### **7.2.1 Rationale**

Although the accountability expectations in this study were not considered by the participating principals as being set by the Government, they were considered expectations because they were answerable, both in intention and implementation, to a higher authority; that is, their School systems. Their ‘answering’, as reported by the principals, was external to their schools. For example, Graham’s interpretation was, ‘I answer to the system far more than I do to Government ...’. Policy expectations have both of these elements—that the policy will be adopted and implemented with some sense of accountability (answering) for its implementation. In education, either this expectation rests with the principal or it is delegated to senior educational leaders in the school. When comparing the extant literature with the findings (see Section 6.2) it was apparent that the experiences of principals in this study have much in common with other educational leaders.

The core category of the theory needs to link all of the categories and hold in its naming an analytic and explanatory power for all of the categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). The two core categories that describe educational leaders’ engagement with external expectations were *making sense* and *integrating*. These core categories represented principals’ interpretations and ways of leading in their accounts of assessment-focused learning, respectively.

The findings of this study suggested that the principals’ understandings of the accountability expectations were interpretive, complex and unique, and had an effect on the

ways they were leading learning in their schools. In this study, the principals were making sense of the external expectations. Their interpretations of their school environments and the priorities they gave to one expectation over another, in turn, were influenced by their previous leadership experiences, beliefs about learning, levels of self-efficacy about learning and teaching processes, and peer principal and school system relationships. Theoretically, the principals' interpretations could be described as *making sense* of the accountability expectations. Weick's (1995) sensemaking properties closely aligned with the findings pertinent to principals' interpreting their expectations. The principals' processes of *making sense* influenced their intentions. These intentions were enacted to varying degrees, such as enabling school-wide learning, influencing learning and teaching, and building coherence within themselves and in their school communities.

Theoretically, the principals' processes in their reported ways of leading learning could be described as *integrating* their expectations. The theoretical relationship between the leaders' interpretations to their intentions and resultant behaviours held the potential to be aligned with Ajzen's (2012) determinants of behaviours. The principals varied in their capabilities of being able to integrate what was being asked of them with their current internal learning agendas.

This section begins by presenting the emergence of the theoretical model, followed by an explanation of the two core categories and their sub-processes. The section concludes with a graphic representation of the theoretical model.

### **7.2.2 The Genesis of the Model**

This researcher's interpretations underpinned the emergence of the theoretical model. Therefore, this researcher uses the first person in telling the descriptive story (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

### 7.2.2.1 *The descriptive story*

I was immersed in the data for some time before asking myself some broader questions: What jumps out from the page? What is coming through the data, even though not directly (Strauss & Corbin, 2008)? I used the *descriptive story* technique (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to capture the highlights. Memo: The Descriptive Story (see Appendix 11 for the full description) describes my thought processes, in which I, like the principals in this study, created a metaphor to explain some of the processes I was experiencing in my analysis. I drew upon Australian flora in trying to represent the images of adaptation and durability in the participants' experiences of interacting with their external environment.



#### **Memo: The Descriptive Story**

One striking and consistent thread that knitted together the variations in the principals' experiences of their accountability was their adaptive process. Their adaptive processes suggested they were active agents in making sense of the accountability expectations, evaluating the consequences of their future actions, and sometimes simultaneously integrating their environments with these expectations. Their adaptability reminded me of the big Australian eucalypt tree in both its hardiness and beauty, as the tree's organic nature adapts to the regularity of the weather and seasons as well as to the irregularity of fire, drought and flood intrusions. The eucalypt, as if recognising and absorbing changes, evolves in its structure, bending and twisting, at times seeping and yet shooting out tendrils to ensure its growth. Mysteriously, yet assumedly, the ways in which the eucalypt adapts is unique, even though the eucalypts may have been planted at the same time, near and in the same bushland. The eucalypt, like most big trees in our country, have interconnectedness that is not readily visible. The roots of large trees are so interconnected that damaging one tree may impact on another. Like the underground interconnectedness of the eucalypts, these principals were interconnected with each other in making sense of the accountability expectations.

Integrating, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), is making a choice for a core category followed by developing the story around this and using the categories and concepts from the inquiry. This descriptive story helped me integrate the main categories of this study into a ‘unified theoretical explanation’ (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 107).

However, the descriptive story only captured part of the thinking. What were not represented here were the art forms that were at play when some principals could integrate seamlessly or absorb their external expectations within their existing structures, their learning goals and their broader learning agendas. Moreover, it was the principals who stressed the importance of understanding learning and finding perspective about the place of performance results in the learning story who were likely to integrate the external with the internal effortlessly. As I compared the findings to the literature (see Section 6), I found some parallels with this apparent seamless and effortless integration. Carnoy et al. (2003) and Elmore (2005b), along with Roche (2004), found that schools with non-aligned internal accountability systems were unlikely to be able to respond in a coherent way with the external accountability demands. This suggested that schools with aligned internal systems were likely to be able to integrate external expectations with internal agendas. This idea prompted the phenomenon associated with the group of findings *Leading accountable learning* to be named ‘*Integrating*’.

## **7.3 Explaining the Model**

### **7.3.1 Overview**

Two core categories emerged from the analysis: *making sense* and *integrating*. Before moving to an explanation of these categories, it is important to understand that two core categories were adopted rather than the usual single category (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) because a single core category on its own could not explain the principals’ experiences of accountability.

Strauss and Corbin (2008) advise that a ‘... place to begin is with the central category itself’ (p. 111). Both *Making sense* and *Integrating* held explanations for the principals’ interpretations of their expectations and the ways these interpretations influenced their ways of leading. The analyst should also ‘find references in the data’ to reflect the central category, along with their properties (p. 111). Memo: Making Sense of Accountability with Joseph’s reports of his ‘making sense’ triggered thinking about *Making sense* as a core category. *Making sense* was initially selected as central to the core category because it was difficult to ignore it in the preliminary stages of analysis. Glaser (1992) discovered that at times, words can leap out from the page and as coding continues, become difficult to ignore. Joseph’s transcript initially triggered my thinking about principals engaging in processes of adaptability: ‘... *I think it’s a personal thing how you see accountability ... I think if you have an understanding of what you’re about yourself as a principal and what’s your agenda, then you can somehow frame accountability to make sense of it ...*’.



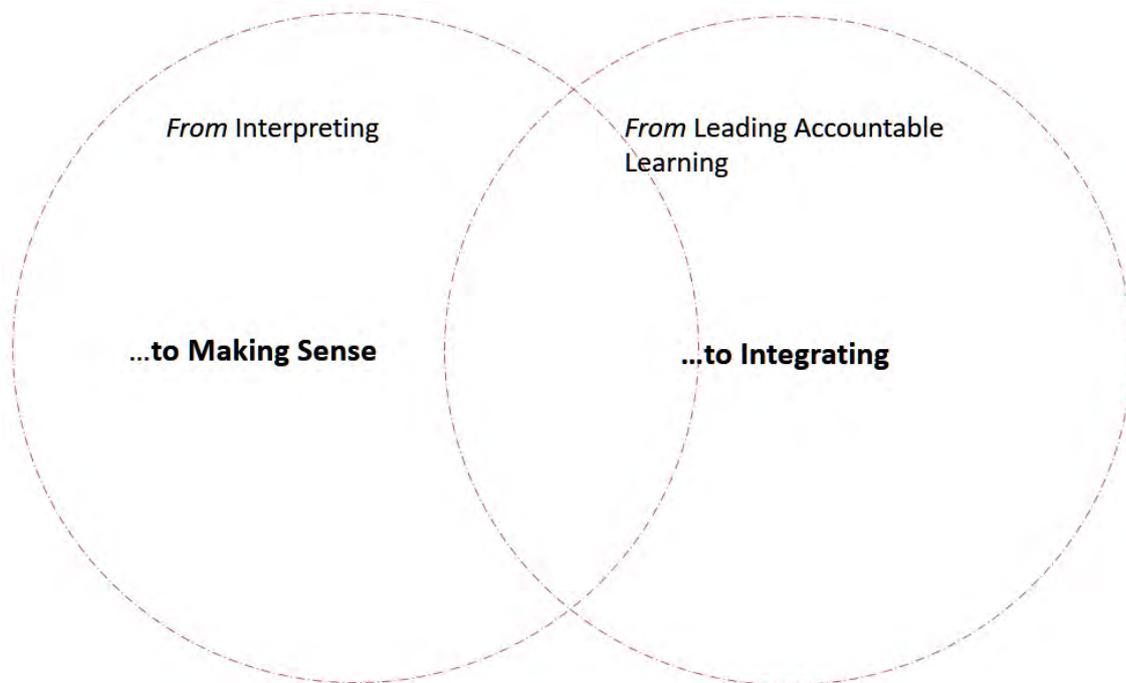
#### **Memo: Making Sense of Accountability.**

Since my interview with Joseph, I have wondered about his ideas about making sense of accountability. When I read and reread his text data, *making sense* continues to stay with me. It is difficult to ignore. His ideas encouraged me to source studies around sensemaking. I have found now that there is a whole body of literature around sensemaking. It is now difficult to block this idea of sensemaking as I continue to analyse the data: I am afraid that I am experiencing my sensemaking as I analyse! My supervisor continues to challenge my thinking, where I jump to a word in my coding and categorising that fits the existing construct—dread! I think also that Glaser calls this forcing the data!

The term *Integrating* was adopted because of its capacity to demonstrate the task before educational leaders whereby they interpret their expectations, examine the internal

school's capacity to adopt or adapt to the policy expectations and then work out ways to integrate it within existing internal systems. *Integrating* described the educational leaders' capabilities of implementing their interpretations of their expectations (see Table 5.2). Similar to the Eucalypt, their behaviours were adapting their interpretations of the accountability expectations in which form is changed.

Hence, the term *Interpreting* accountability expectations moved to the theoretical phenomenon called *Making sense* of expectations and *Leading accountable learning* moved to the phenomenon of *Integrating* expectations (see Figure 7.1).



*Figure 7.1* Transitioning the major themes to the theoretical core categories.

In the next two sections explaining the core categories and the theoretical sub-processes, the themes and sub-themes from the findings have been aligned and shown in italics.

### **7.3.2 Core Category 1: Making Sense**

#### **7.3.2.1 Explanation**

*Making sense* of policy expectations is defined as the process in which educational leaders take notice of pertinent factors in their school environments, prioritising certain

expectations over others and evaluating their expectations. This process of *Making sense* is in light of leaders' beliefs about schooling, which are influenced in turn by their beliefs about learning. The findings suggested that while the participating principals interpreted the accountability expectations in different ways, their common experience was their adaptive process in interpreting their expectations.

### **7.3.2.2 Description**

*Making sense* was adopted because of its power to integrate most of the sub-categories (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). The sub-categories were based on the group of themes from the findings called *Interpreting*. Weick's properties, along with those of other scholars (Dunford & Jones, 2000; Helms Mills, Thurlow, & Mills, 2010; Watson, 1995) contributed to the processes and were applied here because of their explanatory and integrative power (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

The phenomenon of *Making sense* (the *Interpreting* theme) occurs through the educational leaders' following sub-processes:

- Contextualising accountability expectations, meaning leaders take notice of particular factors over others in their school environments, given their interpretations of policy expectations such as enrolments, performance results, competition, student demographics, teacher receptivity and parental and school systems' expectations (see Section 4.2). Weick's properties of 'social context' (Weick, 1995) aligned with the process of Contextualising, whereby educational leaders seek support and consensual validation and relevance with their school communities about the policy expectations. The validation and relevance for members in the community act as social anchors (see Section 2.5.3). The process of Contextualising is also historical in nature. Educational leaders, like the principals in this study, look to the past to make sense of present events in a way that is similar to Weick's explanation of the 'retrospect' property. Weick asserted that retrospect is weakened when individuals do not appreciate or

recall the past (Weick, 2001). Notably, educational leaders, similar to principals in this study, are likely to draw upon empirical and historical data from local and global peers with regard to similar policy expectations, such as the consequences of high-stakes national testing. There is a strong likelihood that when external expectations jeopardise or compromise leaders' beliefs about learning, such as a number not being an adequate measure in the representation of learning, policy interpretations will not be interpreted as the policy makers intended. Principals need to see a benefit that a policy expectation may bring for their school learning environments.

- Prioritising accountability expectations (Weick, 1995) was drawn from the sub-theme *prioritising*. The principals in this study were doing possibly more than *prioritising*; they were *constraining*, possibly unconsciously, which occurs when an individual makes sense of an event by placing boundaries on some portion of the flow. Weick describes the setting of boundaries as *constraining*. Sensemaking diminishes when boundaries are loosened (Weick, 2001). Prioritising in this model describes how leaders place boundaries (Weick, 2001) around what content of the policy is applicable (*account for what learning*), to whom it may apply (*accountable to whom for learning*) and how it is to be implemented (*how learning is accountable*). Principals made these 'boundary decisions' in light of their current expectations in their role function as educational leaders (see Section 4.3).
- Framing accountability expectations occurs when principals are likely to personalise (*personalising accountability*), accept (*accepting accountability*), frame expectations as a responsibility (*accountability as a responsibility*) and frame expectations as an enactment (*accountability as an agency*) (see Section 4.4). In a similar way to Weick's property of 'social context', leaders seek sensible meanings about the policy expectations. They also develop stories that, according to Weick, have 'plausibility', with a sense of reasoning and credibility. In aligning the findings with Weick's

properties, it is hypothesised that educational leaders frame their policy expectations in a similar fashion to the principals in this study, whereby they tell stories and develop mantras about their interpretations of their expectations to make sense to themselves and their communities.

Table 7.1 demonstrates how these processes integrated with the core categories.

Table 7.1

*Integration of the Processes with the Core Categories*

<b>Core categories</b>	<b>Processes</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Influences</b>
Making sense	Contextualising	Interpretations of expectations in light of student demographics, teacher receptivity, parental and School systems' expectations, enrolments, performance results, competition	<i>Beliefs about learning, previous leadership experiences, peer leaders' views, framing the expectations</i>
	Prioritising	Prioritising or placing boundaries (Weick, 1995) around what the content of the policy is, applicable to whom and how it is expected to be implemented	<i>Beliefs about learning, environments (contextualising), School systems expectations, peer leader relationships, self-efficacy in carrying other key functions of their role and their ongoing framing of expectation</i>
	Framing expectations	Expectation frames include through acceptance, personalising, responsibility and agency	<i>Educational leaders' views of their contexts (contextualising), valuing one expectation over another (constraining) and the ways they perceived themselves a leader of learning, including their creation of metaphors and images</i>
Integrating	Designing and implementing learning teaching systems	and Positioning learning in the centre: Articulates visions for learning; and conversations lead to learning; ignoring, deflecting, diverting opposition; implements learning initiatives that meet external expectations through internal goals and targets; creates integration between external with internal (ranging from seamless to disruptive)	<i>Teacher receptivity, enrolments, result patterns, their identity as a leader of learning, their views, skill and knowledge about teaching and learning and the ongoing ways they frame their expectations</i>
Building cultures of coherence	Building cultures with peer leaders, enacting metaphors and	Self-coherence: Fostering relationships with peer leaders, enacting metaphors and	<i>Persuading teachers: By persuading; building credibility; working closely with them, using data to inform practice</i> <i>Teacher resistance; principals and teachers' expectations of students; leaders' self-efficacy in understanding learning; principals' self-efficacy in leading learning; principals' motivation to seek knowledge and skill about learning and teaching</i> <i>Reconciling beliefs about learning and external expectations of</i>

Core categories	Processes	Description	Influences
		images. Community coherence: perspective and balancing priorities, distributing tasks from external expectations, developing aspirational and building cultures	<i>learning; self-efficacy in the leader</i> Taking of <i>learning role, views about competing learning, previous leadership experiences, ways of enacting metaphors and images, and narratives and mantras</i>

### 7.3.3 Core Category 2: Integrating

#### 7.3.3.1 Explanation

*Integrating* policy expectations is defined as the capacity of principals to draw upon their external expectations to contribute to or progress their internal learning goals. The two sub-processes of *Integrating* are *building cultures of coherence* and *designing learning and teaching systems*. The phenomenon of *Integrating* external expectations with internal goals is influenced by the existing internal cultures of coherence (with self and their communities) and the ways leaders design their learning and teaching structures, processes and programs. Educational leaders' acts of *Integrating* are influenced by their capacities to contextualise factors in their school environments, constrain their expectations and frame their expectations. Both the core category and the sub-processes were maintained because of their consistent capacity to integrate with each other (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

#### 7.3.3.2 Description

The phenomenon of educational leaders' *Integrating* expectations (*Leading accountable learning*) is represented through the following sub-processes:

- Building cultures of coherence (*from self-coherence and community coherence*) process occurs when educational leaders act upon their *Making sense* of their expectations. These are evidenced in leaders' acts of self-coherence, such as their creation of metaphors and images. Metaphors and images can be powerful indicators of the ways leaders go about their work, highly internalised and normalised (Panzer, 1989).

These acts also are evidenced when educational leaders build coherence within their communities (Elmore et al., 2013). They include perspective taking and balancing through modelling and articulation (*perspective taking and balancing*); the distribution of tasks set by the policy expectations to senior leaders (*distributing*); developing mantras through telling the positive stories that show the expectations are being met (*developing and telling the good news*); and initiating school-wide structures and processes that are aligned to policy expectations (*building aspirational and performative cultures*).

- Designing and implementing learning and teaching systems occurs when principals plan and enact to integrate the external expectations of policy with their existing learning and teaching structures and processes. The capacity of the design and implementation phase is the extent to which the principal can integrate the external expectations with the internal learning and teaching goals. The capabilities of educational leaders in carrying out these plans and enactments are influenced by educational leaders' contemporary and empirical knowledge about learning (see Section 5.1—Positioning Learning in the Centre); their influence on learning and teaching processes (see Section 5.2—Persuading Teachers); and the strength of the internal design, which needs to demonstrate a visible benefit to teachers in their thinking about learning and accommodating possible teacher resistance (see Section 5.2—Persuading Teachers).

## **7.4 Establishing the Relationship Between *Integrating* and *Making Sense***

### **7.4.1 Theoretical Explanation of the Relationship**

Principals' ways of *Integrating* the accountability expectations are influenced by their *Making sense* of their expectations. The process of *Integrating* combines the capability of principals building coherence within themselves and with their communities, and designing and implementing learning and teaching systems to integrate the external expectations with

their internal goals. However, these are influenced by principals' sensemaking, whereby they contextualise, prioritise and frame their expectations. To justify this theoretical relationship of influence, Ajzen's (2012) behavioural and subjective norms and the perceived behavioural control, as explained in Section 2.7.3, have been applied to the theoretical sub-processes (Ajzen, 1991, 2012; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Table 7.2 demonstrates through example how Ajzen's TPB validates this relationship of influence (Ajzen, 2012). The contents of Table 7.2 moves from left to right, demonstrating how Weick's (2001) sensemaking properties are aligned with the three processes of *Making sense*, which then move on to influence principals' two processes of *Integrating*. Ajzen's (2012) intentions of attitude, norms and perceived control, aligned in the central column, demonstrate the relationship between *Making sense* and *Integrating*. Given certain conditions, it is reasonable to see how a principal's intentions could likely form and how these intentions may influence the principal's ways of enacting the policy expectations significantly. One hypothetical yet common scenario is employed next, to elucidate the relationship.

#### **7.4.2 One Hypothetical Scenario**

The national policy *Every child deserves a future* (ECDF) in Eucaus<sup>28</sup> has announced a development of their nation-wide testing that the external performance results from the national test will align with the competencies in the Eucausian Teacher Standards. In Eucaus, the Teacher Standards are aligned with teachers' incremental pay scales. The Eucausian public narrative that has followed this announcement is that teachers will now be subject to performance pay scales; however, these performances will now be based on students' test results, in the form of a single number. The expectation by Eucaus is that this initiative will encourage educators to improve their students' test results.

We follow how two educational leaders (*Leader 1* and *Leader 2*) enact these expectations in quite different ways, even though they perceive their school environment

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<sup>28</sup> Eucaus: Pseudonym for the name of the country in this hypothetical Scenario

factors in similar ways. *Leader 1* and *Leader 2* each place priorities and frames around the ECDF initiative in different ways, which leads the reader to predict their likely enactments (see Table 7.2).

*Leader 1* has tight constraints about the way the policy can influence their current learning and teaching processes and frame the ECDF as an imposition and an unwelcome headache used as a means to close underperforming schools. *Leader 1* has feelings of anger and indignation that education has been reduced to these measures of learning. *Leader 1* uses the metaphor of the tightrope walker trying to bridge between one building (ECDF) and another (their school goals). ‘Walking this tightrope’ is a fearful experience for *Leader 1* because their employment is at stake. This creates insecurity and fear and knowing these emotions will be difficult to manage for themselves, they also recognise that they need to persuade teachers to implement a learning design that will ensure acceptable performance results. *Leader 1* has an enormous amount of leadership experience but only two years as a classroom teacher. Many educators in rural regions of Eucalus are promoted to leadership positions in their beginning years as a teacher. Although *Leader 1* believes that schooling is a ticket for a student’s future, they do not agree that all learning should be focused on this end point.

It is reasonable to predict that *Leader 1* will find designing and implementing learning and teaching structures and processes to accommodate the ECDF a challenge. One challenge that *Leader 1* needs to overcome is his/her sense of self-efficacy, likely to be low middling, during the design and implementation phases. *Leader 1* may delegate the task to others for implementation, thereby risking its success, given that s/he is not involved or close to the learning and teaching processes (Bendikson et al., 2012). Or *Leader 1* may situate the design of learning and teaching processes squarely with the ECDF expectations in performance results goal setting, hence building coherent performative cultures, at the same time easing the tensions for teachers because performances are what they will be judged upon. However, it is

unlikely that *Leader 1* is able to integrate, with ease, the ECDF expectations into the existing arrangements.

*Leader 2* seeks to understand the ECDF initiative and what it can offer their school. *Leader 2* frames the new Eucaus ECDF as an opportunity to enable teachers to work towards the standards. *Leader 2* situates their leadership in the centre of the learning and teaching processes. Unlike *Leader 1*, there is no sense of fear with regard to the new ECDF policy. They explain their leadership as a bricoleur (Koyama, 2013), whereby they make sense by pulling threads from the ECDF, their school environment, the shared language of learning and the needs of teachers who want to succeed. These threads ‘weave a pattern in the quilt’ that is the design and implementation phases. *Leader 2*’s previous leadership experiences prepared them for this well and they feel a high level of self-efficacy in leading learning. They believe that while data have their place in the learning processes, they should not drive the process; effective learning is related to effective teaching, and influencing teaching is their essential purpose. *Leader 2* believes that learning is not an end in itself but one that should be enjoyed in the present as diverse offerings to students. *Leader 2* perceives that the teachers reject the idea that learning can be measured by a single number and are disappointed that results will be tied to pay scales. However, this is simply a mild disappointment and does not influence their current ways of working.

Table 7.2

*Examples of the Effect of Principals Making Sense of Expectations and Integrating Expectations*

<b>Weick’s sensemaking (see Section 2.5.3)</b>	<b>Core category 1: Making sense of e</b>		<b>TPB (see Section 2.6.3)</b>	<b>Core category 2:</b>	<b>Integrating</b>
Properties	Sub-processes	Hypothetical example: Eucaus	Attitude, norms and control	Example	Sub-processes
<i>Social context—‘social anchors’; Plausibility</i>	<i>Contextualising expectations</i>	<i>High parental expectations for high performance</i>	<i>Subjective norms</i>	<i>Capacity to influence self through the three sub-processes of</i>	<i>Building cultures of coherence</i>

<b>Weick's sensemaking (see Section 2.5.3)</b>	<b>Core category 1: Making sense of e</b>	<b>TPB (see Section 2.6.3)</b>	<b>Core category 2: Integrating</b>
<i>Retrospect</i>	<i>results</i>		<i>Making sense.</i>
<i>Enactment</i>	<i>Effects on enrolments</i>		<i>Capacity to influence teachers through perspective taking, educates and tells good news to parents; possibly through declarations and at time testing the waters</i>
	<i>Effects on teacher pay scales</i>		
	<i>Teacher receptivity</i>		
<i>Ongoing projects</i>	<i>Constraining expectations</i>	<i>Higher priority given to parental expectations over policy expectations</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
			<i>Capacity to set clear and collective internal learning goals; to articulate a vision and implement a school-wide pedagogy</i>
<i>Salient cues</i>	<i>Framing expectations</i>	<i>Capacity to evaluate policy expectations and options, considering parental constraints and enrolments; evaluates their own capacity to act</i>	<i>Attitude</i>
<i>Personal identity</i>			<i>Perceived behavioural control</i>
			<i>May employ selected parts of the expectations, as an agency for change</i>
			<i>These actions are dependent on educational leaders' self-efficacy judgements</i>

Given *Leader 2's* high levels of self-efficacy in leading learning and their views about the possibilities that the ECDF policy offers teachers, it is likely that *Leader 2's* sensemaking will integrate the ECDF expectations reasonably smoothly into the school and add value to their current processes. One reasonable predication is that *Leader 2* will work with the Eucausian Teacher Standards with a formative rather than a summative focus. *Leader 2* is likely to be clear about their expectations with teachers about how they are positioning the ECDF expectations. Performance results will continue to be used as one form of data to inform the teaching and learning processes. Teachers will have begun to identify ways to hold themselves accountable for their learning goals and at the same time, ensure that performance results reflect these learning goals.

The preceding explanations of these two leaders *Making sense* and *Integrating*, according to perceived common conditions (same policy and perceived similar school environmental factors) and knowing these leaders' experiences and views about learning and their likely levels of self-efficacy about leading learning, demonstrate that we can explain leaders' interpretations and reasonably predict the ways they may enact these interpretations.

This section closes with a display of the theoretical model (see Figure 7.1). It illustrates the two central processes that principals engaged—*Making sense* and *Integrating*—and positions their relationship with the external stimuli. The model identifies the likely sub-processes of educational leaders' likely ways of *Making sense* of external policy expectations: *Contextualising*, *Prioritising* and *Framing* the accountability expectations. It illustrates the likely sub-processes at play for the educational leaders' processes of *Integrating*: *Building a culture of coherence* and *Designing learning and teaching systems*. Importantly, the intersection between the two key phenomena, *Making sense* and *Integrating*, is educational leaders' beliefs about learning (and teaching) and their beliefs about their levels of self-efficacy in leading learning. The model forms the culmination of the several demonstrations that have aligned Weick's Sensemaking Framework and Ajzen's TPB. At this point, in this final figure (see Figure 7.2), they are aligned as a strategy to demonstrate support for the theoretical propositions presented.

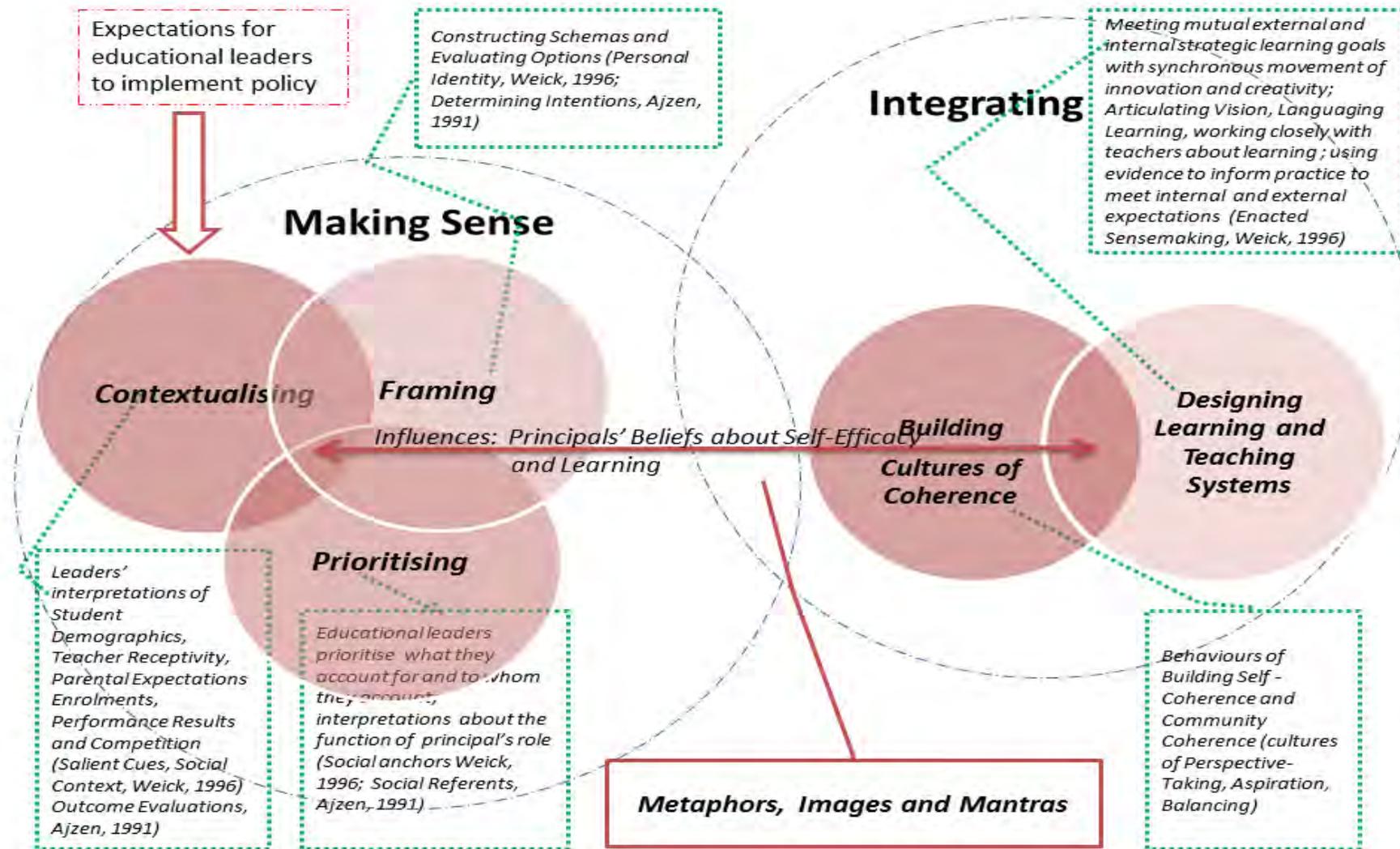


Figure 7.2 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals Making Sense of and Integrating Policy Expectations'—a Grounded Theoretical Model.

## 7.5 Evaluating the Research Process

### 7.5.1 Overviewing

The aim of this section is to evaluate the quality of the research process. Qualitative research is best evaluated through means that are appropriate to the research paradigm (Sarantakos, 1998). As a qualitative research study, the theoretical components of this study's model were determined by employing the analytical strategies advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and Corbin and Strauss (2014, 2008, 1998, 1990). Therefore, evaluating the quality of this model was guided by Strauss's and Corbin's criteria (1990, 2008, 2014). In their earlier work, they advised that 'a grounded theory should explain as well as describe. It may implicitly give some degree of predictability, but only with regard to specific conditions' (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5). Later, Corbin provided a broader perspective as a guide and settled on quality that described whether the research and the findings (including theoretical components) resonated with not only the participants of the research but also the readers. Central to this evaluation for this study were the elements of explaining and describing, with the strategies used<sup>29</sup> providing some sense of the likely behaviour of principals, in similar conditions, when they or educational leaders are being held accountable for students' results in external testing. Attention has been given to the relevance of the insights for further research, for practitioners such as educational leaders and for those studying educational leadership, who may find the theoretical explanations helpful as a platform.

GT determines how the actors (participant and researcher) respond to changing conditions and the consequences of their actions, which Corbin and Strauss (1990) termed interplay. Their theory gives credence to the interplay of both the participant and the researcher:

... the final theory that is constructed and grounded in data is *a representation of both participant and researcher*. Another researcher could take the same data and by

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<sup>29</sup> One strategy was the consideration of relevant conditions.

placing a different emphasis on the data construct a different theory. However, that does not negate the validity of the theory. The most important point is that whatever theory is produced is grounded and that it gives another *insight and understanding* (Corbin & Strauss, 2014, p. 29).

In this investigation, there was an interpretive interplay between the participants and the researcher. The interplay in this study offered rich insights and understandings. For example, the participating principals' use of metaphors influenced this researcher to adopt metaphors in their analytical memos (see Memo: Genesis of the Theoretical Model—the Eucalypt metaphor).

Corbin (2008) advised that not all of their criteria needed to be used and the detail did not need to be great, but it should be sufficient to provide some 'reasonable grounds for judging the adequacy of the research process' (p. 307). Following the advice (*italics below*) from Corbin and Strauss (1990, 2014), the quality of the theoretical model generated by this study could be evaluated by asking several questions about the ways the theoretical components of the model emerged. Their criteria employed were *ensuring an adequate representation of participants' and the researcher's experiences* (Corbin & Strauss, 2008); *uncovering relevant conditions* (Corbin & Strauss, 1990); *capturing the interplay of these relevant conditions with participants and the researcher*; and *offering insights and understanding to the research problem* (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In the following sections, each criterion is evaluated against the research process of the study.

### **7.5.2 Ensuring Adequate Representation of Participants' and the Researcher's Experiences**

This study carried out checks to ensure that the experiences of the participating principals and this researcher were represented as accurately as possible. Moreover, the representations needed to be credible and reasonable to a wider audience (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The validation groups, which consisted of principals, ensured to a certain degree that

the theoretical terms put forward would be accessible to principals and that the key propositions could offer insights into the research problem that made sense to principals. This researcher's interpretations were also scrutinised by supervisors and professional colleagues through regular reviews. At both of these forums, the mini-hypotheses and terms were modified.

According to Strauss and Corbin (2008, p. 307), events, incidents and/or actions needed to define the categories to be considered in the study. One significant event reported by one principal and the influence of several research studies (Shipps & White, 2009; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002) led to the emergence of the first major category, *Making sense*. The category of *Making sense* emerged during the first round of interviews, in which Joseph emphasised the importance of making sense of the accountability expectations that affected the teachers in his school. This category was adopted and as other concepts developed, they were constantly compared to test them for integration. This category did not change throughout the study. However, the second major category did change several times, as the constant comparison and the test for integration was not resolved easily. However, with constant comparison of grouping like and only like phenomena (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), along with reflexive questions, the category of *Integrating (accountability expectations)* was settled.

In developing the theoretical model for this study, the researcher worked with conceptualisation of data, not the actual data *per se* (i.e., conceptual units of data) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 7). The reports from principals were analysed as 'indicators of phenomena' (p. 7) and were given conceptual labels (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). When a participating principal revealed to this researcher, 'The system or the government doesn't make me accountable. I would be accountable anyway—probably to myself first', then this researcher labelled this phenomenon as 'reconstituting' (accountability). When other participants' reports were gathered and then compared to the first reports, if they appeared to resemble a

similar experience, they, too, were labelled as *reconstituting*. By comparing the principals' reports of their experiences of accountability and naming like experiences with the same label, this researcher developed the basic units for the model (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

### **7.5.3 Uncovering Relevant Conditions**

The model in this study provided for 'some degree of predictability, but only with regard to specific conditions' (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 5). It was essential to know the specific conditions that affected or interrupted the ways the principals viewed and enacted their understandings regarding the accountability expectations. The importance of uncovering relevant conditions in this study related to the degree to which the model could reasonably predict the ways principals would be most likely to enact their leadership, knowing their views about being held accountable for students' results in external testing. Some conditions that were uncovered and built into the explanation of the model included the school environment factors; the principal's career stage and length of time in the school; their beliefs, knowledge and skills about learning; and their peer and School system relationships. Memo: Patricia and Charmaine: Differences. Why? is one such example that uncovered the relevant conditions; namely, their career pathways (see Section 4.2.1).

### **7.5.4 Capturing the Interplay of Relevant Conditions with Participants and the Researcher**

In this study, the researcher reported on the participants' interpretations of accountability and the way these interpretations were played out in their schools, considering the relevant conditions. The conceptual understandings of the interplay between the principals' views/actions and their conditions were developed through constant comparison, employing Strauss and Corbin's (2008) conditional and paradigmatic matrices (see Appendices 16; 25–32: Memos, checking results with participants and validation groups, and conversations with colleagues in the field and supervisors).

One example of the interplay between the participants and the researcher was the judgement made by this researcher when participants' conditions and views were expressed. One participant felt the effect of unfavourable student performance (mid-level concern: relevant condition 1), staff deployment (high level of concern: relevant condition 2), reported high levels of self-efficacy in pedagogical leadership (confidence: relevant condition 3) in leading accountable learning (consequences). This participant viewed assessment-focused accountability as being accountable *to* self and *for* a full representation of learning as a high priority, and being accountable *for* performance results as a low priority. The participant appeared to demonstrate high levels of self-efficacy in being a leader of learning. At the same time, the participant decided that immediate targeted intervention to lift performance results, to stop staff redeployment, was required (forecasting consequence). Hence, this researcher, knowing the participant's conditions, predicted that drilling for more favourable NAPLAN results would take precedence in the short term and further predicted that this participant would return quickly to broader curriculum projects after the students' results improved. These judgements were based on this researcher's analysis of other findings in this research and to some degree, on professional experience of other principals' successes when faced with the same challenge.

The broader conditions that affected the participating principals' views of accountability and the effects of these on their behaviours (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), along with the consequences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), were built into the explanation of the theoretical model. In this model, the concepts were systematically linked (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, *prioritising* and *contextualising* interacted when the priorities by the principals' 'referents of account'<sup>30</sup> were influenced by their priorities about the purposes of

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<sup>30</sup> Based on Ajzen's subjective norms, this can be translated as the principals' priorities regarding *to whom* they accounted and *what* they accounted *for*.

learning, ranging from believing that learning brings about happiness to getting good student results in external testing.

### **7.5.5 Offering Insights and Understandings to the Research Problem**

Several vantage points were considered when judging the quality of the theoretical model with regard to the insights and understandings that it offered to the research problem. One vantage point was whether the insights and understandings resonated with participating principals. The second was whether they resonated with practitioners and researchers in the field of educational leadership (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

The insights from the model were presented to the participating principals in the validation (focus) group. Labels for the conceptual units of analysis were presented and the principals provided their comments on whether the labels and the concepts fitted with their experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Modifications were made to reflect the principals' experiences better. For example, one label, 'forming identity', meant that principals modified their identities to lead learning and be accountable. The participants agreed that this was a possible reality for them, but thought that this label was confusing rather than insightful. However, overall, the propositions made sense to them and provided plausible conceptual understandings for their experiences. One principal whispered on departure, 'I think this is spot-on research ...' and another said, '... it's really important for us to talk about this together and as principals, that our voices are heard ...'.

Corbin and Strauss's (2014) test for a theory to be credible was that it offers 'insights and understandings' (p. 29). Given certain conditions within Australian educational leadership research, this theoretical model may offer insights and understandings into the likely ways that educational leaders respond to external expectations.

## **7.6 Summarising the Chapter**

The theoretical model: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations is a culmination of this study and meets the third purpose of this investigation.

This chapter has shown how the findings pertaining to the participating principals' understandings of the accountability expectations related to the principals' ways of understanding those expectations.

In their interpretations of external policy expectations, the principals engaged in a phenomenon labelled *Making sense*. The first step in the principals' sensemaking involved a process of *Framing* their policy expectations; that is, leaders first need to understand what is expected of them. However, this is a back-and-forth process, from evaluating their school environment, evaluating what priorities (or constraints—Weick, 2001) need to be established and then *Framing* their views about the expectations. The second step is the process of *Contextualising*, in which leaders identify which school environment factors will have an effect on the implementation of policy. The third step is the process of *Prioritising*, in which leaders give value to an object or subject (referral) over another. For example, with an accountability policy, this would be to whom and for what they will account (object and social referents), including their priorities around their role function in the expectations of them as leaders and their expectations of themselves as leaders. There is an intersection here: how the educational leader prioritises their social referents influences the ways they evaluate their school environment factors (process of *Contextualising*). These three processes of *Framing*, *Contextualising* and *Prioritising* continue to interact with each other, with leaders identifying, analysing, evaluating and selecting their preferred options before enacting. At this stage, they may even make a gambit (Weick's enacted sensemaking) to test the waters. The preferred options in this study were principals' intentions (Ajzen, 1991), which resulted in the phenomenon of *Integrating* expectations. However, the principals' intentions could be fluid because they were determined through this ongoing process (Weick, 1995) of '*re-making sense*' of their contexts and *re-making sense* of their expectations.

The *Framing* that educational leaders build, notably their preferred option (intentions) for *Integrating*, influences the ways they go about *Building coherence*, such as balancing

these external and internal expectations and building cultures of perspective taking. In turn, the educational leaders' processes of *Integrating* through the process of *Building coherence* influences their evaluations of their options, such as, 'Did it work? Did the enactment meet the expectation?' For example, leaders may work towards building performative cultures through student grades (such as *Leader 1* in this study), only to find that building such cultures has minimal effect in meeting the needs of two of the important social referents, such as School system expectations and parents. Reassessments between *Making sense* and *Integrating* are abundant. Following Ajzen's TPB, the characteristics in this reassessment include principals adjusting their priorities according to their preferred social referents,<sup>31</sup> evaluating outcomes<sup>32</sup> and their judgements of their levels of self-efficacy in leading.<sup>33</sup> Continuing with Ajzen's thinking, the stronger these three determinants work together for principals, the stronger their intentions (Ajzen & Madden, 1986). The process of *Building coherence* also influences the leaders' process of *Designing and implementing learning and teaching systems*. For example, *Building coherence* through building cultures that keep a balance between internal and external pressures influences the ways a leader may pursue a balance between realising their beliefs about learning and at the same time achieving favourable student performance results. As Vanessa in this study explained, 'If I'm effective [as a leader of learning], then the external pressures and the internal pressures are able to co-exist in a way that maybe, hopefully, we can be creative so that one is actually supporting the other, as opposed to having to teach this way'.

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<sup>31</sup> Social referents here could be parents, teachers, students or School systems, or referents could be performance results or a full representation of learning.

<sup>32</sup> Evaluating outcomes could include leaders asking questions regarding whether the interpretation of the policy was beneficial to student learning, whether their own goals were achieved, or whether their initiatives met both the external expectations and their own internal expectations.

<sup>33</sup> According to Ajzen (1991), this is a direct determinant of behaviour.

However, this model has several qualifiers in its theoretical relationship between *Making sense* and *Integrating* expectations. An extension to the key finding from this study<sup>34</sup> is principals *Framing* an external policy as being unbeneficial to students. This makes it unlikely that principals will frame the expectation as the policy maker intends, thus diminishing the policy makers' intended implementation.

The theoretical model posits that effective principals are active participants who *make sense* of (Spillane et al., 2002), rather than remain in confusion and *integrate* external expectations with internal expectations, rather than ignoring or adopting (Dulude et al., 2015; Gonzalez & Firestone, 2013) their interpretations of the accountability expectations (Shipps & White, 2009). Effective principals demonstrate adaptability by building self and community coherence within the expectations and implementation (Elmore et al., 2013). By employing GT strategies, this theoretical model can explain and predict principals' intentions and likely behaviours, given relevant conditions, when responding to external policy expectations such as accountability for students' results in external testing. This chapter has demonstrated that the model's name, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: *Making Sense of* and *Integrating Policy Expectations*', reflects the principals' experiences of accountability in this study, both empirically and theoretically.

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<sup>34</sup> Principals reject that the full representation of learning can be measured by a single number

## Chapter 8: Concluding the Study



*Figure 8.1* Eucalypts in the bush capital.

She, on the other hand follows a delicate bent of her own. Worn by such aeons, dried by such winds, she has learned to be flexible, spare, flesh close to the bone ... (Excerpt from *The Eucalypt and the national character* (Wright, 2016, p. 362).

The eucalypt learns. Learns to follow ‘a delicate bent of her own’; learns to be ‘flexible’ and ‘spare’ with her ‘flesh close to the bone’. Judith Wright’s imagery of ‘delicate bent of their own’ is captured in the individualistic photograph images in Figure 8.1. The imagery and photos aim to draw parallels with the principals’ unique actions and the nuances of their individual ways of being which are affected by external policy expectations. At times, the principals’ experiences suggested they were like ‘flesh to the bone’: ‘How fair is that when you are compared with schools who cherry-pick their students ...?’ (*Adrian*) and other times the experiences suggested they were ‘flexible’ and demonstrated a ‘delicate bent’ of

their own: ‘You just have to accept it I guess, it’s just part of the landscape now ... and always will be ... but you need to use it ... actually I welcome accountability really ...’.

(*Graham*) Graham’s excerpt demonstrates his learning of ‘bending’ by accepting the accountability landscape and declaring his interacting position with the environmental conditions of that landscape (*‘I welcome accountability really’*). Given the opportunity to explain their perspectives, the participating principals made insightful contributions about their experiences of assessment-focused accountability. Their insights were the underlying assumptions guiding this study.

## **8.1 Context**

In Australia, the principal is the key actor for external policy implementation in schools. Little is known about Australian principals’ understandings of the external accountability expectations and even less is known about the way these understandings influence their ways of leading learning. There were three purposes for this study: to understand principals’ interpretations of their assessment-focused accountability; to examine the way these interpretations influenced their ways of leading learning; and to generate a theory that could explain and describe principals’ interpretations and provide, under relevant conditions, indicators of their likely ways of leading learning. A case study research design, employing Strauss’s and Corbin’s data analytical tools (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) was effective for investigating the relationship between the principals’ understandings and their ways of leading learning.

This chapter highlights the key findings and shows how the theoretical model addresses the research questions (see Section 8.3). The theoretical model contributes to existing research and methodology (see Section 8.4) and explains possible implications for principals, educational leaders and aspirant leaders and those who support them (see Section 8.5). The limitations of this study (see Section 8.6) and its possible future directions are explained (see Section 8.6). The thesis concludes with a final summary of the importance of

knowing educational leaders' interpretations of their external expectations and the influences on those interpretations (see Section 8.7).

## 8.2 The Emerging Theoretical Model and the Key Findings

This study investigated principals' understandings of accountability and how these understandings had an influence on their ways of leading learning. The influences on principals' understandings of their expectations was also given due consideration in this investigation. Data were drawn from transcripts and validated by member-checks, from structured interviews and focus groups. Appropriate documentation was analysed for further validating and discounting. These data were analysed, synthesised and compared to address the central research question: *How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* Guided by Weick's sensemaking properties and Ajzen's TPB, and compared with the extant literature, the findings resulted in the emergence of a theoretical model: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations. The core categories, *Making Sense* and *Integrating*, represent the findings and offer insight and understanding (see Section 7.4) regarding principals' interpretations of the accountability expectations and the effect of these interpretations on their ways of leading.

This section demonstrates how the study's findings contributed to answering the two RSQs:

1. *How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to assessment-focused accountability in their schools?*
2. *How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of the accountability expectations that are place on them?*

The theoretical model 'Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations' comprises five major themes: (a) *Contextualising* expectations; (b) *Prioritising* expectations; (c) *Framing* expectations; (d) *Building cultures of coherence*; and (e) *Designing learning and teaching systems*. The theoretical model illustrates the relationship between

*Making Sense* and *Integrating*. This relationship contributes to the thesis of this study in an important way. Principals' beliefs about learning influence the ways they interpret assessment-focused accountability. These beliefs are mirrored in the finding that the principals in this study rejected the idea that learning could be adequately measured by a single number. According to these principals, learning was about more than a student's result in a test. All of the principals in this study believed that learning should be measured and accounted for with a more effective mechanism than their current external testing mechanism (see Section 4.4.1). Part of these beliefs about learning and measurement appeared to be influenced by a resistance to an economic rationalist perspective that learning is assessed only through a quantitative measure. In turn, this belief was often reinforced by their peer principal relationships and their networks. Possibly to a lesser extent, yet notably influential on their interpretations, was the participating principals' self-belief in their agency of enacting their leadership of learning. This confidence was dependent upon being able to integrate the accountability expectations within their own internal learning processes in their schools. The more principals articulated the importance of their understanding about teaching and learning processes in the context of accountability, the less they reported the expectations negatively. Indicators of their sensemaking and integration and their levels of ease or dis-ease with their expectations were manifested in their metaphors, imagery and mantras (see Section 5.3.1).

RSQ1 investigated principals' understandings of the accountability expectations. The phenomenon that best described this group of findings was '*making sense*', which included the themes *Contextualising*, *Prioritising* and *Framing expectations*. The principals were *contextualising* their expectations by 'taking notice of' (Weick, 1995) particular factors in their school environments, such as student demographics; competition for enrolments; teachers' receptivity; and parental expectations. The ways principals were *contextualising* had some influence on their ways of leading; however, their beliefs about learning and their self-beliefs in their capability to enact the leadership of learning had greater influence. The

principals' priorities, which they attributed to their object and social referents (see Section 7.3.2), aligned with Ajzen's (Ajzen, 2012) determinant of *attitude*. Congruent with several of Weick's sensemaking properties (see Section 2.5.3) principals in their prioritising, placed constraints on for what and to whom they would account with regard to their expectations. The principals' intentions materialised as a result of their accountability priorities. Their reports prioritised their accountability to parents, students and themselves over the School system. These intentions were also influenced by their beliefs about the representations of learning, such as students' enjoyment of learning in the present moment, the importance of diverse learning experiences and the skills and knowledge directed at post-school pathways. Principals made sense of their expectations through *framing* their expectations. The frames included accepting, personalising and conceptualising accountability as a responsibility and an agency. The principals' frames appeared to be influenced by their previous professional experiences, their professional learning and the ways they understood the nature and meaning of learning and teaching.

RSQ2 investigated principals' ways of leading learning in light of the accountability expectations that are place on them. The phenomenon that best described this group of findings was '*Integrating*', which included the themes *Designing teaching and learning systems* and *Building coherence*. Some participating principals described their ways of leading learning with regard to meeting their expectations through the designs of their teaching and learning processes and structures. The principals who revealed a sense of confidence in being able to meet the accountability expectations (in whatever form) were the same principals who appeared to integrate their expectations into existing internal processes seamlessly and effortlessly. In turn, these principals also reported the importance of remaining up-to-date with contemporary learning and teaching processes and held close working relationships with their teachers, focused on learning. In contrast, principals who reported negative implications of the accountability expectations were also silent about their teaching

and learning processes in the school. Instead, these principals pursued improvement in student performance through target setting for grades or performances in the external tests. The principals' metaphors, images and mantras revealed some of the ways they managed *Building coherence*. Metaphors included 'buffer', 'shield', 'lantern', 'cheerleader', 'salesman', and images of perspective taking and balancing included mantras such as 'we can all be aspirational', 'just one more mark' and 'we need to tell the good news story'. Metaphors appeared to be powerful platforms for enactments.

The findings drawn from this study and the model explained above point to the central proposition of this thesis, that principals reject that learning is adequately represented through a single number on a test. When policy makers use a single number to hold principals to account, principals are likely to frame and act upon this expectation in ways different from the policy maker's intention. Principals' (or any educational leaders') beliefs about learning, notably and yet possibly to a lesser extent, their levels of self-efficacy, seem to have the greatest influence about the likely ways they make sense of and integrate policy expectations.

The model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations' addresses the key research question: *How do principals' understandings of accountability affect the ways they lead learning?* Principals' beliefs about learning influenced the ways they interpreted (making sense of) their expectations (RSQ1) and their capability and confidence of integrating these expectations in their ways of leading learning in their existing teaching and learning structures and processes in their schools (RSQ2). This researcher's central proposition was founded on the principals' reported interpretations of their expectations and how these were connected with their descriptions of their leadership of learning. Collectively, the principals' reports of their expectations and enactments were synthesised and abstracted to form the theoretical model.

### 8.3 Contributing to Research

This study culminated in a theoretical model, grounded in data, which explained the interpretive, adaptive and enactive processes of principals' interpretations and enactments of assessment-focused accountability. Explained from the perspectives of the principals themselves, the model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations', demonstrates a particular lens to explain how and why principals may make sense of the accountability expectations in the way that they do.

The most important contribution this investigation provides to educational leadership research in Australia is that principals do not enact assessment-focused expectations in the way policy makers or school systems' leaders intend. This study provides some reasons regarding how and why principals may make sense of assessment-focused accountability expectations the way they do and notably, their likely intentions and possible enactments resulting from this sensemaking. In Australia, some theoretical models and frameworks offer explanations of how the individual educator may negotiate moral dilemmas in their leadership (Bezzina & Tuana, 2014) or map the various domains that face leaders (Burford, 2015). However, explanations of the complexities of principals' sensemaking and especially their likely enactments are limited, for two reasons. One reason is that few theoretical perspectives on the external expectations of principals have been grounded in data. Using GT methods of analysis rather than an external theoretical framework provided this study's potential to make a fresh contribution. Second, only a few educational leadership studies have employed other theories to guide their investigation. In this study, Weick's (1995) sensemaking properties (Thiel et al., 2012) and Ajzen's (2012) TPB validated the findings and the theoretical components of the model. Applying these well-recognised and applied frameworks and theories also offers other ways of testing empirical findings in educational leadership research in Australia.

The key finding was principals' unanimous rejection of the idea that a single number could adequately represent learning. While manifested in various ways, their rejection resulted in the principals dismissing the idea that they should be held to account for a number because it was a poor representation of students' and teachers' work (see Section 4.4.1). Some Australian empirical studies on the topic of how educational leaders view their assessment-focused accountability have been conducted (Comber, 2012; Ehrich et al., 2015; Harris et al., 2013; Smeed et al., 2009) and the results of these have been confirmed by educators' international experiences (Stobart, 2008). However, no previous studies have examined the reasons for leaders' viewing the expectations the way they do, nor how these reasons may influence their enactments.

Internationally, this study makes an empirical contribution to educational leadership research. Situating the theoretical categories within the literature (see Section 6) demonstrated that the participating principals' interpretations of their expectations and ways of leading learning mirrored many of the findings from studies in other educational jurisdictions (Firestone & Shipps, 2005; Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002). However, these studies did not explain the detailed elements of principals' interpretations and how these can influence their ways of leading. The way each participating principal in this study understood learning and their knowledge of learning and teaching processes was one of the key influences on their leadership of learning and meeting the accountability demands. Therefore, a contribution of this study is the acknowledgment of the influence of principals' understandings of the nature and meaning of learning on their interpretations of external expectations and the effect of these understandings on the principals' effectiveness in implementing expectations into existing learning processes.

The findings from this study suggested that beliefs about learning are also linked with principals' self-beliefs in leading learning. The principal's levels of self-efficacy in leading

learning may be affected by their self-beliefs in understanding learning and teaching processes. This topic is worthy of further research.

This study advances existing models and frameworks by providing a model—‘Principals *Making Sense* of and *Integrating* Policy Expectations’—developed using GT methods, based on an interpretivist approach. It considers the complex negotiations of sensemaking and agency within principals’ personal, peer and school environment contexts. To sum up, this investigation contributes to the field of Australian educational leadership research. It has presented a credible theoretical model to explain principals’ sensemaking processes, their likely intentions from this sensemaking (given certain conditions) and their likely behaviours, knowing these intentions, in response to assessment-focused accountability. It has provided a methodological contribution through a research design that draws upon the rich, descriptive data that a case study methodology offered in giving voice to the principals’ experiences. It has used a combination of methods for data gathering (Yin, 2009) and analysis informed by Corbin and Strauss (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), with the use of effective memoing techniques to demonstrate emerging and linking propositions.

## **8.4 Implications and Recommendations**

The findings of this investigation have potential implications for principals, aspirant educational leaders, policy makers, system leaders and tertiary programmers. These referents form the structure of this section, in which the implications are raised along with recommendations for future research.

### **8.4.1 Principals**

This was a study of specific principals’ perspectives of their experiences of accountability in an Australian context; hence, the initial consideration is the possible implications of this research for other principals in Australia. Principals in this study revealed that they found this opportunity to think and voice their ideas about accountability was a valuable experience in helping them understand their own views of accountability and their

ways of managing the expectations. They also appreciated coming together in focus groups and listening to the perspectives of their peer principals. Based on these principals' reports, the model has the potential to assist other principals to reflect on how and why they interpret and enact the accountability expectations that are placed on them. This could assist principals with a number of factors: their levels of self-efficacy of enacting their learning beliefs within performative cultures; understanding the enablers of integrating external expectations into existing, strong, in-school evidence systems; useful metaphors, images and mantras that may be employed to honour their beliefs and manifested in their enactments; and learning from their peer principals in how they differ in their interpretations and enactments of expectations.

These implications for principals point to several areas for future research. With school systems increasingly expecting principals to be leaders of learning within the context of a broader performative culture, it is important to know more about how principals' levels of self-efficacy with regard to learning influences their capabilities in leading learning. Second, given the benefits of a positive integration of the external expectations with a school's processes, it is important to understand what conditions make in-school learning systems expansive, yet stable and at the same time which systems are more adaptable and flexible than others in meeting diverse external expectations. Third, in this study metaphors and mantras were powerful sensemaking tools. They appeared to provide some sense of professional identity for the principals themselves, as well as acting as leverage for influence and persuasion with regard to internal and external expectations. Future research could investigate the influence and agency of sensemaking tools, such as metaphors, images and mantras on principals' work. The impact of peer principal relationships of comparison and competition is another research area that could lead to greater understanding than this study could attempt, with regard to the level of effect these relationships have in helping principals develop their professional identities.

#### 8.4.2 Educational Leaders and Aspirant Leaders

With regard to educational leaders and aspirant leaders, the model, ‘From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations’, can provide empirical evidence about which career pathways in the secondary school sector could either support or hinder their leadership trajectory. The study pointed to the importance of those in middle-level leadership positions having opportunities in leading learning and remaining up-to-date in their understanding of contemporary learning and teaching processes. Knowing the characteristics of leading learning or being a leader of learning is an important continued area of research. For example, this study and other studies have revealed some important factors in leading learning: being able to articulate a vision for learning and knowing that a credible vision improves collective work (Hunt, Boal and Dodge, 1991); being closely engaged in the teaching and learning processes, such as being involved in professional learning and teaching experiences, processes and particularly curriculum development (Bendikson et al., 2012); being ‘learning-centric’ in all their enactments (Richmond, 2007); and being clear and confident about the juncture of learning and accountability (Knapp et al., 2013). In this study and others (Derrington, 2015; Knapp et al., 2013), principals who demonstrated confidence in teaching and learning processes and led school-wide agendas centred on learning reported feeling less pressure from the accountability expectations than other principals. The latest work of Le Fevre and Robinson (2014) has extended Robinson’s (2012; 2011) previous works, redefining the notion of instructional leadership in performative cultures. These studies have pointed to the potential in continued research in understanding explicitly what is purposeful for educational leaders in their formation, notably in the area of leading learning, and becoming ‘principal-ready’, equipped to deal with evidence- and accountability-driven contexts.

### 8.4.3 Policy Makers and School System Leaders

In terms of policy makers, this model has implications for school system leaders and delegated governing (NESAs) and employing authorities of principals. The first implication, supported by other studies (Shipps, 2012; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2002), is that principals do not enact policies as the makers of those policies expect (see Section 2.5.2). This model provides some understandings as to why educational leaders may not enact policy, which ultimately is problematic for system leaders. Principals in this study and elsewhere (Elmore, 2005b; Knapp & Feldman, 2012) were found likely to enact policy expectations as makers intend if they understood them and the policies were aligned with their professional beliefs (Shipps & White, 2009). In this study this involved principals' agreements around their conceptualisations of learning.

The second understanding or finding is that the principal's integration of policy was not only dependent on beliefs but on the principal's confidence in knowing how to integrate policy expectations into their existing school structures and processes. This confidence was influenced by their levels of understanding of policy along with their perceived capacity to integrate expectations with their internal processes.

In this study principals held diverse views within their cohort as to what and to whom they were accountable with regard to performance results. Principals not enacting system policies as per policy intentions may point to the need for school systems' leaders to understand the elements of an accountability relationship. This relationship requires that the actor (*school system leader*) behaves transparently and discloses, explains and justifies their ways of accounting (*conduct and its outcomes*) in the area of the mandate, with the expectation that there will be consequences contingent on these (see Section 2.4.2). Drawing on the elements of this relationship it is recommended that school system leaders are transparent about what school leaders are accountable *for* and *to whom* they are accountable. In this instance, transparency is accentuated. There is a need for the expectations to be

transparent that is, *accessible* through visibility, clarity and understanding. School systems' leaders may provide targeted support for principals so that they understand the nuances of the policy expectations and build capacities in principals in establishing strong in-school learning systems. In this way principals may enact the policy as is best suited to their existing internal learning systems. Essentially principals need opportunities for building capacity to understand external policies and also to integrate them.

Principals not enacting policies as intended also points to the importance of understanding the reasons for the disparity. Principals' conceptualisations of learning are central to such understandings along with whom they think they are accountable to (referents) (see Section 4.3.2). It may serve school system leaders, peer principal networks and associations well if they engage in reflective and reflexive processes to understand their reasons. Knowing more fully principals' conceptualisations about learning and the priorities they give to certain accountability relationships over others are avenues to enable such understandings. Principals' conceptualisation of learning was more than a number (see Section 4.3.1.2). This conceptualisation was misaligned with their public and market accountability (see Section 2.4.3) where learning was quantified and reduced to a number form.

The anomalies in this study, often witnessed through the case examples of Adrian and Damien, hold implications for principals, aspirant educational leaders and School systems leaders alike (see Sections 5.14, 5.25 and 5.3.2). Adrian's personal beliefs about his students being leftovers (residualism) appeared to inhibit his confidence in the students' ability to improve their results. His beliefs about residualism explained to some extent the reasons he concentrated on internal grade setting. However, it was less clear why Damien was driven to set goals as percentages in HSC bands, other than he thought that he himself was being measured by the students' results. Damien reported that 'driving for results' was 'burning' him out, even though he knew 'it is not quality education'. Another research direction could

be to investigate why some principals choose to set performative goals even when these goals are against their professional beliefs and recognised as detrimental, whereas other principals who have the same expectations do not.

The relationships of accountability for principals are diverse, including the school system's consultant, the market, the parents and teachers and they themselves (see Section 4.3.2). It may be helpful for school system leaders and indeed principals' themselves to understand that their conceptualisations of learnings and the priorities they give to certain referents can be a sound platform to inform their professional learning experiences and programs.

The preparation of professional learning programs is an essential consideration in tailoring to increasing demands and external pressures for principals. The following section examines the preparation of professional learning programs. The examination of such preparations is not limited to policy makers and School system leaders but also for those who design programs in tertiary institutions and professional learning associations.

Performative cultures are becoming a common characteristic in schools and school systems. As such professional learning programs need to be designed in such a way to support educational leaders and aspirant educational leaders in such cultures (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016; Lambert, Wright, Currie, & Pascoe, 2016). Current professional learning experiences for principals in managing regulated assessment are diverse and substantial; notably in the analysis and the approaches with teachers of associated implementation (see Section 1.5.5). Guides and support in professional practices for principals are helpful for managing accountability expectations including the AITSL Principal Standard for 'Manages High Standards and Accountability' (see Section 1.5.5) and leading learning streams in post graduate tertiary programs. Existing programs such as the DeCourcy modules, RAP analysis and the utilisations of the Principals' Profiles (see Section 1.5.5) are some of the ways principals may integrate their external expectations of accountability with the internal school

system processes. The principals in this study engaged in such programs however the findings in this study suggest that more specificity is required to enable principals to develop a greater internal locus of control through their sensemaking and integration processes from external accountability demands.

The findings in this study suggest that the ways of leading learning through principals' accountabilities were dependent on several factors. One factor was their conceptualisation of learning. A second factor was a principal's confidence in knowing how to integrate these expectations into their existing school structures and processes (see Section 5.2.3). A third factor was the way the principal may frame accountability itself (see Section 4.4). The principals' conceptualisations of learning and frames of accountability also may be impacted upon through the demographic of the school or ethos of the school (see Section 1.5.5). These conceptualisations and frames within the context of a faith based ethos could be employed as a solid professional learning platform.

In this study principals' confidence in integrating external expectations with internal expectations is influenced by their knowledge and understandings of learning. George in this study admitted that his experiences with learning and teaching were limited even though he held formal post graduate qualifications in leadership. This study's findings along with growing empirical evidence (Brookhart & Moss, 2013; Bryant, 2016) suggest that the more principals involve themselves in the learning and teaching processes the better they can lead learning. This involvement is likely to increase their confidence in leading learning. Hence preparation programs need to find designs or even reasons that enable principals to be involved in learning and teaching processes in schools, especially larger schools with complex organisational structures. Action research projects focussed on learning, principal walk-throughs (Bryant, 2016) with reflection and structured professional learning where principals engage with teachers and students in their teaching (Robinson, 2011) are recommended.

These experiences however are not enough. This study suggests that principals<sup>35</sup> need reflective and reflexive<sup>36</sup> strategies to continually make sense of such experiences so that their sense making becomes internal and personalised (see Section 4.4).

The principals in this study who appeared to have framed accountability in a way that acted as a positive force demonstrated liberating conceptualisations of accountability, such as personalising and accepting it, viewing accountability as a responsibility and accountability as an agency. Their frames appeared to strengthen their internal loci of control which minimised their external loci of control (external accountabilities for performance results). To enable accountability to be a positive force then it makes sense if principals' frames of accountability are internal and personalised. While the Principal Standard of Professional Practices - 'Manages High Standards and Accountability' identifies what needs to be accountable this Practice does not describe in how such management may occur and importantly what kind of capabilities, such as developing capabilities of increasing principals' internal loci of control which may enable principals in their management of accountabilities.

To develop such capabilities principals could explore their own frames of accountability. They could do this by engaging in a reflective staged process of accountability from personalising to accepting and framing it into empowering schemata such as responsibility or agency (see Sections 2.4.5 and 4.4.3). In terms of responsibility there is an emphasis that the community shares the collective responsibility for performance results and at the same time keeping results in perspective (see Section 4.3.3 Joseph's excerpts on taking perspective). In terms of agency the external expectations are transformed into an enacted sense making (Weick, 1995), using tools for leverage which align with collective responsibility (DeCourcy, 2005).

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<sup>35</sup> Those principals in this study who demonstrated sophisticated and adaptable ways to management and lead through their accountabilities also appeared to have engaged in deeper reflection techniques. The metaphors were demonstrable signs of such techniques

<sup>36</sup> Reflexivity involves involves the critical consideration of one's own assumptions (Alvesson, 1996). A way to describe reflexive processes is for the individual to think of themselves as an eagle looking down observing themselves.

One particular reflective and possibly reflexive strategy to trigger such framing is the utility of metaphors, imagery and mantras (see Table 5.2). Given metaphors and symbols are used in psychotherapy (Panzer, 1989) a similar process could be adopted for professional learning programs which provide structured and creative guidance, time and safety for principals to explore their metaphors, their images and the narratives that hold meaning in being held accountable for not just results but for all accountabilities of school life. Both the confidence to integrate accountability and the frames of accountability are important foci for the preparation of professional learning; however the impact of the ethos of the school also needs to be considered in such preparations.

The principals in this study were selected from Catholic schools which possibly could have impacted on the ways they approached learning and conceptualised accountability (see Section 1.5.8). While this impact was beyond the scope of this study the matter of context such as the ethos of the school or school system and the ways principals socially construct their expectations (see Section 5.3.1.3) are important considerations in the preparation of professional learning programs. What is known about these two cohorts of principals is that they have been influenced by NSW CEC (2017) professional learning (see Section 1.5.8), school system wide professional learning such as authentic learning (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2017) and scholarly discourses in post graduate tertiary programs in educational leadership such as Bezzina (2008b; 2009), Starratt (2004), Burford (2008; 2009), Branson (2010) and Duignan (2008; 2012). These programs and scholars often privilege ethics, values and authenticity, and employ this privilege to influence each other's thinking along with designs of tertiary programs in educational leadership (Australian Catholic University, 2017).

Professional learning and tertiary programs need to be mindful to align current the ethos of affiliated faith traditions, such as the Catholic tradition, with learning and teaching processes and frames of accountability. In this way key schemata of accountability such as

responsibility, can be viewed as an ethic in a Catholic or faith based context (Bezzina, 2008). Moreover exploring the collective and individual sense of responsibility as an alternate frame for accountability through professional learning programs will enable the ‘development of school cultures of accountability for not only to one self but for the learning that takes place in the school’ (Bezzina, 2008, p. 227).

Looking forward, the sophisticated sensemaking strategies that principals employed in this study are a signpost for the preparation of professional learning programs for principals, educational leaders and aspirant educational leaders. Notably principals of both cohorts referred to the helpful professional opportunities offered through certain analytical tools such as DeCourcy data (DeCourcy, 2006). These tools enabled their understanding of data, how to hold conversations and work with teachers. One suggestion is to maintain and further develop these opportunities. The ways principals make sense of their expectations impact on their implementation of such expectations. It is reasonable therefore that professional learning around accountability centres on sense making. The sense making strategies of accountability that principals employed reflected psycho social processes; individual internal and social constructs developed with other peer principals and social referents in their communities (See Section 5.3.1.3). As such the nature of professional learning programs could offer reflexive strategies to lead principals to understand how the self makes sense of high stakes demands and to ensure that they do this within a context of a community of learners, their peers or with their school communities. These communities embed a cultural and religious ethos which also could enable the integration of expectations of accountability with internal structures and processes. Scholars such as Bezzina (2008; 2013) and Fincham (2010) have provided a solid foundation for such possible integrations. The task now is to interpret these for practical use in managing accountabilities within professional learning programs for educational leaders in faith based settings.

The next section specifically draws on the major findings and offers the potentiality for future research in a general sense.

To summarise, the five major findings that emerged from this study also hold potential for future research. First, the model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of and Integrating* Policy Expectations' provides a lens for educational leaders to reflect upon their levels of self-efficacy about learning and the capacity to remain up-to-date in understanding contemporary learning and teaching processes. Continued research about what is purposeful for educational leaders in their formation as leaders of learning is important, to ensure that aspirant leaders are 'principal-ready' for meeting the demands of external policy expectations. Second, this model proposes that when strong internal evidence systems are effective, educational leaders are also likely to be effective in integrating external expectations within school learning structures and processes. Further to this proposition, what these strong evidence systems look like and how they are constructed in current educational jurisdictions in Australia are also worthy of further investigation. Third, understanding how principals form their professional identities in accountability environments will assist education leaders, especially ECPs. Further research about metaphors and the influences of peer leader relationships on principals' identities will assist further understandings about leaders' professional identities and those who support them. Fourth, there is no guarantee for policy makers that principals will implement policies as intended, which suggests that an extension of this research in Australia would be helpful, as external policy expectations are likely to increase. Finally, the anomalies in reasoning with regard to setting learning goals in the form of summative performance results deserve further scrutiny. This is important because performance goal setting runs the risk of the emergence of pseudo-curriculum designs and teaching to the test, which threatens the broad representation of learning in Australian schools. The latter point is the very reason the participants in this study, and ironically including the anomalies, rejected the notion that learning can be adequately represented by a single number.

## 8.5 Limiting Aspects of this Study

This study was conducted within a limited period and adopted an interpretative perspective, which included the participating principals' perspectives and this researcher's preconceived knowledge. The design of this research needed to be mindful of not only the purpose of the study but also the needs and concerns of the participating principals. This section addresses some limitations of participation selection, sensitivities in reporting the findings and the capacity of the thesis to apply the theoretical components to other contexts.

There was a short period of time in which to collect data from the participating principals. Throughout the research process, there were times when it became apparent that there would be only several opportunities to interview the principals, with little opportunity to select more principals. To manage this limitation this researcher recognised that the time that was available needed to be well utilised, to ensure that the research process for the principals was not burdensome in terms of being long and drawn out. The pilot study ensured that the questions made sense and the areas where the investigation was likely to go. Questions were then modified. The second interview was offered as either a phone or face-to-face interview, according to the needs of the principals. Transcripts of the first interviews were forwarded for amendment ahead of time by email; however, the researcher provided a verbal summary at the beginning of the second interview, to save time for the participants. These options were appreciated by participating principals.

The model, 'From Metaphors to Mantras: Principals *Making Sense of* and *Integrating* Policy Expectations', is limited in the contexts in which it can explain and offer the likely understandings and behaviours with regard to principals' views and enactments of accountability. Hence, when interpreting the findings and their theoretical components, readers may wish to consider the contexts from which the participating principals' profiles were drawn and how these may compare with the readers' contexts. This researcher makes no assumptions that this model is reflective of principals' experiences in other cultures, School

systems or school sectors. However, this model has the useful capacity to focus attention on principals' possible interpretations of assessment-focused accountability, given their beliefs about learning, and identifies the importance of establishing and embedding internal learning goals, including accountable learning processes, to lead effectively with such expectations. Other considerations that the model may offer aspirant leaders are their choices in their professional career pathways; that is, remaining up-to-date in the core work of schools—learning and teaching. In terms of developing the self as a leader, aspirant leaders may realise the opportunities that metaphors and mantras may offer in building coherence into their ways of leading, for themselves and for their communities.

The findings drawn upon to develop the theoretical model were from the principals' personal perspectives with regard to the accountability expectations and this researcher's interpretations of the principals' perspectives. Recall and encoding problems may affect the accuracy of the self-report (Yin, 2003). To minimise this possibility, various strategies were employed. Interview questions were placed in smaller steps (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000), such as asking principals to describe their best performances when leading learning.

This researcher's previous professional experience of being a principal and her current teaching in educational leadership may have led to research bias (Maxwell, 2012). However, Maxwell advised that qualitative research is about knowing how the values and expectations of the researcher influence the processes and conclusions of the investigation. Several strategies were employed to understand and minimise the researcher influence. One was the use of theoretical memos, which revealed the researcher's developing ideas. These memos exposed thought and were critiqued by supervisors and professional colleagues (see *Memo: More Participants!* in Section 3.5). Supervisors also reviewed the line-by-line coding and labelling. Presenting the findings and the main conceptual understandings of the theoretical model to the validation group proved to be a helpful strategy, particularly by changing this researcher's initial category labels to those that held meaning for the principals.

## 8.6 Closing Remarks

Principals need and accept accountability. However, their preferred frame for accountability is *responsibility* for their most significant work, student learning, in its full representation. Measures that can assess the full representation of learning (as much as this is reasonably possible), provide principals with an increased acceptance of working with policy makers and School system leaders in doing their work and being accountable for that work. However, it is unfortunate if assessment-focused accountability constrains a principal's agency in what they know needs to occur for a rich student experience, or misdirects their agency in providing the full representation of what a curriculum can offer to student learning.

This investigation found that most participating principals in this study did not allow the external expectations of disclosure, persistent explanation and justification, and consequences for students' performance inhibit the ways they led learning in their communities. Elmore's comments in 2005 still provide insight to the phenomenon experienced by the principals in this Australian study today:

'... schools [*principals*] are always accountable, regardless of the policies under which they operate ... Policies, however, do not determine whether schools [*principals*] are accountable ... all schools [*principals*] operate with implicit or explicit action theories that determine to whom, for what, and how they are accountable ...' (Elmore, 2005a, p. 135) (words in italics added).

Elmore's point about action theories aligns with the participating principals' use of metaphors. The use of the metaphor has been a consistent theme in the findings of this thesis, with principals using the metaphor as a powerful sensemaking device. As a co-collaborator with the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), this researcher adopted a metaphor as well. Like the thriving Eucalypt, ideally the principal will seize those elements in their external environment which not only can be readily adapted but can enhance their own living school

system. A poem by Judith Wright metaphorically aligns our Australian character with the Eucalypt:

Ready for any catastrophe, every extreme, she leaves herself plenty of margin.  
Nothing is stiff, symmetrical, indispensable. Everything bends, whip-supple, pivoting,  
loose with a minimal mass ... (Excerpt from *The Eucalypt and the National Character*, Wright, 2016, p. 362).

Wright's metaphor aptly captures the diverse ways that adept principals are 'ready', 'whip-supple' and 'pivoting' and bending their identities. The principal does this to accommodate the expectations of their role within an environment of increasing accountability expectations, 'leaving themselves plenty of margin' where 'nothing is stiff'. The experiences of the principals in this study revealed that their particular unique adaptations could be adequately described and explained as processes of *Making sense* and *Integrating*. Specific conditions influenced their *Making sense* and *Integrating*, such as the profile of the principal, the characteristics of the school's demographic and/or the existing internal accountable learning processes.

The Australian principals in this study could be said to have established rich, living dialogues with their communities, through mantras and narratives about their expectations and their conceptualisations of learning. These mantras were organic, diverse and unique, from working closely ('walk with them') to selling ('every child can get an A for effort'). This thesis draws upon the Eucalypt which is iconic for Australians. Wright's poem, extends the imagery and draws parallels between the Eucalypt and the original Australians and their rich, living dialogue with this land. This thesis at this point would fall short in not acknowledging the First Nation Australians who over the thousands of years have held rich living dialogues with the land.

In some ways, the principals in this study adopted the qualities of the original Australians. Through their interpretations of their expectations the principals 'listened to the

land' and what it asked of them and in their unique ways, spoke back , and in doing so, influenced the landscape.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Notes and Presentation of Findings for Validation Group

### Notes for Validation Group

*Introduce* the central research question:

How do principals' understandings of assessment-focused accountability affect the ways in which they lead learning?

### Introduction

An overall finding in the study was that participating principals **held differing understandings about their accountability expectations. These views influenced the ways in which they enacted their leadership of learning.**

At first glance these differing understandings may seem reasonable given the different school contexts. While the various factors in the school contexts held some importance, the differences in the principals' understandings – and in these findings their enactments of learning – were more likely to be influenced by the participating principals' identity as a leader, their views of learning and their moral purpose.

The summary of findings is organised according to the sub-categories, which were determined by the researcher from the text data. Each sub-category section begins with the findings from the text data, followed by a proposition. As each sub-category is presented links are made with previous sub-categories. Linking propositions are then formulated which generates the building blocks for the theory. These building blocks – linkages- are represented in figures throughout until the final substantive theory is generated.

As we go through please feel free to make comment, ask questions and / or write on your slide handout

### Expectations – 'Reconstituting Expectations'

The first area of inquiry was finding out from the participating principals **what** they were accountable for and **to whom**.

The participating principals' understandings of these two elements of accountability demonstrate the diversity in their responses – see Table 1A

Table 1A:

*To Whom and for What are Principals Accountable: Reconstituting Expectations*

Participant	Reconstituting Expectations	
	<i>To whom</i>	<i>For</i>
1	Self, parents	Students achieving to their level
2	Parents	Growth in performance results
3	School system, parents	Growth in performance results
4	Students, parents	Learning goals, own performance targets
5	Students	Learning programs
6	School system	Performance results
7	Students, parents	Learning engagement, work produced
8	Students, parents	Learning goals, own performance
10	Self, students	Ways they use data, holding teachers to account, outcomes of implementation plans
11	Self,	Holistic learning
12	Students, parents, public	Performance results, student happiness
13	Students,	Student joy
14	Students, parents,	Performance results

**Proposition 1: The participating principals understand that the school system is whom they account to however they frame their accountability as a responsibility. These responsibilities are more often to parents and students rather than the school system.**

For example they described their expectations as **a responsibility** to parents, students, self, with some responsible to teachers *for* results, holistic learning, ways they use data, outcomes from implementation plans.

This reconstitution of expectations through a sense of responsibility is demonstrated through the following participants' views:

'I have a moral responsibility to the students and parents and of course then the accountabilities to the school system' ...and at the same time 'does not take too much notice of the numbers on the page' [does not reflect other important learning].

'Quite frankly I would be asking that of myself anyway – not because any system or authority is asking that of me'

'To be honest, performance results are not my main consideration'

'If that is the measure [results] then that is what we work towards'.

There was **one anomaly** however to these differences. **All participating principals perceived themselves to be a leader of learning** and understood that the school system also expected this of them. Identifying as a leader of learning is an important point to the participating principals' overall conceptual understandings of accountability. That is the weighted importance that the participating principals seemed to attribute to being a leader of learning was closely linked also to the principals' views about learning, their own identity – including their leadership formation - and their sense of moral purpose. The close links are detailed in Section 3.

### **Context – 'Knowing Who We Are'**

The second area of inquiry was an exploration of the participants' school contexts.

While the participating principals were asked direct questions about the nature of the school

context within the context of their accountability responsibilities, some participating principals impressed the importance of their school context influencing the ways they viewed their accountability more than others. For example participant 2 emphasises the nature of the parent body: ‘Well first you need to know about the parents – they can be very, very tricky here’. Another participant detailed the demographic of the student body as residual: ‘.....Some principals appeared to hold some tensions between how they viewed certain characteristics in their school context and being held to account for learning.

The participating principals also came to evaluate their own understandings of their school context through a comparison with other school contexts. They perceived some as having considerable tensions due to their geographical locations; where the competition for enrolments was high: ‘We’re not subject to the pressure that some of the others are...’. From a broad perspective there was a diversity of school contexts. The characteristics of those school contexts which the participating principals identified as considerations in their understandings of accountability are:

- ✓ Parental expectations (new arrivals, high ICSEA)
- ✓ Post school pathways
- ✓ High and low levels of competition for enrolments
- ✓ Residualism
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Favourable – unfavourable performance results
- ✓ Increase or decrease in enrolments
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Teacher behaviours
- ✓ Resistance, support for using data
- ✓ Overemphasis on performing for favourable results
- ✓ Helicopters

- ✓ Low expectations of students
- ✓ Poor performance results from poor teaching
- ✓ Public and school system rankings of results
- ✓ Peer principals
- ✓ Compares self and school context with other principals
- ✓ Joins other principals in action research – international, local peer system schools

**Proposition 2: Participating principals who view their school contexts in similar ways might view their accountability expectations differently. Conversely, participating principals who hold similar views about their accountability expectations might have different views of their school contexts.**

The participants are aligned in Table 2 between these two selective codes. The link is evident in how the principals explain their context even if there is no causal link between the codes. For example Participant 1 has decreasing enrolments and poor performance results yet they emphasise that they are accountable to self and parents – with a priority on the learning. Participant 11 also has unfavourable results yet focusses on the learning. Participant 6 has favourable performance results, increasing enrolments yet sees their accountability to be focussed in achieving high performance results.

Table 2A:

*Linking Reconstituting Expectations and Knowing Who We are: FRAMING*

*RESPONSIBILITES*

P	Reconstituting Expectations	Context- Knowing who we are
	<i>To whom and for</i>	
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level, short term improvement in growth in performance results	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results
2	Parents Growth in performance results	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,
3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,

	Reconstituting Expectations	Context- Knowing who we are
	<i>To whom and for</i>	
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	'Solid' results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teacher performativity culture,
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, focus on belonging,
6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, some teacher resistance to improving results
7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	'Could be better' results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA, previous leadership relationship
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance	Improving results, new arrivals, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,
11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,
12	Students, parents, public Performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking
13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition
14	Students, parents, school system Performance results	Unfavourable results, low competition



Question: How does this reflect your experiences of accountability so far?

### FRAMING IDENTITY

#### **Forming an Identity as a Leader of Learning**

A third area of inquiry was exploring with principals possible sources of challenge and how they managed these challenges in meeting their accountability responsibilities. The data that emerged from this inquiry is as follows.

- ✓ Foremost identified as leaders of learning

- ✓ Type of leadership formation– formed as pastoral, curriculum; forming in learning
- ✓ Metaphors to negotiate the demand and leading learning and gaining high results
- ✓ Career aspirations; appraisal
- ✓ ECP; appraisal
- ✓ Length of time in position – building credibility and influence
- ✓ Efficacy in leading learning and obtaining good results; lack of efficacy about leading learning
- ✓ Previous leadership relationships

**Proposition 3: Participating principals, within the context of their accountability responsibilities, identified as leaders of learning. This identification held implications for principals in:**

- **the ways they framed their identity as they negotiated their reconstituted expectations and their school contexts; principals used metaphors to explain their identities in these negotiations, i.e. buffer, salesperson, the light**
- **their sense of efficacy in the ways they lead learning, i.e. distributing or shared leadership, leadership structures**
- **their efficacy in building credibility and influence; principals acknowledge length of time in the position as a factor**

Table 4A:

## Linking FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES with Leading Learning

P	FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES		FRAMING IDENTITY
	Reconstituting Expectations	Knowing who we are	Leader of Learning
	<i>To whom and for</i>		
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results	Leader of learning deeply embedded in identity; formation – curriculum; collective leadership; efficacy in leading learning; results; metaphor – light, lantern, pedagogical leader
2	Parents Growth in performance results	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,	Appraisal- judged; getting the results
3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,	Buffer, filter
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	Favourable results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teachers over focus on performance,	Collective leadership of learning Sense maker; filter
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, focus on belonging,	Close to school wide learning programs; confident in their influence on learning program
6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, teacher resistance	Role models teaching styles; expectation in performance results; Salesperson; bulldozer; Career aspirations- judged
7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	Favourable results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA,	Works closely with teachers in learning; high level of efficacy in leading learning; expects more from teachers
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance	Reasonable results, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship	Collective leadership of learning – executive members play a more influential role in leading learning
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning
11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning;
12	Students, parents, public Performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking	Influence with school wide programs; close to teacher learning journeys
13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition	Collective leadership – others greater influence with leading learning
14	Students, parents, Performance results	Unfavourable results, low competition	Collective leadership – others in the team hold greater influence; mid- level of efficacy in leading learning

The relationships between FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES and Leading Learning become more apparent – see Table 3. As this column Leading Learning is aligned a story begins to emerge for each participant. That is there is a sense making story line. For example Participant 2 feels that they are judged on their results through the appraisal system, and this judgment is also based on how well they lead learning. So while the students are achieving favourable performance results Participant 2 still believes ‘It’s all about getting those results’. So they reconstitute their accountability expectations to performance results and the public ranking of those results.

The relationships between Framing Responsibilities and Leading Learning are the base for the following proposition:

Linking Proposition 4.1: The ways in which participating principals identify as leaders of learning influences the ways in which they reconstitute their expectations.

Linking proposition 4.2: School contextual conditions – ‘Knowing Who We’ are important considerations for the participating principals in the ways they use images to describe their identity i.e. filter, juggler. At the same the ways that the participants identify as a leader of learning also has an influence on how they view ‘Knowing Who We are’.

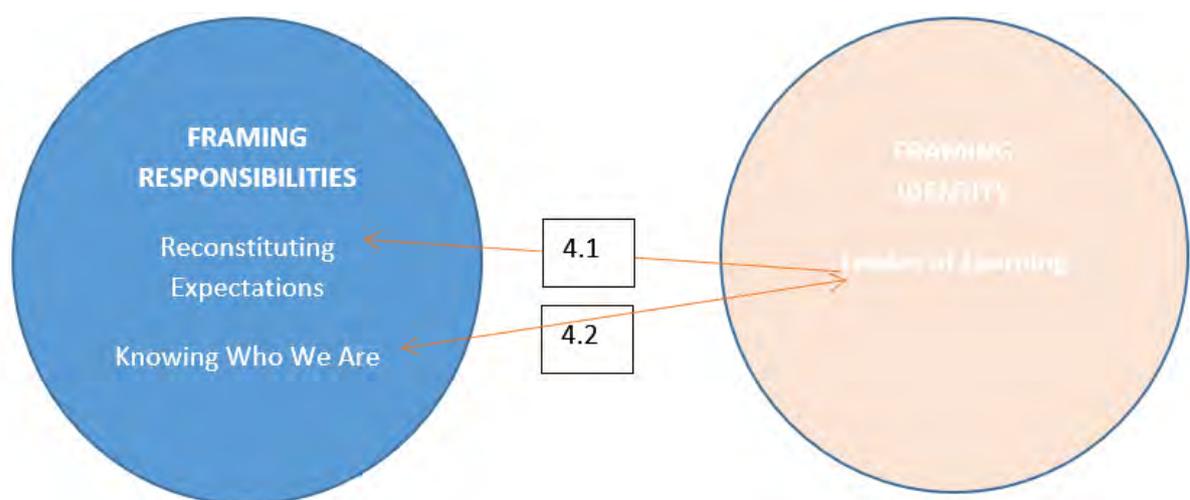


Figure 1A: Building Block 1 of substantive theory: Sensemaking

## Understanding Learning

As the principals emphasised the importance of being a leader of learning - it seemed important to investigate principals' understandings about learning. In particular the investigation explored the relationship between their understandings about learning and the ways they were leading learning – yet at the same time in the context of meeting their accountability responsibilities.

Some of these understandings are:

- ✓ Theoretical understandings: eg. mindsets theory. Understands the learner (gender). Teachers' mindsets can limit learning. If authentic learning is happening the results will come.
- ✓ Provision of opportunities; provision of skills and resources to achieve their absolute personal best;
- ✓ Teaching does not bring about the good results; about the quality of the student (enrolments)
- ✓ Learning needs to be at the forefront of teachers' work; good learning and teaching leads to good results
- ✓ Learning is now, practical and liberating for futures
- ✓ Pushing for results is not quality learning however that is what they (principal) are measured by
- ✓ Need to have a vision for learning
- ✓ The presence of rich authentic learning then results will follow
- ✓ Hope that good results follow good learning;
- ✓ Acknowledges not a strength area
- ✓ Acknowledges deficit in understanding learning – in the past.
- ✓ Learning is for now and the future
- ✓ Learning in early stages important for Stage 6

- ✓ Results take care of themselves if learning is happening
- ✓ Learning holistic in the human element dimensions; cannot be separated
- ✓ It happens but we only see the results of authentic learning way down the track
- ✓ Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development- nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in life
- ✓ Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge

**Proposition 5: Participating principals view learning through three different**

**lenses**

- **learning is a present moment experience, human growth**
- **learning is for post school options**
- **authentic learning leads to good results**

Table 5A:

*Linking FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES with Leading Learning and Understanding Learning*

P	FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES		FRAMING IDENTITY	
	Reconstituting Expectations: <i>to whom and for</i>	Knowing who we are	Forming Identity as a Leader of Learning	Understanding Learning
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results	Leader of learning deeply embedded in identity; formation – curriculum; collective leadership; efficacy in leading learning; results; metaphor – light, lantern, pedagogical leader	Theoretical understandings: eg. Mindsets theory. Understands the learner (gender). Teachers’ mindsets can limit learning. If authentic learning is happening the results will come.
2	Parents Growth in performance results	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,	Appraisal- judged; getting the results	Provision of opportunities; provision of skills and resources to achieve their absolute personal best;
3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,	Buffer, filter	Teaching does not bring about the good results; about the quality of the student (enrolments)
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	Favourable results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teachers over focus on performance,	Collective leadership of learning Sense maker; filter	Learning needs to be at the forefront of teachers’ work; good learning and teaching leads to good results
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, focus on belonging,	Close to school wide learning programs; confident in their influence on learning program	Learning is now, practical and liberating for futures
6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, teacher resistance	Role models teaching styles; expectation in performance results; Salesperson; bulldozer; Career aspirations- judged	Pushing for results is not quality learning however that is what they (principal) are measured by

7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	Favourable results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA,	Works closely with teachers in learning; high level of efficacy in leading learning; expects more from teachers	Need to have a vision for learning Rich authentic learning then results will follow
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance	Reasonable results, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship	Collective leadership of learning – executive members play a more influential role in leading learning	Hope that good results follow good learning; Acknowledges not a strength area
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning Leadership formation - pastoral	Acknowledges deficit in understanding learning – in the past.  Learning is for now and the future  Learning in early stages important for Stage 6  Results take care of themselves if learning is happening
11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning; leadership formation -pastoral	Learning holistic in the human element dimensions; cannot be separated
12	Students, parents, public Performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking	Influence with school wide programs; close to teacher learning journeys	It happens but we only see the results of authentic learning way down the track
13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition	Collective leadership – others greater influence with leading learning. Leadership formation -pastoral	Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development- nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in life
14	Students, parents, Performance results	Unfavourable results, low competition	Collective leadership – others in the team hold greater influence; mid-level of efficacy in leading learning	Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge

Linking proposition 5.1.: Principals who acknowledge minimal understanding about learning see their leadership as collective or distributive, and use metaphors i.e. facilitator, hope-finder, buffer to describe their role in leading learning.

Linking proposition 5.2: Principals who seek empirical and theoretical understandings of learning acknowledge its importance in being able to lead learning

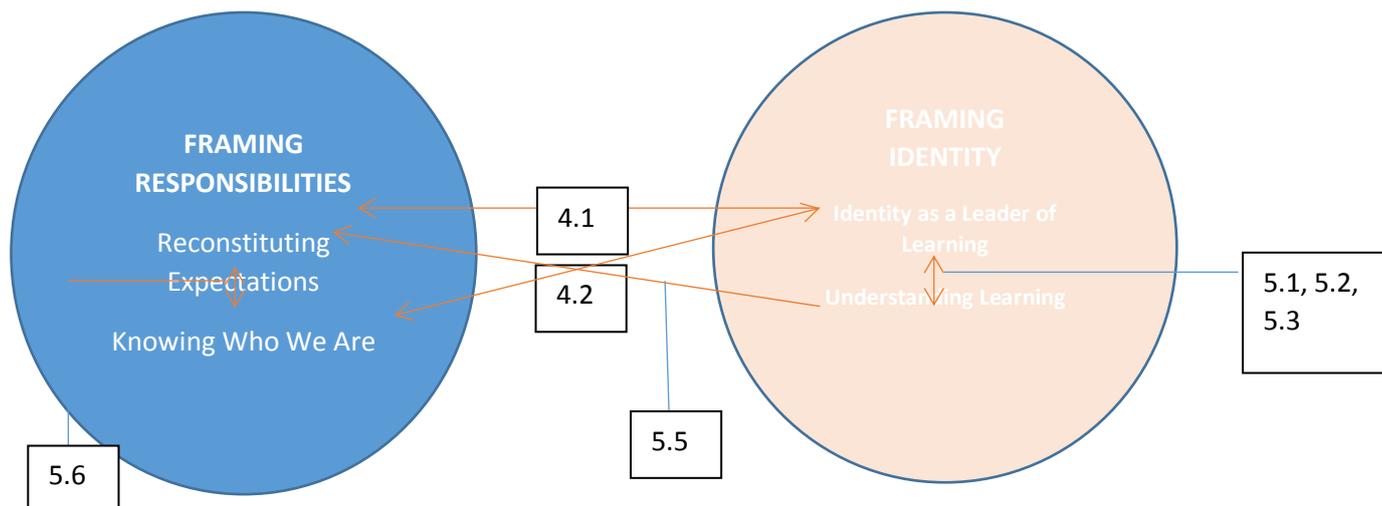
Linking proposition 5.3: Principals who seek empirical and theoretical understandings of learning tend to identify strongly with their role as leader of learning using metaphors such as a light (holding up the vision for learning).

Linking proposition 5.4: Some participating principals acknowledge that their understanding learning impacts on their leadership of learning. These principals also believe that ‘if rich authentic learning is happening then results will take care of themselves.’

Linking proposition 5.5: Most principals who believe that rich authentic learning brings good results also give a higher priority to students and parents for a holistic approach to learning and hold accountability for performance results as a lower priority (other linking propositions follow along in a similar fashion as 5.5. i.e. no acknowledgment of learning and beliefs about teaching and learning and the quality of the learner)

Linking proposition 5.6: Participating principals recognised the importance of knowing who their learners were in the context of the accountability expectations and the ways they understood learning

Linking proposition 6: Participating principals who did not view that learning was a strength area conceded that their leadership formation was in the pastoral domain



*Figure 2A: Building Block 2 of substantive theory: Sensemaking*

### **Framing Purpose**

Several participating principals articulated their understandings about leading or learning with regard and their accountability responsibilities in terms of their purpose. These are worth mentioning because the idea of purpose or moral purposes was important to these principals— that is they were contextualising their accountability expectations within a moral framework. For example participant 6 frames their relentless push for high performance results as a moral imperative explaining that good results are what the student deserves – it is what we owe them: ‘call it what you like a moral imperative- but they deserve the best chance in life’. Some of the references to purpose are below:

- ✓ Provide the best learning experiences; see challenge as positive- ‘hard is good’
- ✓ Have a vision for the learner – collaborative and courageous
- ✓ Best results a student can get
- ✓ Ensures that focus of teachers’ work is on learning as opposed to high performance results, or other programs (i.e. SS imposed programs)
- ✓ Learning does not need to be measured through testing; not a strength area;
- ✓ ‘Best chance in life’ moral imperative – and the purpose of schooling
- ✓ Being clear about teaching and learning helps

- ✓ Optimism for students (and families)
- ✓ Dignity of the learner – aligns with religious beliefs; agenda about pedagogy
- ✓ Committed to a language of learning
- ✓ Ensuring student happiness; harmony;
- ✓ Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development-  
nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in  
life
- ✓ Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge

**Proposition 6: Some participating principals engage in a moral reasoning process to negotiate their decisions in the ways they enact their accountability responsibilities.**

Table 6A:

*Linking FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES WITH FRAMING IDENTITY (Forming Purpose)*

FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES			FRAMING IDENTITY		
	Reconstituting Expectations: <i>to whom and for</i>	Knowing who we are	Forming Identity as a Leader of Learning	Understanding Learning	Forming Purpose
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results	Leader of learning deeply embedded in identity; formation – curriculum; collective leadership; efficacy in leading learning; results; metaphor – light, lantern, pedagogical leader	Theoretical understandings: eg. Mindsets theory. Understands the learner (gender). Teachers’ mindsets can limit learning. If authentic learning is happening the results will come.	Provide the best learning experiences; hard is good
2	Parents Growth in performance results	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,	Appraisal- judged; getting the results	Provision of opportunities; provision of skills and resources to achieve their absolute personal best;	Have a vision for the learner – collaborative and courageous
3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,	Buffer, filter	Teaching does not bring about the good results; about the quality of the student (enrolments)	Best results a student can get
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	Favourable results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teachers over focus on performance,	Collective leadership of learning Sense maker; filter	Learning needs to be at the forefront of teachers’ work; good learning and teaching leads to good results	Ensures that focus of teachers’ work is on learning as opposed to high performance results, or other programs (i.e. SS imposed programs)
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, focus on belonging,	Close to school wide learning programs; confident in their influence on learning program	Learning is now, practical and liberating for futures	Learning does not need to be measured through testing

6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, teacher resistance	Role models teaching styles; expectation in performance results; Salesperson; bulldozer; Career aspirations-judged	Pushing for results is not quality learning however that is what they (principal) are measured by	'Best chance in life' moral imperative – and the purpose of schooling
7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	Favourable results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA,	Works closely with teachers in learning; high level of efficacy in leading learning; expects more from teachers	Need to have a vision for learning Rich authentic learning then results will follow	Being clear about teaching and learning helps
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance	Reasonable results, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship	Collective leadership of learning – executive members play a more influential role in leading learning	Hope that good results follow good learning; Acknowledges not a strength area	Optimism for students (and families)
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning Leadership formation - pastoral	Acknowledges deficit in understanding learning – in the past.  Learning is for now and the future Learning in early stages important for Stage 6 Results take care of themselves if learning is happening	Dignity of the learner – aligns with religious beliefs; agenda about pedagogy
11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning; leadership formation -pastoral	Learning holistic in the human element dimensions; cannot be separated	Committed to a language of learning
12	Students, parents, public Performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking	Influence with school wide programs; close to teacher learning journeys	It happens but we only see the results of authentic learning way down the track	Ensuring student happiness; harmony;

13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition	Collective leadership – others greater influence with leading learning. Leadership formation - pastoral	Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development- nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in life	‘So it’s an ownership of it that wants to enable me to want to work towards achieving it, because yeah, that’s great...Ownership in that level of aligning with my core values around it..’
14	Students, parents, Performance results	Unfavourable results, low competition	Collective leadership – others in the team hold greater influence; mid-level of efficacy in leading learning	Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge	Purpose in offering the ‘essentials’

Linking Proposition 6.1: The participating principals engagement of moral reasoning processes frame their moral purpose/moral imperative and helps them make sense of their expectations and their beliefs about learning.

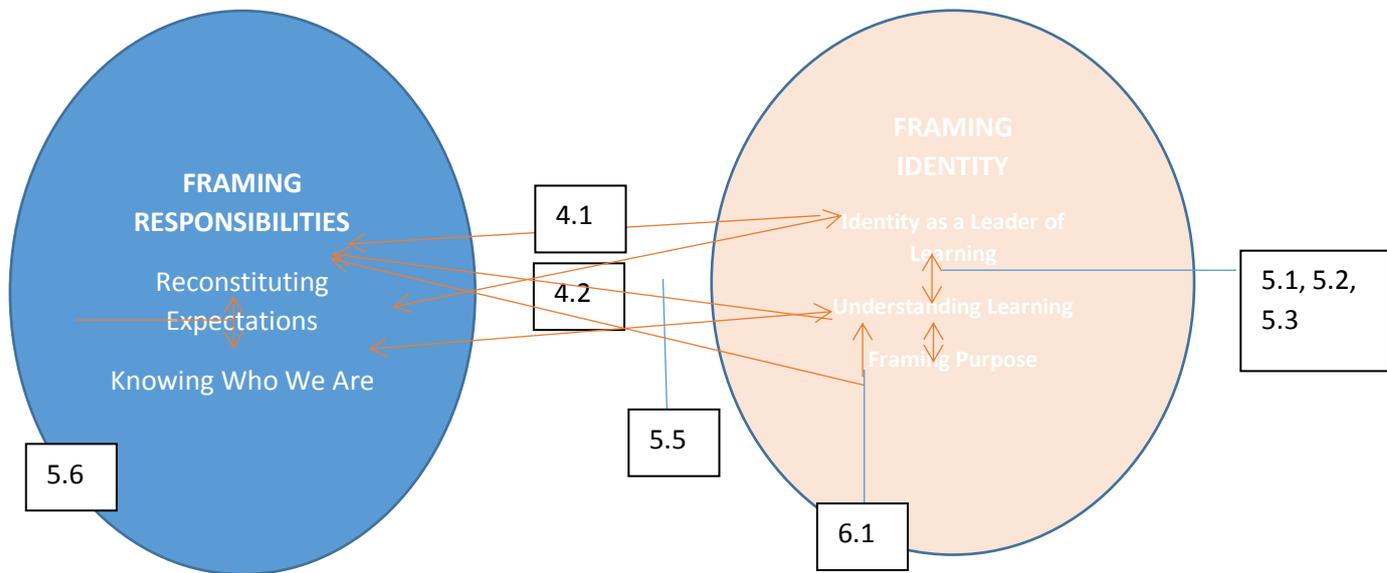


Figure 3A: Building Block 3 of substantive theory: Sensemaking

### Enacting Congruence

The final area of inquiry was to investigate how principals understood that they enacted their accountability expectations. The findings were interpreted into the selective code of Enacting Congruence. Participating principals’ enactments of their accountability expectations were congruent with the ways that they framed their identity – as presented previously- and the ways they framed their responsibilities – as presented above. The findings are presented in the form of the strategies used and the consequences resulting from the enactment of those strategies.

For ease, both strategies and consequences are aligned and presented in table form – see Table 7A.

Table 7A:

*Enacting Congruence: Strategies and Consequences*

**ENACTING CONGRUENCE**

**Strategies**

**Consequences**

Staff restructures; short term focus on improving literacy and numeracy results.  
Implements different maths programs- challenges teachers mindsets; artists in residence

Increased enrolments. Tight timeframes implemented.  
Maths learning programs implemented. Data informed new structures.  
Apprehension

Models through teaching to mass gatherings i.e. students re; their vision for them; Combines marketing with student learning programs.. Takes carriage of training modules: rewards growth in performance results with staff, students

Increased enrolments; decreased anxiety; staff influenced; implements various SS imposed programs; market aligned with learning program– sense of excitement

Acts as a buffer and filter from imposed programs being implemented in the school; Builds aspirational culture; provides PLTeams for crm design; broadcasts achievement within contained expectations;

External programs tailored to school needs; Grade target setting implemented

Builds sense making, balanced culture;  
Supports existing staff structures and roles;  
Uses NP accountabilities to implement school wide pedagogy; monitors through filtering what programs are implemented

School wide pedagogy implemented; teachers focussed on learning and engaged with new school wide program

Initiates individualised learning programs; to track and use as a tool in learning conversations between tutor and student

School wide individualised learning program implemented

Ensures leadership team hold and articulate same expectations; models teaching technique in own class; holds teachers accountable for results. Use accountability as leverage to challenge teachers

Increased enrolments; most results improve; some coordinators not meeting expectations

Close to the learning – learns alongside with teachers; understands own syllabus; instructional; uses data to influence staff; Transfers own understandings of pedagogy into their practices of leading learning

School wide learning program (non-traditional) continues

Distributes the role of leading the learning to others  
Sets targets with performance results with external measurements (NAPLAN and HSC)  
Accountability here always

Staff hub implemented total focus learning – pride  
Data walls. Performance targets met – results plateau

Sought to understand learning – empirically and theoretically. Confront and accept accountability – use it as an opportunity; uses data ; invests in teacher work in junior stages of learning; uses DeCoursey for improvement conversations

Implemented a school wide pedagogy; critical mass of teachers enacted new thinking; evidence based culture emerges; focus is on pedagogy

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Only holds conversations about learning;  
Action research – teachers ‘go out’; uses empirical research to influence teacher thinking about learning; uses data to persuade thinking

Articulates more about learning to wide audiences; intervenes with whole student cohorts in later years; supports teachers’ interventions in early stages; will not take teachers off snr classes; adopts a SS project; uses data to inform

Supports others to lead learning; looks at all the potential and sees what needs to be done; tries to influence staff to have a sense of pride in what they do; to be a steward

Decrease non-essential learning to improve the results; works at influencing the leadership team re; improving results; supports those who know about learning

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Relief experienced by teachers when focus is learning

SS program implemented; information from data used for implementation plans; uses DeCourcey for improvement conversations

Ensures that a new classroom is built; furniture. Addressed staff learning needs. Joy. Professional learning programs catered for teacher needs

Non-essential learning activities dropped from calendar; leadership team worked towards improving result . Unease

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**Proposition 7: Participating principals' strategies to enact their accountability expectations are mostly centred on learning. Some of the consequences of their strategies exist in the affective domain where principals feel excited or a sense of peace when they experience congruence. When the consequences are not known participating principals felt apprehension and unease i.e. not knowing if a program would improve results.**

At this point the researcher deemed it appropriate to rename Enacting Congruence to Framing Enactments For Learning. The rationale for the name change is that Proposition 7 holds that the participating strategies are generally centred on learning. A further reason is to align with the previous sub categories of Framing. Table 8A displays the total links across the three sub-categories.

Table 8A:

*Linking FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES, FRAMING IDENTITY AND FRAMING ENACTMENTS FOR LEARNING*

P	FRAMING RESPONSIBILITIES		FRAMING IDENTITY			FRAMING ENACTMENTS FOR LEARNING	
	Reconstituting Expectations: <i>to whom and for</i>	Knowing who we are	Forming Identity as: Leader of Learning	Understanding Learning	Framing Purpose	Strategies	Consequences
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results	Acts as a leader of learning deeply embedded in identity; formation – curriculum; collective leadership; efficacy in leading learning; results; metaphor – light, lantern	Theoretical understandings: eg. mindsets theory. Understands the learner (gender). Teachers' mindsets can limit learning. If authentic learning is happening the results will come.	Provide the best learning experiences; hard is good	Staff restructures; short term focus on improving literacy and numeracy results. Implements different maths programs-challenges teachers mindsets; artists in residence	Increased enrolments. Tight timeframes implemented. Maths learning programs implemented. Data informed new structures
2	Parents Growth in performance results Appraisal;	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,	Acts as 'a leader – teacher'; juggler	Provision of opportunities; provision of skills and resources to achieve their absolute personal best;	Have a vision for the learner – collaborative and courageous	Models through teaching to mass gatherings i.e. students re; their vision for them; Combines marketing with student learning programs.. Takes carriage of training modules: rewards growth in performance results with staff, students	Increased enrolments; decreased anxiety; staff influenced; implements various SS imposed programs

3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,	Acts as a buffer, filter	Teaching does not bring about the good results; about the quality of the student (enrolments)	Best results a student can get	Acts as a buffer and filter from imposed programs being implemented in the school; Builds aspirational culture; provides PLTeams for crm design; broadcasts achievement within contained expectations; broadcasts, mantras, repeats messages	External programs tailored to school needs; Grade target setting implemented
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	Favourable results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teachers over focus on performance,	Collective leadership of learning Acts as a sense maker; filter	Learning needs to be at the forefront of teachers' work; good learning and teaching leads to good results	Ensures that focus of teachers' work is on learning as opposed to high performance results, or other programs (i.e. SS imposed programs)	Builds sense making, balanced culture; Supports existing staff structures and roles; Uses NP accountabilities to implement school wide pedagogy; monitors through filtering what programs are implemented, use of mantras	School wide pedagogy implemented; teachers focussed on learning and engaged with new school wide program
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, need to focus on student belonging,	Close to school wide learning programs; confident in their influence on learning program	Learning is now, practical and liberating for futures	Learning does not need to be measured through testing	Initiates individualised learning programs; to track and use as a tool in learning conversations between tutor and student	School wide individualised learning program implemented
6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, teacher resistance	Role models teaching styles; expectation in performance results; Acts as a salesperson; acts as a bulldozer;	Pushing for results is not quality learning however that is what they (principal) are measured by	'Best chance in life' moral imperative – and the purpose of schooling	Ensures leadership team hold and articulate same expectations; models teaching technique in own class; holds teachers accountable for results. Use	Increased enrolments; most results improve; some coordinators not meeting expectations

7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	Favourable results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA, previous leadership relationship	Works closely with teachers in learning; high level of efficacy in leading learning; Distributive leader not leader of learning	Need to have a vision for learning Rich authentic learning then results will follow	Being clear about teaching and learning helps	accountability as leverage to challenge teachers  Close to the learning – learns alongside with teachers; understands own syllabus; instructional; uses data to influence staff; Transfers own understandings of pedagogy into their practices of leading learning	School wide learning program (non-traditional) continues
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance;	Reasonable results, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship	Collective leadership of learning – executive members play a more influential role in leading learning	Hope that good results follow good learning; Acknowledges not a strength area	Optimism for students (and families)	Distributes the role of leading the learning to others Sets targets with performance results with external measurements (NAPLAN and HSC) Accountability here always	Staff hub implemented total focus learning. Data walls. Performance targets met – results plateau
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account,	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning	Acknowledges deficit in understanding learning – in the past. Learning is for now and the future Learning in early stages important for Stage 6 Results take care of themselves if	Dignity of the learner – aligns with religious beliefs; agenda about pedagogy	Sought to understand learning – empirically and theoretically. Confront and accept accountability – use it as an opportunity; uses data ; invests in teacher work in junior stages of learning; uses DeCoursey for improvement conversations, use of mantras	Implemented a school wide pedagogy; critical mass of teachers enacted new thinking; evidence based culture emerges; focus is on pedagogy

11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,	Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning;	learning is happening Learning holistic in the human element dimensions; cannot be separated	Committed to a language of learning	Only holds conversations about learning; Action research – teachers ‘go out’; uses empirical research to influence teacher thinking about learning; uses data to persuade thinking, mantra of language of learning	Relief experienced by teachers when focus is learning
12	Students, parents, Public performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking	Influence with school wide programs; close to teacher learning journeys	It happens but we only see the results of authentic learning way down the track	Ensuring student happiness; harmony;	Articulates more about learning to wide audiences; intervenes with whole student cohorts in later years; supports teachers’ interventions in early stages; will not take teachers off snr classes; adopts a SS project; uses data to inform	SS program implemented; information from data used for implementation plans; uses DeCoursey for improvement conversations
13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition	Collective leadership – others greater influence with leading learning; seek opportunities for others – best they can be ; act as an enabler; hope-finder; inspirer	Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development- nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in life	‘So it’s an ownership of it that wants to enable me to want to work towards achieving it, because yeah, that’s great...Ownership in that level of aligning with my core values around it..’	Supports others to lead learning; looks at all the potential and sees what needs to be done; tries to influence staff to have a sense of pride in what they do; to be a steward	Ensures that a new classroom is built; furniture. Addressed staff learning needs. Professional learning programs catered for teacher needs

14	Students, parents, Performance results,	Unfavourable results, low competition	Collective leadership – others greater influence; mid-level of efficacy in leading learning; act as a facilitator of learning	Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge	Purpose in offering the 'essentials'	Decrease non-essential learning to improve the results; works at influencing the leadership team re; improving results; supports those who know about learning	Non-essential learning activities dropped from calendar; leadership team worked towards improving result
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Linking Proposition 7.1: The strategies, which the participating principals employed, were strongly aligned to their efficacy in their understandings of learning. Those principals who perceived learning as not a strength area enacted this on several ways. They either distributed this role to other members of staff or studied empirical research to improve their understandings.

Linking proposition 7.2: The participating principals strategised in a relentless fashion by using mantras, broadcasting their beliefs about learning, aspiration, just one more mark.

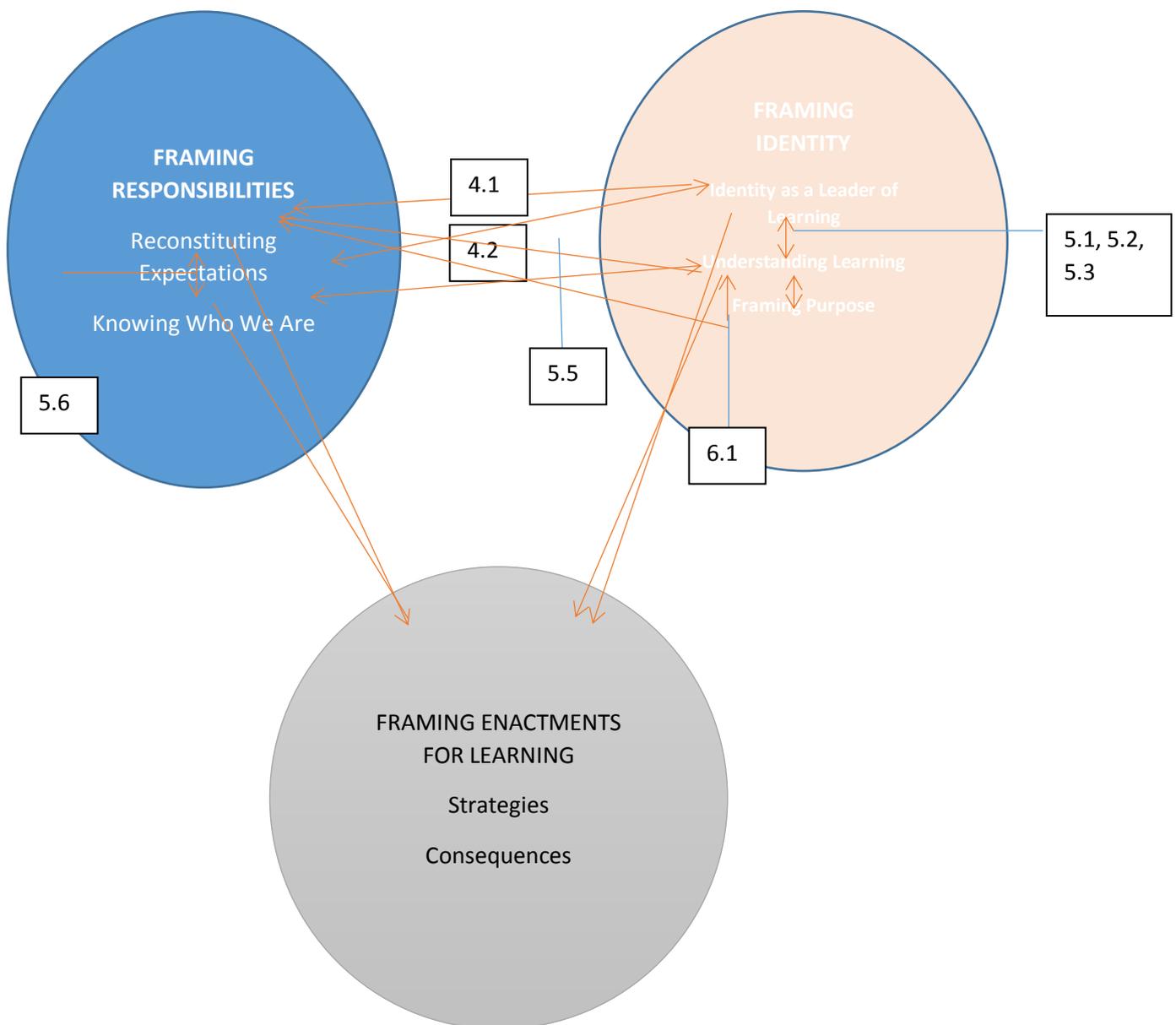
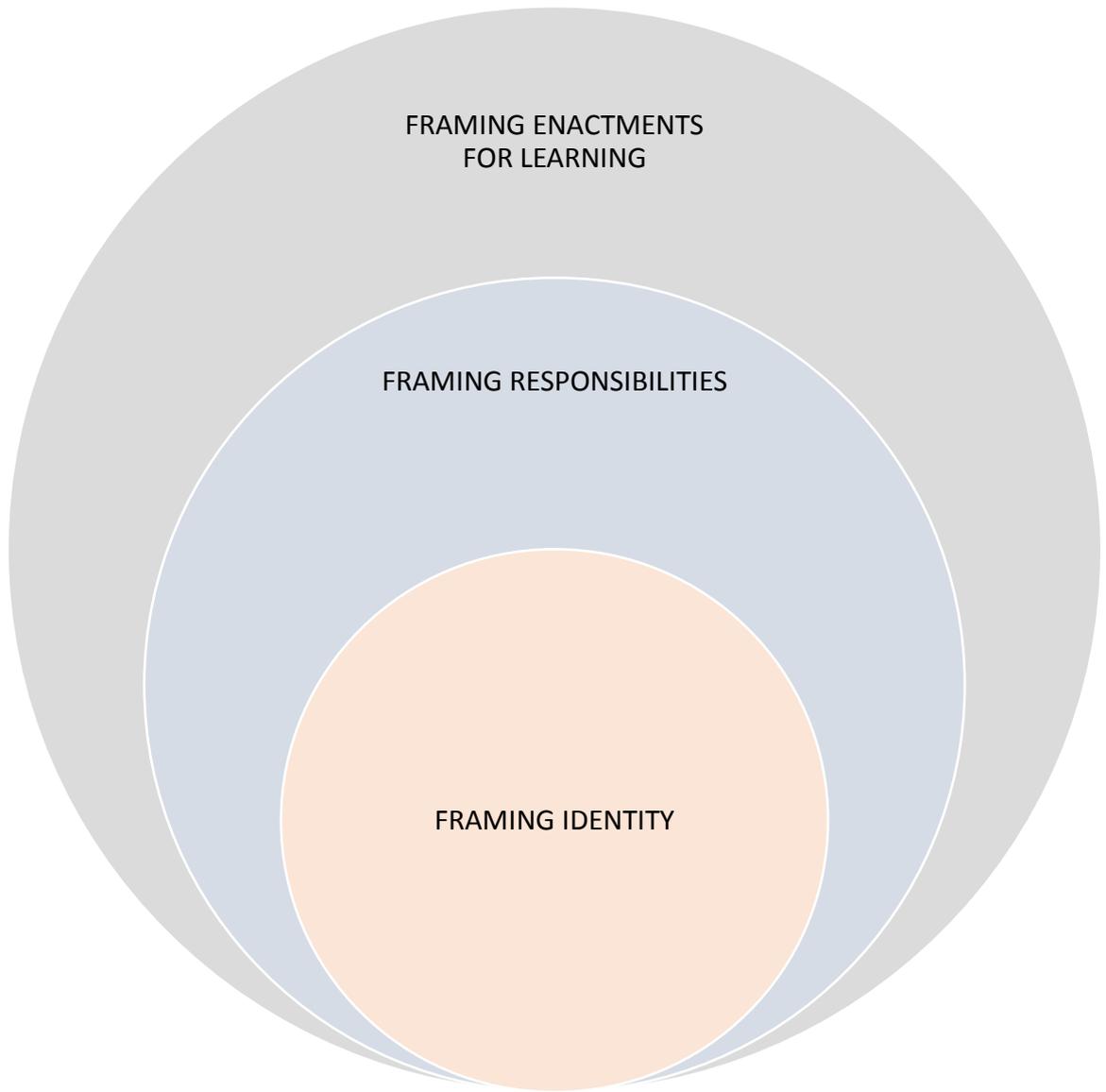


Figure 4A: Building Block 4 substantive theory: Sensemaking.

## **The Substantive Theory: Principals Making Sense of their Accountability**

The nested circles show the relationships between the three main sub-categories. Each category has a relationship with the other however Framing Identity is closer to a principal's interior world. The ways in which principals frame their responsibilities – is determined by the principals' understandings around learning, framing a purpose in order to meet their reconstituted expectations and at the same time being true to their understandings about learning. Principals identity as a leader of learning is influenced by their fundamental understandings about learning. That said the ways in which principals frame their responsibilities– that what is being asked of them and also the members that they are 'leading' can influence their identity – yet to a lesser extent. The engagement of framing enactments of learning has links with both the ways they see their identity and also they ways they have framed their responsibilities. Principals bring these two frames together and aim to enact a congruence – meeting the perceived needs of the community (reconstituted expectations) and being true to their decisions about learning in the context of the expectations.



*Figure 5A:* Building Block 5: A Substantive Theory: Principals Making Sense of their Accountability

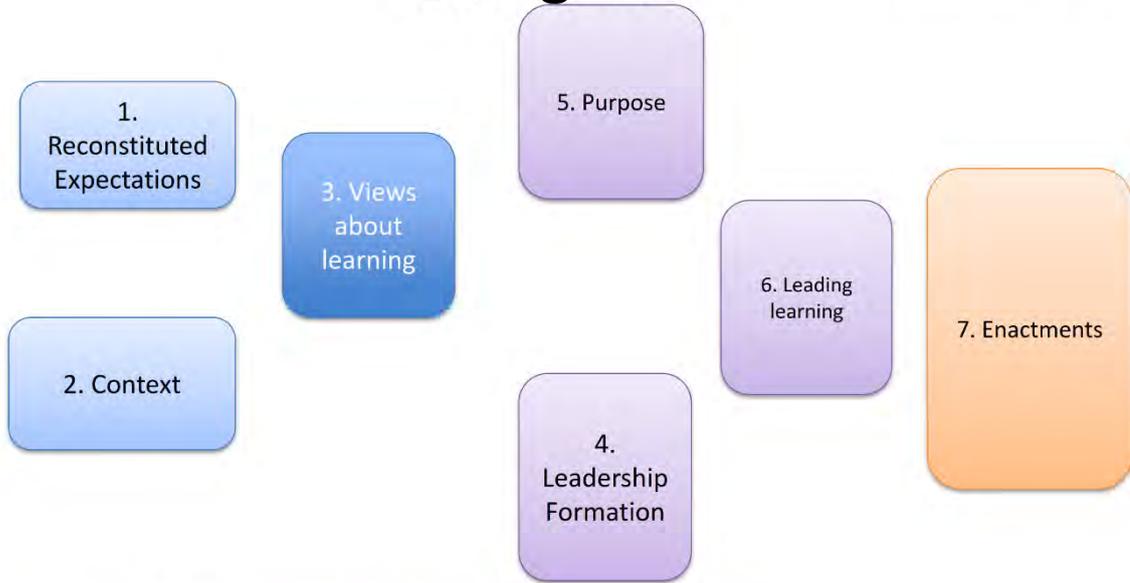
## RQ 4. Enactments and reasons

- Short term learning programs on literacy and numeracy → *Because:* Poor results, declining enrolments
- *Broad, enrichment quality learning programs* → *Quality learning produces good results, moral imperative, purpose*
- Holds teachers to account SMART and DeCourcy data → SS expectations to use data; to improve
- *Building cultures* → *Beliefs about students, teachers, own understandings about learning eg aspirational, performative,*

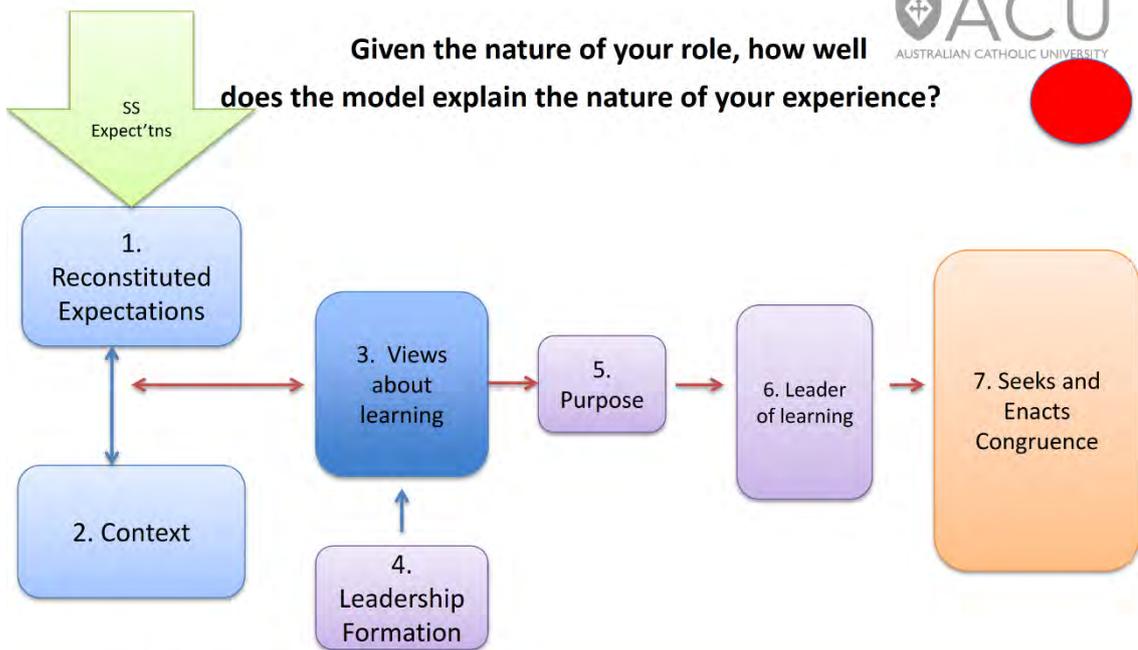


**4. How well do these findings around the enactments – and the reasons - reflect your experience?**

# Categories



Given the nature of your role, how well does the model explain the nature of your experience?



## Renaming categories



## Appendix 2: Letter to School system Directors



Dear **XXXXX**,

I am requesting to conduct research with all secondary school principals and the secondary schools consultant in your Diocese. The application for research as per **XXXXX** requirements is attached, along with the approval by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (approval number 2012 255N).

### ***What is the project about?***

The research project aims to investigate Australian principals' understandings of the current accountability regime and how these understandings influence the ways they enact their accountability for learning. As Australian education moves to increased levels of educational accountability and where principals are held to account for student learning, it is important to understand principals' views of what is expected of them, how they make sense of these expectations and how they enact these expectations in their schools. This study aims to shed light on principals' perceptions of these expectations, the dynamics that be at play for principals and how they enact these expectations.

### ***Who is undertaking the project?***

This project is being conducted by me under the supervision of Associate Professor Shukri Sanber and will form the basis for the degree in the Doctor of Education at Australian Catholic University,

### ***Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?***

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project.

### ***What will participants be asked to do?***

- The commitment from participants in group 1 involves two interviews. Interview 1 will be approximately 40 minutes in length and interview 2 will be approximately 60 minutes in length. These interviews will be held at a mutually convenient location for the participant or over the phone. It is anticipated, with the participant's consent, that these interviews will be digitally recorded. Transcripts of this record will be provided to each participant for their verification.
- Participants will also be invited to submit any relevant documentation pertinent to accountability for learning, such as minutes of staff meetings or annual planning documents.
- Questions asked by the researcher concern the expectations of principals with regard to their accountability for learning, the tensions that these expectations may bring and the ways in which principals enact their understandings of these expectations. Questions will be forwarded to the participant before interview.

***What are the benefits of the research project?***

Contribution in the literature on how principals view the expectations in their accountability for learning is minimal yet Australian principals are being expected to be a key player for the improvement in learning with accountability being the driver for such change. This research will benefit principals in enabling their professional voice to be heard. As such the findings will be an essential contribution to key understandings about accountability for learning and principal leadership. To this end this research depends on gaining principals' views about accountability, what is expected of them and how these views influence the ways they enact these expectations.

At times school system leaders and government policy makers may assume that principals perceive accountability for learning in similar ways to system and government initiatives and directions. The study aims to investigate the actual views of principals and how these views may influence the ways they enact their accountability for learning. The exploration of

principals' views will provide recommendations to enable school systems refine the ways in which they work with principals in their accountability for learning

Any foreseeable risks have been minimised due to the de-identification of participants.

***Can participants withdraw from the study?***

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants are not under any obligation to participate. If participants agree to participate, they can withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences.

***Will anyone else know the results of the project?***

Data will be stored at ACU North Sydney on a non-networked computer where data will be unidentifiable, through the use of coding. In any publications that follow this research it will be impossible to identify individuals or schools. Any element that will identify individuals and/or schools will be omitted, and as such only aggregated information will be published.

***Will CEO Sydney be able to find out the results of the project?***

Once the findings have been validated these will also be forwarded to [REDACTED], to you the Director. The researcher will inform you through email.

***Who do you contact if you have questions about the project?***

System personnel may contact the researcher at any time about the project:

[judith.norris@acu.edu.au](mailto:judith.norris@acu.edu.au) or [REDACTED] or the supervisor of the project Associate Professor Shukri Sanber, [shukri.sanber@acu.edu.au](mailto:shukri.sanber@acu.edu.au)

***What if you have a complaint or any concerns?***

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (approval number 2012 255N). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Chair, HREC  
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)  
Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne Campus  
Locked Bag 4115  
FITZROY, VIC, 3065

██████████

██████████

Email: [res.ethics@acu.edu.au](mailto:res.ethics@acu.edu.au)

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

I understand that I will be notified through ██████████ research application processes if this application has been approved.

Should the application be approved then the Letter of Information to Participants (as attached) will be forwarded to potential participants. A consent form will be provided to participants at their first interview and a copy will be forwarded to participants one week later.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms Judith Norris**

### **Appendix 3: Email Correspondence to Principals**

Dear...,

In your role as principal you are invited to participate in the research project concerning principals and assessment-focussed accountability. The attachment, 'Information for Participants' provides information about the project.

Should you wish to participate then simply reply to this email. Should you have further queries about the project and your participation, please make contact with my supervisor or me as indicated in the Attachment.

In appreciation,

Judith Norris

## **Appendix 4: Email to Principals**

Subject line: Giving voice to principals' experiences of assessment-focussed accountability in Australia

Dear...,

In your role as principal you are invited to participate in the research project concerning secondary principals' views in their assessment-focussed accountability. The attachment, 'Information for Participants' provides information about the project.

If you are happy enough to be interviewed (no more than 50 minutes) then I am thinking of coming to [REDACTED] on 29<sup>th</sup> August and [REDACTED] on 30<sup>th</sup> August and [REDACTED] on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. I can accommodate any times on these days. If these times look glaringly inconvenient, even with some shuffling, then I will send another set of dates.

Should you have further queries about the project and your participation, please make contact with my supervisor (see Attachment) or me (see below).

In appreciation,

---

CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principals' perceptions and enactments of accountability for learning in Australia

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Associate Professor Michael Bezzina

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms Judith Norris

I ..... have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in two, one hour interviews approximately two months apart. These will be recorded. I realise that I can withdraw my consent at any time, without giving reasons and without 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 .....

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: .....

DATE: .....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: .....

DATE: .....

## Appendix 5: Approval to Research School system 1



[Redacted]

Judith Norris  
23/10A Mears Avenue  
RANDWICK NSW 2031

Dear Judith

I refer to your application seeking permission to contact the [Redacted] Schools Consultant as well as the Director of Schools in the [Redacted] in order to conduct research for your study "Principals' perceptions and enactments of accountability for learning in Australia".

I wish to advise that approval is granted for you to approach the above personnel in order to seek their willingness to participate in this research. However, the decision to participate is the prerogative of the Principal.

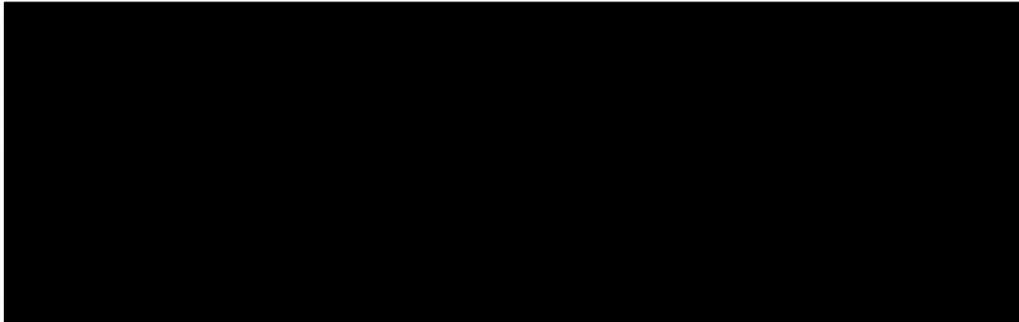
Should you require further details, please do not hesitate to contact [Redacted] at this office [Redacted]

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted]

## Appendix 6: Approval to Research – School system 2



Ms Judith Norris  
23/10a Mears Ave  
RANDWICK NSW 2031

Dear Judith

RE: RESEARCH APPLICATION REF: 822 – LETTER OF APPROVAL

Thank you for the submission of your application to conduct research in Archdiocesan Catholic Schools under the jurisdiction of the [REDACTED]. Approval is given by [REDACTED] to conduct this study. **This approval is granted subject to full compliance with NSW Child Protection and Commonwealth Privacy Act legislation.** It is the prerogative of any Principal or staff member whom you might approach to decline your invitation to be involved in this study or to withdraw from involvement at any time.

Permission is given for you to approach the Principals of the schools nominated, listed below, requesting participants for your study: "Principals' perceptions and enactments of accountability for learning in Australia".

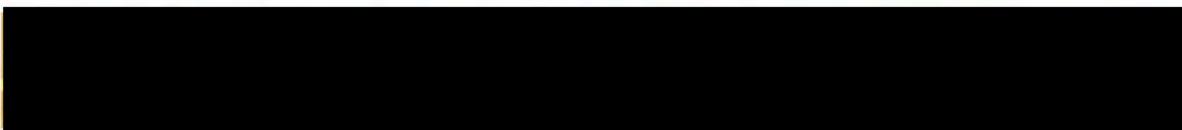
10 secondary schools [REDACTED]  
and  
3 secondary schools [REDACTED]

### COMMONWEALTH PRIVACY ACT

The privacy of the school and that of any school personnel or students involved in your study must, of course, be preserved at all times and comply with requirements under the Commonwealth Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000. In complying with this legislation, the [REDACTED] has decided that, for the purposes of research applications, students are not to be identified by anything other than age and/or gender.

### NSW CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

It is noted that your proposed study methodology **does not involve direct unsupervised contact with students.** Approval to conduct this research study in [REDACTED] Catholic Schools under the jurisdiction of the [REDACTED] is granted subject to the researcher's **full compliance** with the 'Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998'.



---

**FURTHER REQUIREMENTS**

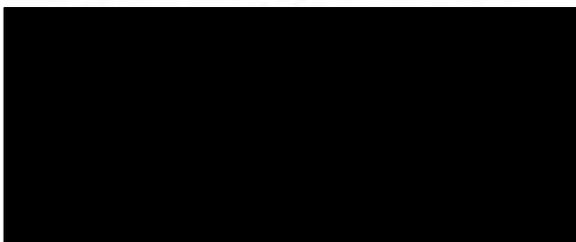
When you have established your participating schools, please **complete the attached form and return it** to this office.

It is a condition of approval that when your research has been completed you will forward a **summary report of the findings and/or recommendations** to this office as soon as practicable after results are to hand.

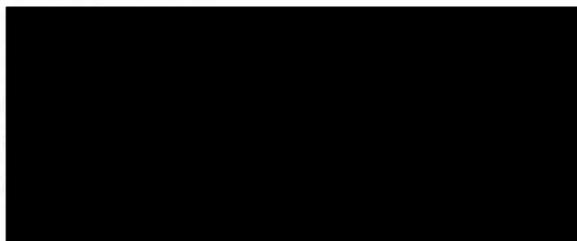
**All correspondence relating to this Research should note Ref: Research Application 822.**

Please contact me at this office if there is any further information you require. I wish you well in this undertaking and look forward to learning about your findings.

Yours sincerely,



Form to be returned to this office when you have established your participating schools.



PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECT — Ref: Research Application 822

Following approval from [redacted] to approach Principals seeking participation in the research project "Principals' perceptions and enactments of accountability for learning in Australia"; the following schools have agreed to become involved in the project:

	Yes	No	Expected Start Date
Insert Name of school here			

Yours faithfully

Ms Judith Norris  
23/10a Mears Ave  
RANDWICK NSW 2031

Date.....

## Appendix 7: Families of Grounded Theories

Families <sup>1</sup>	Classic Family	Emerging Family	Constructivist Family	This study's Family
<i>Other family names</i>	<i>Glaserian; Classic Grounded Theory</i>	<i>Straussian</i>	<i>Constructivist Grounded Theory</i>	<i>Making-Sense: Framing the Dragon! A Grounded Theory of principals' experiences of accountability for learning.</i>
<i>Parent(s)</i>	<i>Glaser and Strauss (1967)</i>	<i>Strauss (1987)</i>	<i>Charmaz (2000; 2006; 2014)</i>	
<i>Structure</i>	Resemblances <sup>2</sup> of members			
<i>Research approach</i>	Either quantitative or qualitative methods; in an objectivist positivist paradigm Non-relative Pure methodology Inductive inquiry Sets aside any preconceived theoretical ideas	Emphasises qualitative methods (observing, interviewing reviewing documentation) in a constructivist- interpretivist paradigm Relativity Pragmatist methodology Inductive inquiry Sets aside any preconceived theoretical ideas	Emphasises qualitative methods (observing, interviewing reviewing documentation, researcher's interpretations of participants' perspectives) in a constructivist- interpretivist paradigm. Relativity Pragmatist methodology Inductive inquiry	Emphasises qualitative methods (observing, interviewing, reviewing documentation, researcher's interpretations of participants' perspectives) in a constructivist- interpretivist paradigm. Relativity Pragmatist methodology Inductive inquiry Acknowledges and draws upon own understandings of the phenomena

<sup>1</sup> Families – approaches to the methods in 'claiming the Grounded Theory Methodology mantle' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 11). Bryant and Charmaz (2007) posit that at a simple level there is the Glaserian school of Grounded Theory Methodology, the Strauss and Corbin school and the Constructivist school '(p.10). Many scholars would agree that Grounded Methodology has three versions; nevertheless, for some scholars, Grounded Theory Methodology is actually far more diverse. Denzin for example lists seven different version of Grounded Theory Methodology: 'positivist, post- positivist, constructivist, objectivist, post-modern, situational and computer assisted' (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, pp. 10-11). For this study Creswell's terms are used for the family names in an attempt to be objective (Creswell, 2008). They are Classic, Emergent and Constructivist Families. This study drew the comparisons from only these three families because this study only adopted members from these families.

<sup>2</sup> Resemblances: Bryant and Charmaz assert that the 'family of methods' deliberately evokes Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances. This metaphor of the family is extended to membership where certain members are more esteemed or excluded over others (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007, p. 11).

Families <sup>1</sup>	Classic Family	Emerging Family	Constructivist Family	This study's Family
			Acknowledges and draws upon own understandings of the phenomena	
Theory processes	Theory generation Basic Social Process Core category central to the Substantive theory	Theory verification Theoretical propositions Narratives No core category Story line	Theory verification Plausible accounts more than a theory that can claim any objective status No basic process No core category	Theory verification Theoretical propositions Basic Social Psychological Process Core category central to the Substantive theory Story line
Concerns of the Researcher	Independent Purposively distant Non-knowing Objective knowledge can be verified – non engagement with self-reflexivity	Dialectic Knowing Active Provocative Interventionist Interrogationist Self-reflexivity	Questions data Brings sociological concepts brings values, experiences, and priorities to the data Self-reflexivity	Provocative Interventionist Interrogationist Questions data Brings educational concepts; brings values, experiences, and priorities to the data Self-reflexivity
Research Questions	General topic area	Research questions guide the inquiry	Research questions guide the inquiry	Research questions guide the inquiry
Literature	Delayed until the first category is identified	When categories emerge- at the discretion of the inquire	Continual literature comparison	Continual literature comparison
Methods <i>Data collection</i> <i>Data analysis</i>	Data are real and represent objective facts Theoretical coding: with over 18 coding families Constant comparison analysis Two types of coding: - open coding - selective coding Analysing through memoing Theoretical sampling	Constant comparison analysis using three levels of data fracturing Three types of coding: - open coding - axial coding - selective coding. Coding Paradigm: a theoretical framework that looks systematically at Conditions; Interacting among the actors; Strategies and tactics; Consequences.	Data and analyses are social constructions reflecting their process of productions (Hildenbrande in Bryant and Charmaz. 2007 p. 556-557) Three types of coding active open codes axial coding selective coding [CHECK FURTHER]	Data and analyses are social constructions Constant comparison analysis Three types of coding - open coding - axial coding - selective coding. Coding Paradigm: a theoretical framework that looks systematically at Conditions; Interacting among the actors; Strategies and tactics; Consequences. Analysing through memoing. Theoretical sampling

<b>Families<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Classic Family</b>	<b>Emerging Family</b>	<b>Constructivist Family</b>	<b>This study's Family</b>
		Analysing through memoing. Theoretical sampling		
Criteria for evaluating research	Fit Work Relevance Modifiability	Two types of criteria: Research process by using seven criteria Empirical grounding of the study using the seven criteria (O'Donoghue, 200&)	Credibility Originality Resonance Usefulness (Charmaz in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, pp. 231-232)	Credibility Fit Work Resonance Relevance, Usefulness Modifiability

Adapted from Hildenbrande in Bryant and Charmaz, 2007 pp. 556-557; Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Strauss and Corbin, Babchuk (2011), Charmaz (2006, pp. 129-132), Charmaz in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, pp. 230-231

Babchuk, W. A. (2011). Grounded Theory as a "Family of Methods": A Genealogical Analysis to Guide Research. *Online Submission*.

## **Appendix 8: Straussian Framework**

According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007) the consideration of Grounded Theory methodology as a ‘family of methods’ deliberately evokes Ludwig Wittgenstein’s concept of family resemblances. Three families have influenced the evolution of GT. These three families are related and their resemblances can be traced back to the work of the original family where the kinship of grounded theory are Glaser and Strauss (1967) and can be identified as the parents.

The doctoral researcher using a qualitative approach is often unaware as they begin their investigation of the nature of their findings and their implications which may come forth. At times the selection of methodologies can be precarious in doctoral research and more often than not are influenced by the methodological practices of the supervisor (Lee, 2008). In the initial years of candidature this doctoral researcher held certain clarities on their research purpose and problem. To a certain extent the review of literature provided guideposts as to what the investigation may possibly find. While the doctoral researcher may desire a contribution to a theoretical field there is no guarantee that a theory will emerge, or if it does the time that an emergence may take. Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their original work in developing grounded theory methodologies for example impress that theoretical propositions cannot be rushed or forced. Grounded methodologies also require the researcher to manage ambiguities. Concern that a theory may not emerge and the disagreements with the parents of the families of grounded theory approaches were some of the reasons that this researcher initially avoided the methodology of Grounded Theory. Moreover, this researcher thought that to begin doctoral research with a qualitative approach, a case study methodology seemed a reasonable guarantee for a research proposal to not only be confirmed but also to progress in a timely manner. applications over others. This researcher was working in the field of the Research Concern. The literature review (as per case study methodology) was completed and had informed the research questions. There needed to be a methodology which embraced

literature as not only a source but the acknowledgment and recognition of this researcher's interpretations of the participating

Employing systematic methods of analysis informed by the principles of Grounded Theory provided this researcher with the confidence that the construction of the Substantive theory would stand the 'work and fit' test. The data are generated as sets of propositions through the generation of the conceptual relationships. These relationships describe, explain and make predictions about the phenomenon at hand. Grounded Theory methods provide for findings to be applied to other contexts – to other principals experiencing accountability or mandates. Using these systematic methods of analysis provided this researcher with the confidence that the construction of the Substantive theory would stand the 'work and fit' test. The methods are systematic yet recognise and provide for discovery and intuition (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Using these systematic methods of analysis provided this researcher with the confidence that the construction of the Substantive theory would stand the 'work and fit' test. For example the coding paradigm matrix enables the generation of the selective codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and methods from the constructivist Grounded Theory family provide for the researcher's interpretations on participants' perspectives (Charmaz, 2011, 2014). As this researcher teaches in the educational leadership program and has held roles in the supervision of principals. This provision is essential for those researchers who have professional knowledge in the field of inquiry (O'Donoghue, 2007).

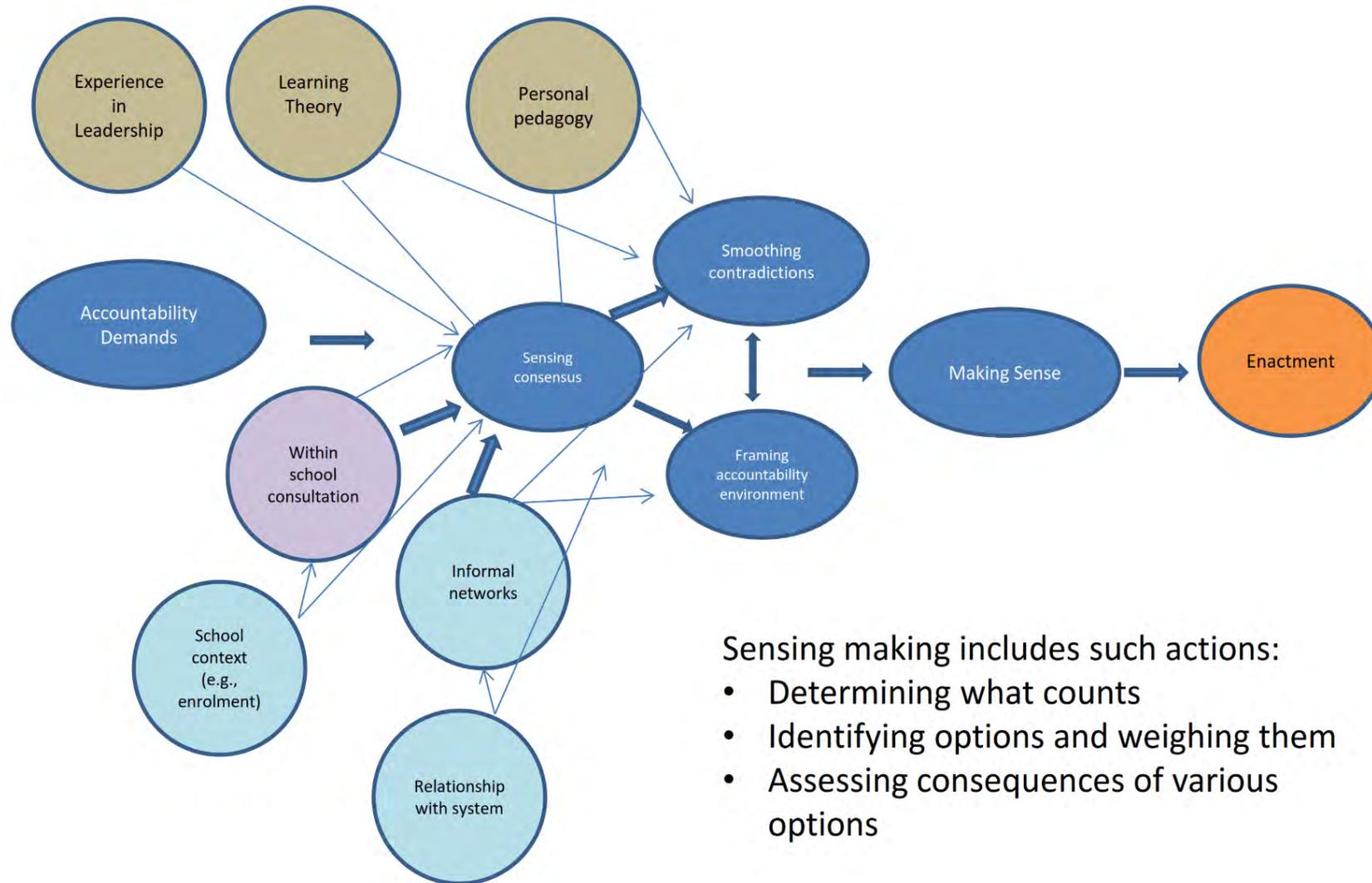
Table 9A:

*Grounded Theory Approaches Adopted for this Study*

Parent	Family Name	Resemblances	Methods employed for this study
Glaser and Strauss (1967)	Classic Grounded Theory	<i>Discover</i> theory ‘just do it’ (p.): addresses the main concern of the study; basic social (and psychological) processes; data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously; theoretical coding with over 18 coding families; constant comparative analysis Two types of coding: - Open coding	‘Just Do It’ and noted the method Basic social psychological processes Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously; theoretical coding Constant comparative analysis Open coding Selective coding Analysing through memoing Theoretical sampling
Strauss (1987) Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998)	Straussian Grounded Theory	<i>Generate</i> theory: addresses the main concern of the study; theoretical propositions, narratives, no core category, Story line Constant comparative analysis using three levels of data fracturing Three types of coding: open coding; axial coding; selective coding. Coding Paradigm: conditions; interacting among the actors; strategies and tactics; consequences. Analysing through memoing	Theoretical propositions; narrative; Storyline Constant comparative analysis Open and axial coding; selective coding Coding Paradigm: conditions; interacting among the actors; strategies and tactics; consequences. Analysing through memoing
Charmaz (2000; 2006; 2014)	Constructivist Grounded Theory	<i>Construct</i> theory Three types of coding: active open codes (gerund) words; axial coding; selective coding; focussed coding Memoing; interpretive tools; raise questions	<i>Construct</i> theory Active open codes (gerund) words; axial coding; selective coding; Memoing Techniques of sensitising to safeguard

Adapted from Hildenbrande in Charmaz and Bryant, 2007, pp. 556-557; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin; Babchuk, 2011; Charmaz, 2006 pp.129-132; Charmaz in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, pp.230-231

## Appendix 9: Examples of Integrative Diagrams



## **Appendix 10: Selective Coding**

### **Core category 1: Makes sense of assessment-focussed accountability**

#### **Selective codes:**

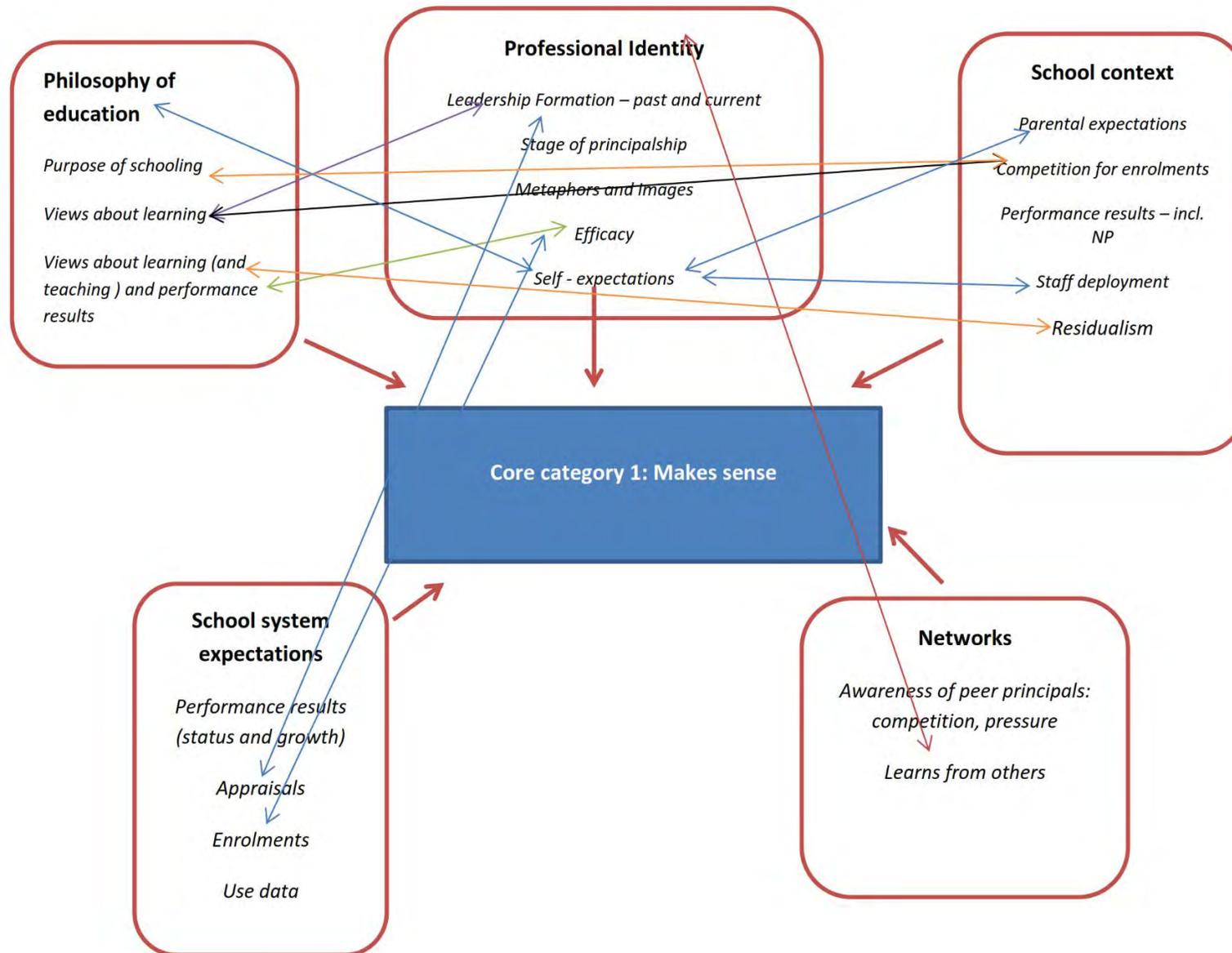
**Phil of Education** – Properties of: - Views about learning (and teaching) the learner, the purpose of schooling, identity in here?

**Professional Identity** – Properties of: - Previous formation, current formation (study, reading, professional experiences), leader metaphors and images,

**School context** – Parental expectations, perf results, enrolments, staff deployment, staff cultural issues (resistance, complacency, critical mass)

**SS expectations** – Performance results, growth, appraisal, ongoing employment

**Networks** – peer principals, experiences to shared education locations



## Appendix 11: Genesis of the Theoretical Model: The Descriptive Story



### Memo ██████████ Genesis of the Theoretical Model: The Descriptive Story

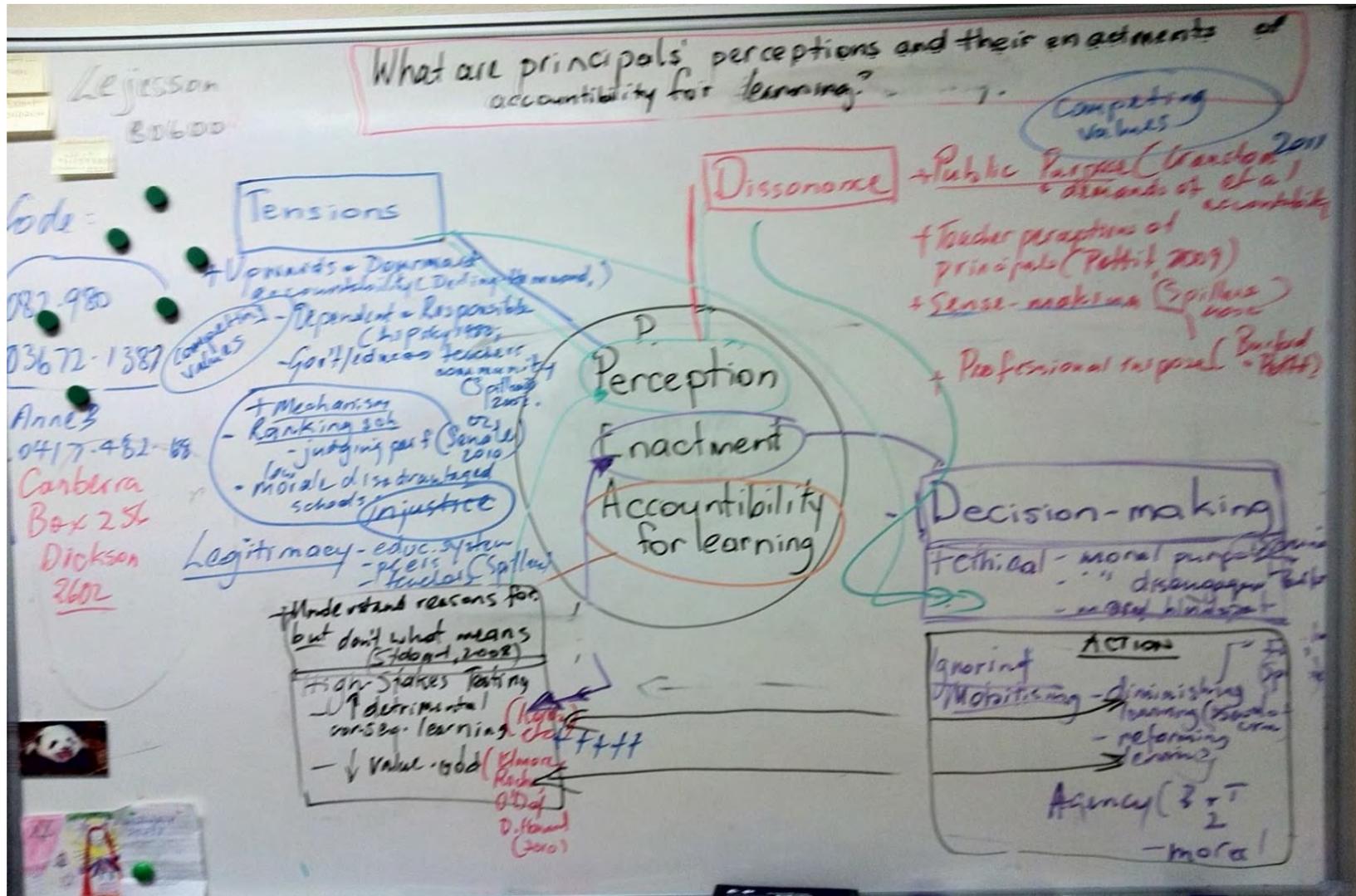
One striking and consistent thread which knitted together the variations of principals' experiences of their accountability was their adaptive processes. Their adaptive processes suggested they were active agents in making sense of their accountability expectations, evaluating the consequences of their future actions and, sometimes simultaneously, enacting their environments from these expectations. Their adaptability reminded me of the big Australian eucalypt tree in both its hardiness and beauty where the tree's organic nature adapts to the regularity of the weather and seasons and also to the irregularity of fire, storm and flood intrusions. The eucalypt as if recognising and absorbing changes evolves in its structure, bending and twisting, at times seeping and yet shooting tendrils to ensure its growth. Mysteriously yet assumedly the ways in which the eucalypt adapts is unique even though the eucalypts may have been planted at the same time, near and in the same bushland. The Eucalypt like most big trees have interconnectedness not readily visible. The roots of large trees are so interconnected that damaging one tree may impact on another. Like the underground interconnectedness of the Eucalypt, principals were interconnected with each other making sense of their accountability expectations.

So, too, in this study, principals adapted to their expectations by making sense of the external stimuli (of being held to account for external assessments). They made sense of their expectations through their unique personal and situated interpretations. Importantly, like the eucalypt, their evolved responsiveness influenced their enacting (rather than reacting) their accountability environments which enabled the staff, students and themselves to evolve, grow out and for flourish from those expectations. Principals like the eucalypt were also unique in the ways they adapted and grew out of their expectations.

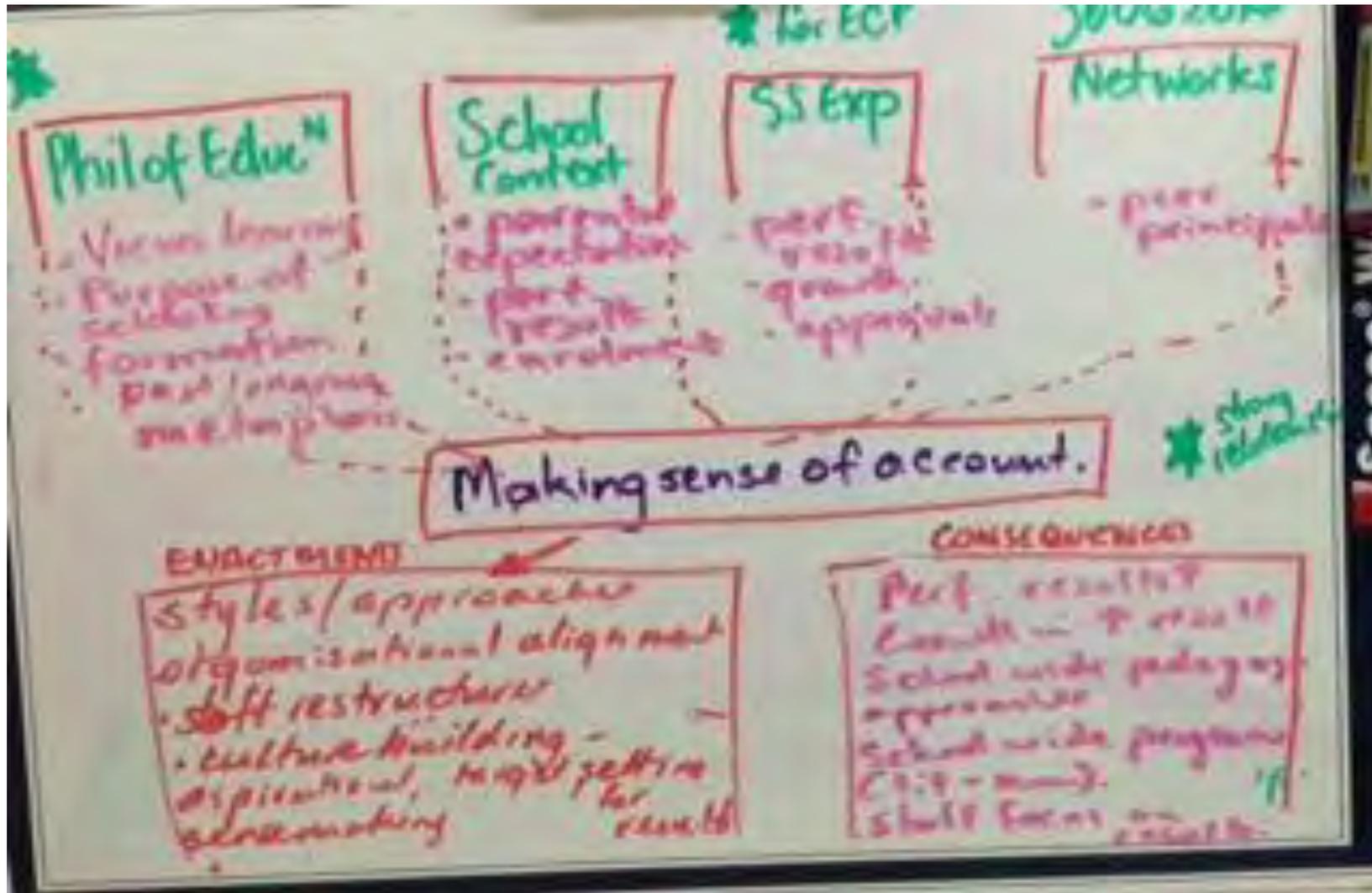
Principals' ways of leading learning in light of their expectations were influenced by their personal and situated cognition (Spillane, Healey, & Mesler Parise, 2009). Their personal cognition comprised their own views about learning and their professional experiences. They contextualised and prioritised what they were accountable for and to whom they were accountable. They evaluated the possible options available to them and made decisions according to the possible consequences for themselves and their school communities. Principals were in continual processes of building coherence and modifying their understandings of accountability. These processes were influenced by their understandings of the nature and meaning of learning, their interpretations of their school contexts, peers, school system expectations, career stage and pathways.

Principals' understandings about the nature and meaning of learning were influential in both their interpretations of their contexts and expectations. Moreover, principals' understandings about learning were also major determinant in the ways they described the ways they were leading learning within their accountability environments. Their 'learning understandings' with regard to their accountability expectations were influenced by their beliefs about the purpose of schooling, their formation as a leader, their adaptability to reform themselves in the context of the leader of learning expectation of the role, school system expectations and peer principal relationships. Principals' knowledge and skill about learning was a consistent reference point for the majority of principals and largely determined the ways in which they influenced teachers and their reported capacity to build coherence in their accountability environments.

Appendix 12: Integrative Visual Diagram



# Appendix 13: Making sense of Accountability Selective Codes Progression



## Appendix 14: Supervisor Feedback on Open Coding

445

RQ 1: How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to external accountability in their school?		
Open Codes	Characteristics	Examples
Providing school pathways [3]	Important the pathways and opportunities open to students after year 12; Sees themselves as personally accountable to the students and parents; includes trades and academic pathways.	Parents ask: 'Tell me about what percent of your kids .... go into universities (P 2); 'whether it be straight to a trade, whether it be in a volunteer situation overseas, around being - having the skills to be set up for success -' (P 10) My primary accountability is to the kids, to provide them with the best opportunities' (P 4) 'We've got to give these kids the best possible chance' (P 6).
Ensuring student growth and development	About the joy in students' lives; achieving as well as they can as individuals; student happiness; equitable and equal learning experiences	'It's not just about getting a great ATAR in year 12, it's about the skills that will sustain them to lead a happy and satisfying and joy filled life (P10). 'I'm more concerned that the girls do as well as they can as individuals rather than - which probably puts me out of kilter a little bit with the system push for...(P7)' 'I'm far more interested on every individual deserves equity and equality around their dignity as a learner (P10)
Enabling learning experiences for students	Enjoyable and variety of experiences of learning; experiences of success; are challenged; individual learning needs are met	'Protecting the teaching to ensure that these kids get the opportunity to be successful (P 4)'...and making sure that students learn, because that's our core business (P6) 'Every child achieves beyond their capacity and so we have a duty for these kids to ensure that that's what we are doing to do for them, whilst they are here'(P 6); 'all the other opportunities that the girls get to learn and to grow and get experience in a variety of things (P 7)
Achieving favourable performance results	HSC results (more emphasis) and NAPLAN results (less emphasis). Benchmarks state averages. Number of band sixes; raising the bar closing the gap	'So how many Band 6s- (P6)'... I am going to be measured using HSC and NAPLAN ...' (P 6) Performance results matter BECAUSE of the door that they open (P7). 'But the reality is that we're measured by them [results]' (P7). 'They rank, I think it's the top 200 schools, and people look at that and make lots of personal judgements on what's a good school and what's not a good school....They rank, I think it's the top 200 schools, and people look at that and make lots of personal judgements

1   shsanber   07/03/2014 07:53:58	The characteristics need to provide the depth of each code
2   shsanber   07/03/2014 05:08:03	I would have thought this as example to a code such as "Parents' pressure for academic excellence."
3   shsanber   30/08/2016 10:03:09	I find this code too open. Going through the "characteristics" confirms this. I suggest considering: Personal responsibility to student learning. Providing multiple opportunities and pathways Catering to students' abilities?
4   shsanber   07/03/2014 05:15:56	I would read this as an example of "juxtaposition of high performance or good marks AND facilitation of competencies".
5   shsanber   07/03/2014 05:19:14	I do not see this example as "enabling learning". It is not the same as the next sentence.
6   shsanber   07/03/2014 07:55:37	How do you see your input here to be illustrating the characteristics of the "achieving favourable results"?

## Appendix 15: Open Codes to Categories

RSQ 1: How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to external accountability in their school?

Properties	Open codes	Categories	Text data
Providing multiple opportunities and pathways	Sees themselves as personally accountable to the students and parents and ensuring that students may be able to secure a trade enter the academic pathway of their choice and/or enrol in training; able to take up opportunities such as international exchange	<b>Post school options</b>	<i>'Other indicators are the number of students who are getting into the courses post-school and the pathways post-school that they want to go to .....My primary accountability is to the kids, to provide them with the best opportunities' (P 4). Parents ask: 'Tell me about what percentage of your kids .... go into universities (P 2); 'whether it be straight into a trade, whether it be in a volunteer situation overseas, around being - having the skills to be set up for success -' (P 10)</i> <i>'We've got to give these kids the best possible chance' (P 6). Tell me about what percentage of your kids .... go into universities (P 2);'</i>
	<b>Accounts for (object of the account)</b>	<b>Student growth and development</b>	
Joy Achieve as well as they can Experience success at school	About the joy in students' lives; achieving as well as they can as individuals; student happiness; equitable and equal learning experiences.		<i>I'm more concerned that the girls do as well as they can as individuals rather than - which probably puts me out of kilter a little bit with the system push for... (P7) I'm far more interested on every individual deserves equity and equality around their dignity as a learner (P10) '.....ensure that these kids get the opportunity to be successful' (P 4)'</i>
Student growth and development is of equal importance as performance results	Securing favourable results in HSC provides opportunities and as such is seen as important. Equally important is the students overall development as a person and their capacity to contribute to society	<b>Student growth and development</b>	<i>'It's not just about getting a great ATAR in year 12, it's about the skills that will sustain them to lead a happy and satisfying and joy filled life (P10). 'Student happiness is pretty important; it's not just about the marks' P 13.</i>
Enabling learning experiences for students	Enjoyable and variety of experiences of learning; experiences of success; are challenged; individual learning needs are met	<b>Student growth and development</b>	<i>'...and making sure that students learn, because that's our core business (P6) 'Every child achieves beyond their capacity and so we have a duty for these kids to ensure that that's what we are doing to do for them, whilst they are here'(P 6); ' all the other opportunities that the girls get to learn and to grow and get experience in a variety of things (P 7)</i>

	<b>Account for (object of the account)</b>	<b>Growth in performance results</b>	
Juxtaposes learning gain with gain in performance results	View that they are accountable for growth in performance results yet use the term learning gain for this growth	<b>Growth in performance results</b>	<i>we do spend a lot of time, we do exhaustive review of HSC data more so from a learning gain point of view, a DeCourcy learning gain far more(P10)</i>
Achieving favourable performance results	HSC results are given a key emphasis in the school. Comparisons are made from previous years. NAPLAN results are given emphasis yet less than HSC results. Benchmarks against state averages to use as target setting for staff. Counts and celebrates the number of band sixes the students attain; promotes and pushes for raising the bar and closing the gap	<b>Growth in performance results</b>	<i>'So how many Band 6s- (P 6)' .... I am going to be measured using HSC and NAPLAN ..' (P 6) Performance results matter BECAUSE of the door that they open (P7). 'But the reality is that we're measured by them [results]' (P7). 'They rank, I think it's the top 200 schools, and people look at that and make lots of personal judgements on what's a good school and what's not a good school.....They rank, I think it's the top 200 schools, and people look at that and make lots of personal judgements on what's a good school and what's not a good school' (P8) 'I know I sit there the morning the results come out, I'm analysing the number of band sixes, band fives, fours, threes, twos, ones and always thrilled to see each year less ones and less twos' (P13)</i>
Not accountable for performance results	Performance results do not influence actions; mindful of results however need to be balanced		<i>'But really, I don't care what the Sydney Morning Herald thinks of the school. ); I care about our kids, I care about their parents (P7 89); okay, band sixes are important but it's more important that they're all getting the best that they can get (P7 121); That's not just about results, is it?' (P 7). 'I am not interested in what other schools get with result' (P 13)</i>
	<b>Accounts for (object of the account)</b>	<b>Their analysis of data</b>	
Accounts for the ways they analyse NAPLAN results	School System examines if and expects principals have analysed their NAPALN data. Members of the leadership team hold these specific responsibilities however the expectation is that principals understand and know the analysis has been completed.	<b>Their analysis and evaluation of data</b>	<i>'....how we respond to that data, what implementation of programs have been done...They [SS] expect us to first of all analyse the data thoroughly, they then expect us, a synopsis or a summary of that data, and then from that data they ask the school to make plans about where to next (P10). 'They now know the data at the same or before we do' (P 8)</i>
Accounts for the ways they implement the DeCourcy data	School System examines if and expects principals have implementation plans from their NAPLAN data.	<b>Their analysis and evaluation of data</b>	<i>They [KLA Coordinators] go to other schools who are doing well in that area (P 11).</i>

Accounts for the ways they implement the synthesis of the NAPLAN analysis	School System examines if and expects principals have implementation plans from their NAPLAN data.	<b>Implementation practices</b>	<i>Our strategic plan reflects our plans for the data (P 2)</i>
Accountable for leading learning	Key function of the principal's role; perceived to be the key role in relation to assessment-focussed accountability	<b>Implementation practices</b>	<i>'The second part [after faith leadership] – the major thinking is our leadership for learning' P 4 ..the main for me is those two components ....Your role as a leader of learning is to seek improvement in authentic learning. (P4)'Those principals who have to micromanage every element of their complex organisation can't possibly do their key job, which is to lead the conversation around learning and teaching' P11. Role is to lead learning and for students to come and know and love Jesus P 6</i>
	<b>Accounts to – (subject of the account)</b>	<b>a body</b>	
Accounting to SS	SS reviews the performance results, the number of band sixes and fives; growth in performance results, learning programs. SS annual review days with documentation. National Partnership outcomes. In their role as the leader of learning	<b>a body</b>	<i>What sort of results are you going to get for my daughter? (P 2) '.. Rather than just look at the number of band fives, sixes, which is what the media focuses on. ...To some extent, I think the [SS] does too' (P13). 'System wants schools to get that just one more mark' (P7). The press releases from the [SS] - the rhetoric to parents in newsletters - continues to be about how we compare to state averages' (P3). 'Success of a school is its performance results first' (P 9). 'Accountable to the SS' (P 13). 'I answer to the system far more than I do to government...' P 10</i>
Accounting to the SS	Key function of their role is the leader of learning; principal appraisal processes are focussed on performance results and the plans and implementation from the results	<b>a body</b>	<i>Role is twofold; faith and leading learning (P4, P6); 'I was employed as a pedagogical leader' (P 1)' I love pedagogy, and I consider myself a leader of learning(P1). In the context of what they are held to account for: My appraisal is this year...(P 2) get direct text. So in that sense about - talking now about accountabilities again - the accountabilities of the teachers are to the students and to this community, it's not to the CEO' (P 3).</i>
	<b>Accounts to - (subject of the account)</b>	<b>people</b>	
Accounting to teachers	Ensuring that teachers can carry out their work		<i>'Third accountability would be to my teachers to ensure that what I can do in my role maximises their learning environment, maximises the opportunities for them to engage kids..' (P 4). You know I have a responsibility to the teachers.....to this community to ensure that we are being professional'(P10)</i>

Accounting to the public	Public disclosure of performance results – HSC and NAPLAN	<b>people</b>	<i>'...rather than just look at the number of band fives, sixes, which is what the media focuses on. ..' (P13) '..but your enrolments are very much determined by your results...there's that level of accountability in terms of your results' P2</i>
Accounting to themselves	Accountability as a responsibility to themselves, especially their professional responsibilities;– raising the bar closing the gap; being a learner; ways they use data; the number of bands; leader of learning	<b>people</b>	<i>'Key accountability for me is to lead that [Australian Curriculum] implementation but to do it in a way that's strategic..' (P4) 'It's who you are and who you really are, isn't it' (P7); Holding myself accountable, I'm far more interested on every individual deserves equity and equality around their dignity as a learner (P10)</i>
Accounting to students	As a responsibility; doing the best for them; achieving their potential, holistic sense	<b>people</b>	<i>'I think we're accountable to the [girls/boys]. I think we're accountable to the students, yeah' (P 7); Responsible 'to do their best for them all ways (P 7). 'My primary accountability is to the kids' (P4) 'I believe that my accountability – talking from an ethical point of view here and from the teacher professional – I believe my ultimate accountability must be to the students we teach (P3). 'looking at the holistic nature, I'm accountable to those kids; to each of those students (P 14)</i>
Accounting to parents	Providing opportunities for their child, post school pathways, ATARS, trades; their child is progressing well in terms of performance results	<b>people</b>	<i>Parents ask: 'Tell me about what percentage of your kids .... go into universities (P 2); 'Next accountability is to the parent community working in partnership with them' (P4) '...students we teach and their parents' (P3). '...accountabilities in the eyes of the parents are very, very, tricky. Very important' (P2)</i>

RSQ 1: How do principals understand expectations of them with regard to external accountability in their school?

<i>Account to</i>	<i>Account for</i>									Totals
	Performance results	Post school options	Student growth and development	Student learning	Teacher professional learning and recruitment	Learning programs	Working with data; responding to data	School organisation to improve learning	Student and school well-being, incl. faith	
Self	SS 1: P 5; P 6. SS 2: P 10; P 14;	SS 1: P 5	SS 1: P 5; P 7. SS 2: P 10; P 11; P 13	SS 1: P1; P 3; P 7. SS 2: P 10	SS 1: P 1; P 4. SS 2: P 10; P 11; P 12;	SS 1: P 1; P 5; P 7. SS 2: P 10	SS 1: P1; P 5. SS 2: P 10; P 11	SS 1: P 5. SS 2: P 10; P 11	SS 1: P 5 SS 2: P 12; P 13	33
School System	SS 1: P 1; P 2; P 3; P 5; P 7; P 8. SS 2: P 10; P 12; P 14			SS 2: P 13		SS 1: P 2; P 3. SS 2: P 10; P 11; P 13;	SS 2: P 10; P 11; P 13	SS 2: P 11	SS 1: P 6; P 5	19
Students	SS 1: P 6; P 7; P 3; SS 2 P 14	SS 1: P 4; P 5; P 6; P 8	SS 2: P 10	SS 2: P 10	SS 2: P13				SS 1: P 5	11
Parents	SS 1: P 2	SS 1: P 4; P 5; P 6; P 8	SS 2: P 10							6
Public	SS 1: P 1; P 2; P 3; P 6; P 8									5
Government – NP	SS 1: P 3; P 5; P 8					SS 1: P 3; P 4				5
Bishop			SS 2: P 13						SS 2: P 13	2
Teachers					SS 1: P 5 SS 2: P 10					1
Priest	SS 1: P 3									1

Impacts

Open codes	Category	Property	Examples : Text data
School Systems expect principals to be leaders of learning' principals expect that they themselves are leaders of learning.	<i>Meeting the 'leader of learning' expectation</i>		<i>'I'd come from a strong pastoral wellbeing sort of career path to that point in time, and whilst I saw myself as a competent and capable teacher that had taught to stage six, I probably didn't have the depth of understanding around</i>

Both these expectations create challenges where participating principals needed to keep abreast of learning

*curriculum and a really broad understanding - the breadth of understanding around learning that I do now' (Graham). 'There was a strong focus [ by SS] about the principal being the leader, or the lead learner, or the leader in learning and teaching and that that seemed to be a strong push in schools, in terms of that that's what they wanted ..... I suppose my focus is around leading that learning and that requires of me to be competent enough to be able to help facilitate that..... As a deputy I was stronger in pastoral care and well-being and that's where most of my leadership formation, but I'd also done time tabling and things like that' (P 14). 'I've been influenced by my own research and reading that very material and thinking well how do I, that's great to say that but how do we make that real within the workplace?' (P 3).*

Need to attend to other dimensions of leadership yet knows leading learning is more important (P 2; P 7; P 11).

*Meeting the 'leader of learning' expectation*

Understanding learning

*And realising also the core business of your school might be learning, which it's supposed to be, but all of these other things are just creating more burdens....The student who's off the rails, the girl who's been harmed they need to be – those issues those issues need to be dealt with so that they can get back on track with learning(P 2); When I came here I wasn't doing what I wanted to be doing as a leader because I wasn't leading learning ...I was dealing with HR issues and legal issues and finance issues and getting very cranky and frustrated because of it because there were some things here that had to be fixed yesterday and therefore I couldn't [get to learning] Charmaine*

Need to take learning seriously (P 10; P 14; P 7)

*Meeting the 'leader of learning' expectation*

Understanding learning

*'Oh look personally in relation to learning, I had a lot to learn.....So I take learning seriously and I don't think a school can take learning seriously unless its principal takes learning seriously for themselves as well as for the community' (P 10). 'Where we're at now is a real shift. ....just the push around learning and teaching has come to the point where, it's swallowed up the pastoral well-being in making sure that if you do this really well, you're in fact doing your pastoral well-being really well' (P 14). 'But like*

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Lack of empirical understandings about learning and leading and what is expected in the role ( P 10; P 14)	<i>Meeting the 'leader of learning' expectation</i>	Understanding learning	<p><i>for my AP, for me, I don't get that, that's not what you do as principal at regional level and I'm interested in those learnings about how they see how the Board of Studies saw the pack being used, what they saw - they're constantly adding things to it, what's new in it, what's the data showing us so that you can walk with your coordinators and you can have, if you need to, those conversations' (P 7) [Charmaine describes sees herself 'close to the learning]</i></p> <p><i>'I mean one thing that's come out of a lot of the research and you are aware, that principals need to be lead learners, and they need to be learners themselves' (P 10). 'If you want, it has to happen with the leaders; it's not going to happen elsewhere.....I suppose for me, continually trying to stay abreast with what is contemporary and being knowledgeable and being not necessarily an expert, but being understanding about that .....issues for me are around being helped or assisted in my own development as an elite learner . I think that that's something that's really important and I suppose I need to be continually allocating time and resources to and the team' (P 14).</i></p>
Own lack of formation in leading learning ( P 14; P 3; P 10)	<i>Meeting the 'leader of learning' expectation</i>	Understanding learning	<p><i>'The school itself might have needed a person with strong leadership more depth of learning (P 10).</i></p> <p><i>'Tensions of leadership – are eased when there is an understanding of learning – or a clarity of learning' (P 13: Val. 2)</i></p>
Holding teachers accountable using DeCourcy results in deciding to move staff off HSC classes; challenging staff about performance results – need to but knows that not most important (P10; P12; P6; P11)	<i>Achieving quality teaching – holding teachers to account for performance results</i>		<p><i>'It's [DeCourcy] been a piece of evidence that's been used to support me to say to a staff - two staff members; I can't put you on senior classes anymore' (P 10)* ' I don't go and say to somebody, I've had a conversation with so-and-so and I've told them this isn't good enough and that's not good enough' (P 12). 'I won't take teachers off senior classes and I won't force subject choice' Brianna. ' So I've really sharpened the pencil at the moment with this group and said well, you are either part of the solution to this problem or you don't have a place, because it's - this can't continue....' (P 6) 'I just think that when you do respond to a learning need revealed by data like NAPLAN or HSC,</i></p>

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<p>Gaining credibility with staff when needing to improve performance results; staff may not appreciate the same importance- especially new to the school (P 1; P 7)</p>	<p>Achieving quality teaching: <i>Gaining trust with staff</i> To improve results quickly when new; need to gain credibility</p>	<p><i>we're encouraged to say, put your best teacher on this class because last year, this' (P 11)*<sup>1</sup>.</i></p>
<p>Valuing what is counted and not counted- Sub Property: Prioritising favourable performance results and quality, authentic, real learning – Aiming for performance results at the expense of quality, authentic learning (P 1; P 4; P 6; P 14); Real learning versus over emphasis on the ATAR or achieving the desired performance results (P 5; P 7; P 11)</p>	<p>Meeting the leader of learning expectation Challenging beliefs about learning</p>	<p><i>I think if I was a principal at this school five or six years down the track, and you had the trust of the staff, then I think sometimes it's easier to enable change to happen if staff have confidence in you, and you're already someone that's established in the school community, but I suppose there's that credibility factor for me too. So I'm still a new principal, and new to the school' (P 1). 'Easy to impact here as the previous principal was a leader of learning – they knew what was happening in the classrooms' (P 7).</i></p> <p><i>So I think probably it has limited me in a sense that I feel like I've got to get this right first to tick a box, and then I can start to think a little bit more creatively about where learning might - you know, what it might look like for kids... You know, I'd love to run a sustainability unit at the end of year 10 for year 10, and suspend the curriculum, and have kids working on ..., but I've got to get those results up (P 1). 'The only contradiction there is when accountability is weighted so heavily that you're unable then to engage with learning on the broad spectrum of things; engagement of kids on pastoral issues, discipline issues are all opportunities for learning there. If you're so focussed on the HSC results and NAPLAN you're driven to see the learning as fairly narrow' (P 5). 'Whilst I have this much broader view of quality learning in a school, I'm very acutely aware that they're the measures that we are going to be judged by and therefore we have to perform' (P 6). 'I really believe that we are losing a lot of valuable education because a number of schools know accountability's so important, and it's focussed on this very narrow [part] of the school curriculum, but we'll make sure we get that right, and a lot of the other stuff is going out the window' (P 1). 'So the contradiction for me sometimes is when you push up on</i></p>

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<sup>1</sup> Worked together in a previous school

Valuing what is counted not counted-  
Sub-property:

Meeting the expectations of status over growth results  
- Tensions between a greater importance being placed  
on accounting for raw performances results rather

Meeting the leader of  
learning expectation

Challenging beliefs about  
learning Expectations to  
achieve favourable raw  
performance results over the

*learning and teaching, that can come at the cost of there's only so much time and so many resources and so sometimes it's making that judgement between well what is essential in terms of our pastoral care and our sporting program and where does that crossover and impact significantly on our learning and teaching' (P 14). ' There is always that little tension there that you think learning should be about learning, not about the number on the page' (P 7). 'Now - and I can hear the cries of people complaining with teaching to the test. But the reality is, if you don't, the kids perform poorly' (P 6)*

*'So as a point of tension, when I turn up to principals meetings and there's a great emphasis on ATARs, Band 6s [unclear] analysis, and there's absolutely no reporting in relation to certificate two or certificate three completions or numbers of school-based apprenticeships and traineeships - that's a point of tension, and remain so (P 4). 'But the reality is that we are measured by and probably that was more a tension at my last school than it was here and that was because I was the one challenging them to do things differently because I was with them with the laptop rollout..... Their big fear was what happens if our results fall down after this laptop business, because they were convinced that they were' (P 7). 'What will make it come up here is evaluating what we're doing in terms of that integrating project based learning, and particularly if we don't get what we think the girls should be achieving then that will challenge the whole tension again' (P 7). 'The straight, just HSC data? I think it's immoral of us to advertise how many Band 6s we get, unless we do it in a context of learning gain, which we're advised strongly not to do, not to mention DeCourcy data.....' P 11.*

*'It [raw performance results] diminishes the work of the kid who's on the cusp of being Band 4 who we pushed to a Band 5 or a Band 3 to a Band 4 - and that's some of our most significant teacher and student work.....If you think about who we advertise and what we're saying, we're essentially left out the majority of our population where*

than accounting for the improvement in performance results ( P 11; P 7; P 1)	improvement of raw performance results	<i>there's significant learning gain' (P 11). 'It does happen to a certain extent [accountability driving educational outcomes], because I've picked up - I mean, I've used the data that the government has decided is important. I'm in a bind' (P1). 'Learning's a lot bigger than the HSC and NAPLAN – always will be you know' (P 4).</i>
Setting targets for high performance results jeopardises holistic learning goals : Aiming for high performance results jeopardises learning in holistic sense (P 5; P 1; P 6) Reaching an upper limit (P 8) Creates challenges in 'pushing staff'	Meeting the leader of learning expectation Challenging beliefs about learning <i>Learning is jeopardised in the work needed to attain favourable performance results</i> Target setting according to external performance results. Reaching upper limit from target setting: where to now?	<i>From a result's perspective, and results-driven perspective, there is a degree of inevitability around external regimes like NAPLAN, like the High School Certificate. That is in no way to criticise those things and say they're not important. They are. My earlier reference to going to principals' meetings and having a focus around HSC analysis, Band 6 performance, ATAR .....My reflection on it though is more to say the things that are seen to be important are the things that we report on and spend time on' (P 4). 'The degree to which the number of band sixes drives the thinking about what success is incredible (P 3); 'If you want all the teachers to teach to a test or whatever you want...To call it, I'm sorry, that's what people are doing....I do it pretty heavily with my own staff.....So if you are going to perform in the HSC in this exam and this is what it looks like, then you've got to then give everything towards that....' ( P 6).</i>
Valuing what is not counted - Some students not interested in ATAR yet that is what is counted – 'what is counted, is what is valued (P 12; P 5)	Meeting the leader of learning expectation challenging beliefs about learning <i>'What is counted, is what is valued (P 5). Students not wanting an ATAR not feeling valued</i>	<i>Kids with no commitment, but you just bash your head against - keep bashing your head and bashing your head against the brick wall and you try and lift them ....Then you get these ones that think, I've got an HSC, I don't care about my bands....it is upsetting for the teachers who come in and run tutorials (P 12). 'The ATAR is the holy grail' (P 4) 'what is counted, is what is valued (P 12; P 5)</i>

Experiencing conflict with the measure Accountability measure is narrow (P 3)	Meeting the leader of learning expectation Challenging beliefs about learning	<i>There's tension there and a conflict between, even if you're saying the development of the whole person and you're only testing this little bit (P 7). 'We use blunt instruments' (P 3). My worry is, yes NAPLAN can diagnostically as a school provide us with information, but I don't think - I think we've gone nuts, and we should be learning from what's happened in the UK, and what's happened in the US about an oversupply of - an over-focus on a particular test' (P 1);</i>
Setting school targets according to performance results and reaching an upper limit (P 8) Creates challenges when staff not responding	Meeting the leader of learning expectation Challenging beliefs about learning <i>Target setting by results</i> Target setting according to external performance results. Reaching upper limit from target setting: where to now?	<i>'So somewhere if we've gone along a grades journey there has to be a sort of upper limit to that journey ... Yes. I want the learning growth, I want the improvement, but I've also got to accept there's got to be some sort of plateau. ... I've got to come to terms with how do we celebrate that, because that's just as good' (P 8)</i> <i>Staff resistance: 'You've had - we've tried two or three years now to address what I could see was a problem and it's not improving' [management: needs to bring the big guns in]</i>
Valuing what is counted and what is not counted - Sub property: Esteeming the broader student experience more than results. Esteems student experiences more than results (P 11; P 12)	Meeting the leader of learning expectation Challenging beliefs about learning Esteems other areas of learning than perf results – creates tensions	<i>'I've just been saying, that you don't separate learning and well-being, and that there is no measure of what we do for kids to just maximise their opportunity in life and that's measured by more than just learning gain' (P 11). 'Student happiness is more important than any results...' (P 12).</i>
Learning is the challenge rather than performance results	<i>Achieving quality teaching</i> Learning is the challenge rather than performance results	<i>'The only tension is that the focus needs to be teamwork-based, needs to be whole-school-based, and needs to be on the potential to improve individual teacher classroom practice' P 11.</i>
Balancing between teachers aiming for performance results and engaging in authentic learning (P 7; P 12; P 4; P 13; P8)	<i>Achieving quality teaching</i> Balance between teachers aiming for performance results and engaging in authentic learning	<i>'You're trying in some ways to inspire them to want to continue the authentic learning and you want them to see the relevance to some extent of the testing that's happening that's external but to keep it in the right perspective' (P 7). 'Some teachers now, only wanting the right kids in their class....Not on. That's not on. That's not who we are' (P 12). 'The only contradiction I see is I think the obvious one,</i>

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<p>Imposed SS accountabilities- staffing- tightly bounded – diminishes the opportunity for creativity (P 3; P1)</p>	<p><i>Achieving quality teaching:</i> <i>Staffing formulas Inhibits:</i> <i>SS staffing formulas</i> <i>disadvantage the local</i> <i>school needs</i></p>	<p><i>is learning's a lot bigger than the HSC and NAPLAN...the only contradiction there is when accountability is weighted so heavily that you're unable then to engage with learning on the broad spectrum of things'(P 4). '...I sometimes see the tensions around trying to be accountable for the [the authentic learning] and then trying to also have those individuals that are connected to it, they're also accountable' (P 13). 'But your leadership is to sort of make sure that we don't self-destruct from over working [NP], but we just need to keep that balance going' P 8.</i></p>
<p>How to best lead learning; looks for diverse ways to lead learning (P7; P 1; P6)</p>	<p><i>Experiencing Tensions,</i> <i>Challenges and</i> <i>Contradictions with School</i> <i>System Expectations</i> Discernment on the best way to lead learning when external mandates are set and knowing what they know about learning: moral dilemmas, close to learning? Teach a class?</p>	<p><i>'We doubled our ESL allocation from last year to this year using that process and, do you know what? We got into trouble. Why did we get into trouble? Because we didn't have an ESL person. That's right, we didn't have an ESL person who could go to the CEO meetings. Like we worked outside the structure.....But because it broke the mould of what was expected under an old paradigm we get into trouble.....So, who takes the wrap for that? I take the rap for that P3</i></p> <p><i>'You need to follow the SS staffing formula, but this does not allow you to be innovative to resolve some of the issues around results' (P 1: Val 2)</i></p> <p><i>'They want the best teacher in front of them. So that's my moral dilemma there, and that was when I had those girls in Year 9 at the last school' (P 7). Needing to take a Maths class to build the team (P 1). 'I take a class – I walk the walk' (P 6).</i></p>
<p>Held to account for results yet hard to find teachers with expertise (P 12)</p>	<p><i>Achieving quality teaching:</i> <i>Inhibiter: Hard to staff</i></p>	<p><i>'But staffing is really hard. It is really tough to get teachers to go west of XXX or west of anywhere at the moment' (P 12).</i></p>

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SS have their own chimney with numerous projects, not aware of each other – transfer the projects to schools – lots of demands – yet schools have their own goals (P 2; P 1; P 3)

schools yet held to account for results

*Experiencing Tensions, Challenges and Contradictions with School System Expectations*

*Pressured to lead learning according to the School System methods*

What [School System] doesn't get is that each of these [mandated learning programs] – they're all in their own little chimneys and they all have their own little projects, and they think that you're only answerable to one project. What they don't get is that you have got people coming at you saying, I want a meeting with you to tell me how you've gone in this, I want another meeting. Its struggling all of these things and making sure that we're doing exactly what we're supposed to be doing ...and [the same time]the[KLA Department] is imploding at the moment. So the [School System Programs] have caused a huge amount of issue as well. Again I think because of the way that it was – it was imposed on them (P 2). 'I kind of feel sometimes the system assumes that principals are not leaders if learning, and that we'll put things in place and give you money to support you with a project on learning that you couldn't come up and dreamed about yourself' P 1.

'So [name of SS personnel] is one of the advisers in the inner west. {XXXX} excellent at her job. She really understands where schools are coming from, so the complexities of high school, the complexities of the dynamics of working in teams of different people and strengths and weaknesses, all that kind of stuff. So she is top shelf in that regard. I mention that because even people of that calibre can fall into this trap.

So at the beginning of the year she writes to us and she says, we've done an examination of your HSC results and we've determined that it's this area and this area where we are going to target our support for you this year. So they sat around in a meeting and based on some HSC matrix that they had looked at, they determined simply on the basis of that where our strengths were and where our weaknesses

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Competing accountabilities: SS accountabilities and the principals' accountabilities (P 3)

*Experiencing Tensions, Challenges and Contradictions with School System Expectations*

SS accountabilities – overly focussed on results (P 3)  
Expectations from SS to improve performance results seen as demanding and unfair (P 2; P 5; )  
Link with previous comment from P3

*Experiencing Tensions, Challenges and Contradictions with School System Expectations*

were. So it was around science and part of the issue there was an inexperienced teacher in a particular science subject. A really highly capable KLA, one of our most capable, if not the most capable, we'd identified prior to those results that were coming out that this was likely to be an area where we needed to put in further development.

We had a strategy in place to address it long term, so while the results pointed this as an issue, yes, but what's the context in which that result has emerged? What's the school's view on it anyway before we come in over the top and say, this is where we are going to focus our support? Because if that's story had of been heard they might have come to another conclusion. [Marietta] might have decided well the school understands that's an issue. The school has got a strategy in place to address that issue and that's not where really it needs its major support. P 3

Clashing priorities to whom and what they accounted  
*Sometimes the system thinks that schools exist to serve their purpose whereas my message very clearly to staff is we love the CEO, we want the CEO in here and on every occasion because they're a great resource to us but we're in charge and it's our agenda and if they're telling you what to do I want to know about it because I'll tell them to back off because it's not.....So in that sense about - talking now about accountabilities again - the accountabilities of the teachers are to the students and to this community, it's not to the CEO' (P 3).*

*Clashing priorities: System places greater emphasis on results and data from results than principals themselves  
There's not the same amount of attention given to them [well being programs school wide learning], though in formal reporting, and in reflecting with colleagues around some of the results from the conversations which can take place, it seems to me that if we take a broader perspective on what we think are the critical outcomes from our schools, ultimately that liberates everyone (P 5); The degree to which the number of band sixes drives the*

Clear what they are not held to account for – Year 7  
 NAPLAN results – mismatch with SS.  
 Pressure from SS to use data (P 1; P 11)

*thinking about what success is incredible....irresistible for the advisers at the office to look at results and say...' (P 3)*  
*'You get them, and within two or three months, they've got to do their NAPLAN testing. Then all of a sudden, you're then put under the spotlight to say well you know, what have you done about those results?' (P 2). 'The extent to which the Catholic Education Office can work with schools and work with principals then, to get away from a blaming and shaming perception (P 5). 'Systems very keen on seeing the growth from five to seven, but we've only had those students for three or four months' (P 10). 'But I've also would have had conversations with [jurisdiction] staff around that really we should be better than - travelling better than where we are will stop' (P 14). 'Saying this school is underperforming now and its results are inferior to, say, [school] up the road is I think radically unfair because it's not comparing apples with apples' (P 3).*

One jurisdiction has an RE test - absence of referral. *' But we've only had those students for three or four months' (P 10).*

*' I thought we were not responsible for Year NAPLAN ; the SS told me otherwise (P 3)*

*'I wish we would focus less on data and more on create ....yes NAPLAN can diagnostically as a school provide us with information, but I don't think - I think we've gone nuts (P 1).*

*'Measured on the ways we use data' – wish there was less emphasis (P 11)*

*' But having said that [DeCourcy and improvement] and while we get strong information around those things and our accountabilities internally are around those things the public narrative of our Catholic schools continues to be about state averages (P 3); 'XXX is a very poor performing school, we've got to do stuff to improve them, and the measures that they were using were as much as anything performance on HSC and not to DeCourcy ' (P 3) I think from time to time the, I'll call it the measures, have*

Mismatch between SS rhetoric of being interested in improvement and action – only interested in high performance results (P3; P 8)

*Experiencing Tensions, Challenges and Contradictions with School System Expectations*

*moved....The accountabilities do tend to move. They're not as clear cut. You can't just look them up... 'P 8.*

*Contradicting narratives: 'Look, when I meet with a consultant and when the Regional Director rings up and congratulates us it's always about that. It's always about learning growth and they understand that narrative. But when it comes to what's said publicly it's always about state averages and about number of band sixes (P 3). Rhetoric does not always match their [SS] actions with regard to what they are really interested in (P 8).*

*'Some of that conversation again was in relation to going along to principals' meetings and getting feedback around HSC feedback, HSC analysis et cetera, et cetera...No reference ever being made to Vocational Education and Training completions. ....From my point of view saying we understand that we don't have those same sets of expectations and accountabilities in relation to outcomes related to HSC' (P 5)*

SS appears only interested in HSC performance results (P 5 Imposed SS accountabilities – annual plans– unnecessary work ( P 2; P 1))

*Explaining and justifying Accountability methods and processes: double work, 'felt fearful – I felt grilled'*

*Feeling negative emotions with methods used to account You might have three or four people in that meeting, as well your leadership team, and they ask challenging questions (P 2). 'I was fearful – I felt grilled' (P 12). 'I don't have a problem with the system having an expectation, but sometimes I think the way the information is recorded can actually add work rather than value because in a sense, there are different ways that you can present data, and sometimes I think the system requires of us an extra layer to what we were already currently doing in schools. 'We might ask them a whole series of questions, but then the system may want a number of different areas of investigation which may or may not be relevant to us. It kind of fits in but then there's that sort of an extra layer that may or may not suit us at a particular time you can spend a lot longer making it look the way the system wants it, versus it being a local plan that actually can be done so much faster, because it's in the language of the people that are*

Overwhelmed by levels and layers of accountabilities create (P 3; P 13). Leadership and accountability difficult as ECP: so bug

*Explaining and justifying Accountability devices and processes: double work, gruelling*

*using the plan' (P 1). 'Our system accountabilities are, I think - look, sometimes they can be tedious' (P 2).*

*Playing tunes to different pipers: The reality that we live in day by day is that we've got huge external accountabilities to a whole lot of different pipers trying to play the tune and those from the regional office to Catholic Education Office Leichhardt and the State Government almost seem to be a non-player' (P 3). 'There are just so many different layers of accountability' (P 13) It's damn hard. It's so big. You don't - everyone is watching to see whether you've got any credibility. Coming in as a principal, the level of accountability was quite - yeah, it sort of hits you in the face a little bit (P 2). 'I have been here[jurisdiction] for four years now and I still not used to it [accountabilities]' (P 7)*

Dislike of how public judgements made about the school because of the performance results (P 2; P3; P7; P 4; P 8; P 13)

*Being judged*  
Challenge: public judgments made about the school because of performance results

*Silencing the human story: 'Whether you were above or below state average in the various components of NAPLAN, and all of those things. But it doesn't actually tell the story of your community, and the great things that you've done with that community. Because I honestly believe that that aspect of growth doesn't come through at all, in that website [MySchool] .....People need to know something about your story as well, and the sorts of kids that you're dealing with.....big thing here is enrolments. You've got - you've got to keep your enrolments going. But your enrolments are also determined very much by your results. We've got over 90 per cent non-English speaking background' (P 2).*

Pressure from SS to increase enrolments

Being judged leads to pressure with enrolments: linked with performance results

*Juggling the causality between performance results and enrolments*

*I knew when I applied for this job that those two areas were going to be massive, and they were intertwined, essentially..... So the big thing here is enrolments. You've got - you've got to keep your enrolments going. But your enrolments are also determined very much by your results (P 2). We are almost full capacity now. So that's been a big effort in trying to draw - increase the enrolments....Along*

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Unfair that performance results linked to principal appraisal or teacher appraisal processes (P 2; P 3)

Need to perform to the measures because we are judged by this (P 6)

*Being judged*

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*with that, then you have to maintain good academic results (P 6).*

*Experiencing injustice when results tied to professional performance*

*'We generally set goals as well, as part of that [accountabilities]. That's also linked into the PPPR process' anxiety feelings (P 2). 'Now how is it fair or just to make a judgement about the quality of a teacher's performance, or indeed a principal's performance against top 200 schools when you've got a clientele that's below average?' (P 3)*

*'I'm very acutely aware that they're the measures that we are going to be judged by and therefore we have to perform' (P 6).*

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RQ 2: How do principals describe the ways they lead learning in light of their accountability expectations?		Reasons		
Open code	Examples	Open code	Examples	Characteristics
Enacts accountability responsibilities with others -Leadership Team, LoPs, KLA Coordinators and teachers- 'distributing' ( P8) the leadership accountabilities				
Decides with leadership team should be doing better than what they are doing P 14	'But to me, working, looking at - at the start of the year in terms of where we [Leadership Team] wanted to go with our learning and teaching and having the discussion, it was agreed that we really should be doing better than what we are' P 14	Changes [ in learning and teaching] need to come from the Leadership team, was not for SS purposes P 14	'But I didn't feel like it was something that I had to do for an external purpose, for [SS] purposes, it was because well this is what we [leadership team] want to do ...the changes such as learning and teaching needs to start with the leadership team....' P 14	For change to occur in learning and teaching principals see it as important that the Leadership team undergoes the change in the first instance. These changes, in learning and teaching, occurred because the Team identified that there was a need to improve the results not because of the SS accountability (P 14).
Speaks to the staff in middle management positions about the exciting empirical changes that have occurred in the last 10 years P 11	'I think that's been - in the past decade, as I keep telling them, if you were teaching ten years ago, when John Hattie first started his research, and despite everyone being sick of him, I think his latest book is just an outstanding overview of those last ten years, and you're still here now, you've just lived through the most exciting decade with the mix of technology changes, architecture changes, furniture changes, understanding of assessment changes, and then you look forward to the next ten years' P 11	Some staff engages in their practices from 1970s. Not aware they were doing it. Sees these old practices as unacceptable P 11	'Some of them didn't even notice that they're doing what they did in the 1970s. That's true, and that's sort of unbelievable, unacceptable, and that's the accountability thing - who lets that happen? What system or school lets that happen? P 11	Principal holds disbelief (who lets that happen; what system or school lets that happen?)and a level of unacceptability when they find that those in middle management positions are engaged in outdated pedagogies or the teacher sin the KLA are; Uses empirical changes in education as a lens for those in middle management positions to examine their practices (P 11).
To prepare for SS Review meetings, Crm coordinator gathers data and uses opportunity for leaders to practise P 8	'We have a meeting with each of the heads of department. .. We look at the DeCourcy analysis. My curriculum coordinator has to gather data P 1...P8 I suppose we also take it as a great opportunity in practising; we do practice for those [SS] meetings. We just don't turn up to - if we have to account for things we actually make sure we've actually done like a rehearsal' P 8	Sees the practice of the leaders preparing and discussing as distributive leadership P 8	'The term people probably use would be a distributive leadership.... I think because they've got to be accountable to myself initially, then they'll think it's very helpful for them..... At least then they get a chance to discuss things before you're presenting it to whoever it may be, Catholic Education Office or Boards of Studies or things like that' P 8	Asks leadership team to prepare the data and present to SS review day because principal sees it as an opportunity for leadership development and describes the processes as distributive leadership (P 8).

Others lead professional learning around content for assessment-focussed accountability P 8	'But the focus of the day is very much around the Leaders of Pedagogy, leading the first part of the day and then the KLA coordinators leading the second half of the day' P 8	Right people doing right jobs; distributive leadership P 8	'But my role in that is to make sure that we've got the right people doing the right jobs. The term people probably use would be a distributive leadership' P 8	Others lead professional learning around learning and teaching; important to make sure they are the right people. Sees this as a feature of distributive leadership (P 8).
Grows and expands leadership team because if you are going to be collaborative and delegate you need people to delegate to P 6	'We have nine on my leadership team. I quite purposefully grew my leadership team because I felt that if you are going to be collaborative and delegate the leadership, then you've got to have people to delegate to. So I now have a very large leadership team and they report directly to me and I expect that they lead their own areas' P 6	Bigger Leadership team allows for a stronger process of accountability P 6	'So there is a much stronger process of accountability, if you like and I ask them [for example] We are have an issue with someone over the weekend and the head of that area is finding out and talking - so there is a level of accountability that they have to be at the leadership level' P 6	Growing the leadership team is seen as increasing numbers and also in delegating responsibilities, including accountability responsibilities (P 6).
Leadership Team declares focus for the year is about being above state average P 14	'That's what we've [Leadership Team] said has been a focus even for this year, but I suppose to me, that should include being above the state average' P 14	Always will settle for growth in performance results however should be better than state average P 14	So maybe I'm having my cake and eat it. But look, if I have to settle for something, I would always settle for growth, but I don't - I know we would take growth over Band 6s and all those types of things. But in saying that, I do think that we should be better than the state average. Can I say that? P 14	Normally principal would be looking at growth in performance results [HSC and NAPLAN] however when the results are below state average they concentrate on getting them above state average (P 14).
Leadership team & staff clear of the principal's expectations; sets the expectation around the teacher student relationship – bullseye. Develop teachers – next layer; KLA coordinators next layer P 6	'But they are very clear about what the expectations are, I hope. They know. I'm pretty clear about what our focus is. We started the year, both with my leadership team and the staff. ....So, if we say bullseye is the student, the first layer around that bullseye is the teacher and the relationship that goes on between teacher and student. So, all of our energy is around developing teachers. The next layer around that, is the heads, our new coordinator, our paths and structures and so forth' P 6	Aim is what goes on betw teacher –student P 6	'So, everything we do is aimed at what goes on between teacher and student at the classroom level.....' (P 6)	Holds members of the leadership team to account to keep aim at the teacher-student relationship (described as bullseye). The dart board is then the development of the next layer the teachers and the KLA coordinators develop these – which is the next layer (P 6)
Sees staff don't like them because of challenge; not	'I don't feel that my staff - I've got to be fair, there would be quite a few that don't like me because I challenge and I don't - have	Tries to build relationship with staff; Thinks staff would say	'So in one sense, you try and really build a relationship with the staff and two, I think - I'd like to think and I hope they	Sees it is important to be emotionally tempered while challenging staff, yet acknowledges some staff don't like

unreasonable; not tantrums, tries to build community and give support P 6	challenged some people. I'm pretty tough in many ways. But I'm not unreasonable. I don't chuck a tantrum. I'm very calm and even tempered and tried to build a good community and support people and do all of those sorts of things' P 6	that they [including leadership team] are genuine – wanting to improve outcomes for students P 6	think, that me and my deputy and the leadership team are very genuine in what we are doing. We are not here to just simply do a job, that we are here to really try to improve the learning outcomes for kids and making Jesus known and loved' P 6	them because of this; that said acknowledges relationship is important and hopes that staff would know the leadership team has learning outcomes and faith at the heart of their work. There is a sense here – pushes on even though actions may antagonise staff (P 6).
Interested and attends BoS RAP professional learning with Co-ordinators; not wanting to cramp style but interested – what's new? What etc?? P 7	'Well, I didn't want to cramp their (KLA Co-ord.] style. I wanted them to be able to ask questions and do things. ....I'm interested in those learning about how they see how the Border Studies saw the pack being used, what they saw - they're constantly adding things to it, what's new in it, what's the data showing us' P 7	So they can 'walk' with coordinators and have conversations about RAP if needed P 7	'What's the data showing us so that you can walk with your coordinators and you can have, if you need to, those conversations' P 7	Keen to understand the RAP data from BoS so that they can 'walk' with coordinators and have conversations about RAP data (P 7)
Emphasises to staff the positive utility of data from NAPLAN which starting to take hold (P 14; P 7)	'We've tried to re-emphasise it, but my impression was that it wasn't held in high esteem here for a while' P 14; 'NAPLAN data starting to take hold' P 7	Not many schools make good use of NAPLAN data P 14 Not seen as important as HSC P 12	'There's not many schools I think make great, or do work with the data than what they could perhaps' P 14; 'They don't place the same value on NAPLAN as HSC...no particular teacher owns it' P 12; [SS] Sees NAPLAN growth data as more important now' P 7	NAPLAN and the utility of NAPLAN data not held in high esteem by teachers (P 12, P 14); yet growing momentum in importance in non NP schools (P 7).
Makes decision to cancel sport for a term to focus on preparation for HSC in last term	'.....recently our senior students were told that in term three - well this term - that there wasn't going to be any group sport, okay and in the past that had been the case. But, there'd been a push right across the curriculum, like no excursions .... so it was really just to focus in on their last term of school and do revision' P 14	Really should be doing better P 14	It was agreed that we really should be doing better than what we are' P 14	When performance results are below state average some principals make choices about certain 'non-essentials' being dropped to focus on the essential curriculum areas that are more likely to produce better results (P 14).
Community need to know that you are endorsing leaders in their leadership of	'...where at times you need to allow others to lead and be fine with it... It's not about taking your foot off the pedal totally, but it's just allowing others to lead when it's	Others who are better than them in learning and teaching P 13; P 8	'They have maybe more expertise than you around that P 13; There are other people who are better at that [leading learning and teaching] than me P 8 To be	Principals know when there others on their leadership team who are better equipped to lead learning and teaching – for example professional learning.

learning and teaching P 13; P 8	important... But as the principal, the community need to understand that you're endorsing that and you support it and you support the person P 13; 'I will always be there to support when they are running the day. Others know I am supporting it. I might introduce it and close it' P 8		comfortable in your own skin that that person is doing it really, really well. ... developing the capacity of the group here is far more important than developing my own profile around it and all these accountabilities, if I'm not measuring up to other people's standards, system standards right, I will know that and I'll face it. I'll have to make some decisions about it' P 13	However they also emphasise the importance of signalling to the community members that they endorse who ever is taking the lead; this maybe through being present on the day and opening and closing the day ( P 13; P 8).
Teachers are influenced by the Leadership Team in their thinking about using data; the Team has reemphasised P 14	'Significantly influenced by the leadership's view of it, because it would be hard to say if they weren't, and we've tried to re-emphasise ...But I also think that that's reflected in teachers' use of data as well' P 14	Explains why it needs re-emphasising; teachers and the leadership have not been educated how to use the data P 14	'But I also think that that's reflected in teachers' use of data as well - that they don't - they just see it as, or have seen it as, a series of numbers and have not been able to - or haven't been educated, and leadership probably the same around how to use data to help lead in learning' P 14	In some cases teachers and members of the Leadership Team do not use data – see it as a series of numbers – not educated how to use data to help lead learning (P 14).
Sees 'squashing' staff from two ends – higher layer and lower layer – P 6	'So I guess you squash them two ways. We are asking this of them as a leadership team, but if their own staff are asking this of them, then - and I've seen it in one faculty, where someone who was very reluctant to do lots of things ended up with - just by luck, really - a faculty of quite dynamic people. He is now saying things that I know that three or four years ago he would be arguing with me left, right and centre that I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't do that. But he is doing it because his staff are doing it already' P 6	Needs to strategise in getting there [improving results] P 6	'...so there is a lot in there about strategic intent and really, from a principal's point of view, continually strategising around how you are going to get there. So a strategical issue is critical, but it's that whole difficult area of you've got to get support' P 6	Principal works from both ends to mobilise KLA Coordinators' thinking such setting targets (P 6). One end is the teacher placing pressure on the Co-ord and the other end is the Curriculum leader on the Leadership team P 6 9 Principal also self-references his own experience when they were a young teacher and had experienced a non-moving KLA Co-ord (P 6).
	'If I can keep talking the talk with my leadership team and with the heads of department, but we are doing this for this reason' P 6	Students deserve it [improving results] and staff not likely to argue against this reason of students deserving the best chance in life P 6	'...in teachers' minds, that we owe it to our students to give them every opportunity and by us not performing at our best and giving our students the best' P 14	Talking up is viewed as a persuasive strategy directed at the Leadership team and the KLA Team. The persuasion is the argument that students deserve best chance in life and the teachers need to give students every opportunity for this best

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New staff to school need to familiarise with the understandings about learning in the school P 6	'If you come from another school, you need to familiarise with us, because this is what learning is like here. So, little things like I won't employ anyone that doesn't have a high level use of technology in their learning, so it's an essential criteria... I don't have anyone in middle management, for example. I have a huge emphasis on the fact that they are involved in the Catholic Church and have a very strong Catholic ethos, because that's what's required of them at that level' P 6	Helps keep focus on what learning is like at school P 6	...because this is what learning is like here....' P 6	possible chance. We owe the opportunity to students (P 6).  Expectations are set for new staff about learning – with seemingly tight boundaries that extend to another dimension, participation in the religious tradition (P 6).
Keeps only one fire burning and then embeds it	'I'm very much into the model of let's not have too many fires burning, let's just keep a fire burning and go and embed it and get it right and then come back and get another one.....So yeah, we're very, very strategic. I think the other thing they would say to you is that they're very much supported. We have our exec meetings and we have our disagreements but once we formulate what we are going to do, it's a real understanding of the team that everybody is on board and everyone has to stay on board. But at the right opportunity they get to have their say' P 8	Believes that sometimes too much energy can be going everywhere	'They [Leadership Team] know I'm very passionate about [learning]- you know we think about our ideas, we think about how we're going to make them work, then we go and embed it....That doesn't always work but I think sometimes when the schools have too many going, none become embedded and none become realised and then in two years' time you're talking about there was a really good idea, why didn't we continue it? I just think because there was too much energy going everywhere.' P 8	Important when the Leadership Team is enacting accounting responsibilities not to have too many fires burning. Choose one fire – program - then embed this. Having too many fires – the ideas not are realised (P 8).
Co- constructs with Leadership Team members the learning section in the periodic Newsletter; used for Monday briefings P 6	'The assistant principal has a page and my head of teaching and learning has a page. So we jointly construct it every week and that comes out....On Monday I have a briefing with my staff every Monday for 10 minutes' P 6	Vocalises poignant points at Monday briefing from Newsletter P 6	'But I'll pick out things [from Newsletter] that I want them [staff at morning briefings] to hear' P6	Repetitive in messages – Newsletter and at staff meeting – to ensure message is heard (P 6).

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No ad hoc leading in learning, helps others understand where they are going; establishes core group who are on board, then encourages others, and targets others P 7	‘So it's then been a matter of helping them to understand that no, I am on board with that and that's the direction we're going. How can I bring you with me? So having a core group who really are very on board with it and then gradually encouraging others to get involved, providing professional development for them both at school and when it's available off site as well to enrich them and target that. So it's not ad hoc, it's not anyone who wants to go. ....So we do some things all together and to really target some people’ P 7	Where will it matter the most P 7	‘...it's where will our key change agents be? Where is it going to matter if we send, those sorts of things’ P 7	Strategic and planned in being influential – as opposed ad hoc actions in bringing about change in learning and teaching in response to accountability responsibilities. Looks for key agents of influence, targets some, has a core group who are centre – own the direction ( P 7).
Reporting to SS ( and for NP accountabilities); Review (SS) Meetings; preparation of documentation; accounting to declared plans is a requirement in the role of principal				
Reporting to government requirements –how they respond to data, what implementation has been done P 10 annual report, P1	‘They would require of me each year well there's the federal government request to do the annual report, now that's an extensive seven or eight page document which encompasses all sorts of things as basic as student numbers, to HSC results, to NAPLAN results, to how we respond to that data, what implementation of programs have been done’ P 10.  ‘There's an annual report that we have to report to the community’ P 1	Required to report to SS, consultant, director on learning P 10	‘Regular requirements of me as principal to report to system, consultant and director, around various aspects of learning’ P10	SS requires as part of the school’s annual plans that principals produce the appropriate documentation – which also includes the Annual Report to the community. Principals prepare this documentation detailing their performance results for HSC and NAPLAN RE, the growth in the results from 7 to 9 and the ways they respond to the data and the outcomes for implemented programs, the future plans that they have ( P 10; P 1)
Attends accountability SS meetings ( P 1, P 2)	‘They [SS] have a series of meetings throughout the year’ P 1.  ‘Every time - at the beginning of every year, you begin by identifying what aspects from your SRI you want to focus on, in the various components ... By the end of the year, you also have to rate yourself. Okay, how are you going in that area as well? .... I know that probably in the next two weeks,	SS sets the accountability processes through principals reporting to them	‘[SS] also sets up accountability. We start with our - what we call our XXX process, which is our Strategic Planning Review Process’ P 2	Documentation specified by the SSs is prepared for the review meeting. At the meeting the principal and designated leaders discuss the documentation (P 1, P 2).

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Provides documentation to SS re; NP accountabilities P 8	I'll be having meetings with the Catholic Education Office about our HSC results' P 2  'We have to obviously provide them [SS] the documents they need, but that's been very helpful' P 8	the SS helpful with NP accountabilities	'Our system of schools has a team that works on accountability for us so in terms of presentation to governments or documentation for it they tend to look after it for us' P 8	Three schools participated in the NP program; no principal thought that the accountabilities were onerous. Principals perceived that the SS helped them through the processes and perceived that the SS 'tend to look after it [accountabilities] for us' (P 8).
Divides the reporting outcomes to particular audiences P 8	'A good example would be in the Annual Improvement Plan that goes to the National Partnership, I'll say its 16 pages long. The version that - and that's been worked upon the executive and the leaders of pedagogy - the version that goes to staff might be a couple of pages long. Where the detail is needed for the system level, that detail is taken out and the nuts and bolts of it are included for the staff. A good example was in the plan that goes to the system they talk about how are you going to cater for kids who are at risk, how are you going to cater for kids who are Aboriginal, how are you going to cater for kids that don't meet the benchmarks in numeracy and literacy? Well that would be converted, for the staff, in how are we going to meet the needs for these five groups of kids and they're dot points' P 8	Thinks strategically in n meeting the external accountabilities while at the same time staff is on board P 8	'I think that I work very collaboratively with them [staff] but we actually think strategically about how do we meet the accountability to external bodies....So we think strategically. We work out how we're going to get staff on board' P 8	NP accountabilities require lengthy documentation. Instead of circulating their documentation to everyone – principal uses parts of the documentation for different audiences (P 8).
SS expects principals see that SS to identify the priority, advertises and then pursues relentlessly, then collect some data P 11	'.....identify the priority, advertising it, relentlessly pursuing it is the language they would use, and then collecting some data - and not doing what we used to do here, and tick eight things that we'd sort of semi-go and do this year, this package or that package ...P 11	Follows the SS expectations of drawing up an explicit annual plan P 11	'So they've got a Diocesan Strategic Plan, which I believe is a very well-informed document that looks at elements of, and looks particularly at, Catholic life and student learning and pedagogy. It's those three elements. They have some system-wide priorities in that. They ask us to draw from this to	Prefers priority setting with regard to annual school plans rather than the tick box or list of tasks; sees this as semi-go (P 11)

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			identify our own priorities for this setting to have an explicit annual plan that does what I said' P 11	
Prepare comprehensive documentation for the SS review day by SS. KLA Co-ord. The Leadership team puts together; evidence whether the plans have worked or not, plans for next year P 1 P 2 P 8	'... I have to write a fairly detailed NAPLAN report about how - what is the evidence - what sort of strategies have we put in place to improve, and what is the evidence have worked or haven't worked - what plans do we have next year? ...between us putting together a fairly comprehensive report' P 1. 'What generally happens is that as a leadership team, we talk about those questions. We get feedback from each of our KLA coordinators. Each of them are asked to put in a report about their HSC results. We then combine that information together as a leadership team P 2	SS expects principals to provide data on performance results and growth in performance results	'...but there are reports that we have to submit to the [SS] P 1 'So we were always given a series of questions about our HSC results' P 2	Principals prepare this documentation detailing their performance results for HSC and NAPLAN RE, the growth in the results from 7 to 9 and the ways they respond to the data and the outcomes for implemented programs, the future plans that they have. They also answer series of questions about the HSC [DeCourcy] ( P 1; P 2; P 8).
Prepares SS reports with honesty P 2	'You have to be very, very honest, and that's the way that I treat that process as well' P 2	SS knows the data; 'can't push anything in front of them' P 2	'So they have access to the Board of Studies data, but they also have access to the CEC data - the DeCourcy Analysis. You can't push anything in front of them. You can't basically create a smoke screen around those results' P 2	Principals are acutely aware that the SS – to whom they report to- knows the data before they do; knowing the data before the principals has been change in practice. So rather than going through the numbers more time spent on a discussion and comparison of how SS and the principals have analysed the data (P 2; P 8)
Attends SS review meeting on results; goes through every subject in fine detail- responsibility spread P 1 P 2	'...the CEO - my consultant would come in with her curriculum advisers, and we'll sit down and go through every subject in fairly fine detail to look at how we've gone this year' P 1. So, at those meetings, each one of us takes responsibility for a component of that analysis' P 2	SS requirement Use for internal goal setting	We generally set goals as well, as part of that. That's also linked into the PPPR process as well, that you P 2	Principals prepare this documentation detailing their performance results for HSC and NAPLAN RE, the growth in the results from 7 to 9 and the ways they respond to the data and the outcomes for implemented programs, the future plans that they have. They also answer series of questions about the HSC [DeCourcy].

Meets with consultant and other SS personnel to answer questions P 1 P 10 P 2	<p>‘There's a very long meeting at the beginning of the year around HSC results’ P 1.</p> <p>‘Meet with our consultant once a term to provide data about - he asks us three questions, where are you, how do you know and where are you going to next..... They're questions that we are expected to not just formulate answers on a gut feeling, but to have some documented evidence around the provision of that....’ P 10</p> <p>‘Okay, talk about your results within seven and nine. Talk about the growth. What areas are weaknesses? What are areas are challenges? What sort of things are you going to be doing to improve those?’ P 2</p>	SS require principals to answer questions	<p>‘At a local system level we are required to meet with our consultant’ P 10.</p> <p>‘They know our results almost before we do. Again, those sorts of questions [as HSC questions] are asked again’ P 2.</p> <p>‘So I’m held to account. We are asked to examine our results, to challenge our staff to look at - deeply look into our results through [DeCourcy] analysis. To go back and reflect upon what’s gone well, why’s it gone well? What do we need to do better? So on that level, that level, we are accountable and it’s not just me. We’ve now got out staff understanding the language around what that means in terms of unpacking those results. So the HSC results, the NAPLAN results are equally on that level’</p> <p>P 12</p>	Principals prepare this documentation detailing their performance results for HSC and NAPLAN RE, the growth in the results from 7 to 9 and the ways they respond to the data and the outcomes for implemented programs, the future plans that they have. They also answer series of questions about the HSC [DeCourcy] (P 10; P 2; P 12)
Complies to SS review dates and meetings P 1 P 4	<p>‘If there's an HSC report, NAPLAN reports - people just do it’ P 1.</p> <p>‘They [SS] come out and meet with us and then we have an HSC analysis meeting ... The accountability is we sit for a couple of hours with advisors from the office there and we talk about results and school improvement’ P 4</p>	Compliant principals SS expectations	<p>‘I think our principals in our system are quite obedient from those sorts of perspectives’ P 1</p> <p>‘At a local system level we are required to meet with our consultant’ P 10.</p>	Accounting to SS in the form of the reports and discussion is seen as part of the principal’s role ( P 1; P 10)
Challenging questions are asked at the SS review meetings by several SS personnel P 2	<p>‘But also at those meetings, they bring out some of the - they bring out the curriculum people as well to those meetings. You might have three or four people in that meeting, as well your leadership team, and they ask challenging questions’ P 2</p>	SS expects challenges have been dealt with, particularly if funded P 2	<p>‘They expect the next year that you've dealt with some of those challenges, or at least you've got something in place for those’ P2</p>	Some principals find the SS review meetings as challenging – the questioning processes with regard to how the principal may have dealt with some of the challenges ( P 2).

Accounts to SS for targeted intervention programs- funded P 2	'So it's [SS regional targeted intervention] a small pot of money, and that goes towards a project that you might have in the area of literacy or numeracy P2	Program is funded by SS and principal is accountable for the ways funds are spent P 2	'So again, you have to be accountable for how you spend that money as well' P 2	Funding is attached to targeted program – including those required by SS for schools i.e. RAMP (P 2)
Worked through annual improvement plan process - with a grilled experience P 12	'We also have an annual review process as well. Most of that is actually done with the Assistant Principals.... There'll be various areas - there'll be Safety. There'll be New Scheme teachers, Pastoral Care, HSC - so making sure you're doing the right number of hours, all of those sorts of things' P 2  'I think that was - I think that was achieved, but we had to go through our annual improvement plan, which I found a little hard, because some of that was written while I was on long service last year. There's a focus on Catholic life, Catholic identity. I think we did two hours on HSC results ... We were grilled' P 12	SS see annual review process as an assistant principal's responsibility	'So that's their [AP] responsibility P 2  I know [the consultant's] plan was not specifically to be like that. I know that. They wanted - they were really after showcasing to the director, this is what the secondary schools do and do well P 12	
Own sense of self as leader is important when meeting accountability responsibilities				
Teaches a class P 6	'I still teach' P 6	Teaching is like walking the walk – modelling P 6	'So I teach and I have targets and - so everything that I say to them I walk the walk' P 6	Principals spend time thinking about whether they should or should teach a class; some see that teaching a class is a strategy in leading others; as a role modelling tool
First years at spent time finding out things and not the principals they wanted to be – hands on with learning P 7	'So first year in the college I spent a lot of time finding out things and perhaps not being the sort of principal that I like to be' P 7	Learning more important – hands on with learning P 7	'Learning more important.....because I do like to be very hands on with the learning' P 7	Energies were taken away from principal to enact the ways in which they desired due to other leadership responsibilities – a concern because they see that learning is more important
Persuades staff to listen to the perspective of the new principal – uses	'That's something I've been going after, say, to these people that say, what the experts say is that when you do get a new principal, and you can browbeat that person, if you	Confidence because they are informed; empirical research for eg Dinham's research	'Firstly, that it's informed. I will go back to that notion that unless you're informed, you're selling the profession and the whole sector short, because	When principals asked about accountability they move their conversation to how they were confident in moving staff thinking;

<p>research to support views P 11</p> <p>Aims at moving thinking not changing things P 11</p>	<p>like, to resist change. The experts will say that fresh set of eyes is exactly what we need in this place, and you're effectively holding one hand over one of those eyes, They get that... So it's good to say to them, here's what I'm required to do, and here's what successful principals do, and in that next step is here's what happens when you come to a new school. . It could be challenging, but we lose some of that fresh perspective, if you sit there and say we're all right, we don't need to move our thinking...' P 11</p> <p>'...It's moving thinking rather than changing things is where the challenge has been' P 11</p>	<p>with KLA Co-ord. and the fresh perspective: 'you can't turn a school around without fresh leadership' P 11</p>	<p>there's enough stuff out there now that we have a responsibility to be informed, and again, that is instructional. That is, it is around the language of learning and teaching ... It is significantly influenced by some key people who I just think it nailed. Steve Dinham is one of them, and his notion of authoritative leadership... He preceded it a bit by some work in KLAs about the effective KLA leader. He's really quite challenging, including saying if it does get bad, get someone new in, a fresh set of eyes, because you can't turn the school around without fresh leadership ... Similarly, what makes an effective principal in the KLA? It's all out there, and it's not just someone's ramblings. It's based on observation' P 11</p>	<p>how they use empirical research for persuasion. In their personal leadership the first year principal supported the empirical evidence that schools cannot be turned around without fresh leadership (P 11).</p>
<p>Emphasises teaming – leadership of KLA co-ord. Models leadership to KLA co-ord. sets up the conditions for KLA Co-ord. to give the better chance of leading authentic learning, not just focus on the endpoint of HSC results, declares intention to tighten up stage 4 and 5</p>	<p>‘It's easier for me to say I have a huge accountability to make sure that we have effective teams of professionals here that are making clear to everyone that our first role is to be a part of a team, emphasising the leadership of KLA coordinators and modelling to them a leadership, and setting up those conditions that we know give us a better chance of leading to authentic learning, rather than just to focus on the endpoint of learning itself, ...[for example] we've got to tighten up stage four and five' P 11</p>	<p>Focussing on the end point of HSC results lies in disaster. Knows need to go the longer term – stage 4 and 5...take a step back and when with regard to assessment-focussed accountability? ... look at the elements of school life that contribute to authentic learning P 11</p>	<p>‘...because that way [focusing on the end point of HSC results] lies disaster, particularly when you come in to a place and you measure just on HSC results.... We know we've got to go longer term, and we've got to tighten up stage four and five. Going straight to stage six is putting the cart before the horse.....So I don't know what the accountability to learning is, so maybe you'd take a step back and talk about accountability to those elements of school life that we know lead to more authentic learning' P 11</p>	<p>Leading KLA Co-ord is important to keep focus on authentic learning. KLA Co-ord leadership is important in modelling and setting conditions for the KLA Co-ord. to lead authentic learning – being mindful that KLA Co-ords do not heavily focus on the HSC end point rather they are encouraged to focus on the development of stage 4 and 5 work. Thinking reflectively principal is not sure what assessment-focussed accountability is however they muse that it is possibly about' accountability to those elements of school life that we know lead to more authentic learning' P 11</p>

All their conversations are 'primed around learning'; this quickly gets around with parents, with students P 11	So that means that you're free to wander around the place, and when you talk to other leaders, the conversation is always primed around learning. When you talk to kids, it's around learning. That quickly gets around. When you talk to parents, it's about learning P 11	Sees building capacity in leaders as a serious responsibility and you need to plan for this improvement P 11	'What we're trying to do is to build people to their capacity. It's a serious responsibility, and just sitting here marking time is not good enough anymore. That's what I'm talking about what we say we're in the now. You've got to plan for improvement' P 11	Principal takes their role seriously in building leaders capacities – the building is part of their plan for improvement. It is viewed in the present moment and emphasises that 'marking time is not good enough anymore.' Possibly this principal may have experienced other leaders as being inactive in their role (P11).
Straight account point of view to SS P 8	'More from a straight out accountability point of view, that's who I have to account to. Straight out accountability I think it's more to the office, but I see a moral purpose to the families' P 8	However moral purpose to family P 8	'...but I see a moral purpose to the families....I think I have a responsibility to every mum and dad out there to try and get the best results for their kids, I suppose that's what I believe. It's the responsibility to the students in trying to get that too. That's more a philosophy that they will get their results, and I think kids will at times and parents will at times and say that's my son or daughters results and that's what they got' P 8	When explaining assessment-focussed accountability principals explain in non-emotional terms that they account to SS but hold a responsibility to parents and students – their explanation is in more detail and with emotion. Some principals call this a moral purpose (P 8).
Strategically tweaking what needs tweaking P 4 Declares agenda of a broad crm and maximising opportunities for kids P 4 Encourages staff to keep the balance right – good processes and systems and a culture that makes sense of it P 4 Encourages staff to keep the balance right,	'It's about strategically managing what needs to be tweaked, is how I see it' P 4 My agenda is around a broad curriculum and maximising opportunities for kids' P 4  'But at the same time to encourage them, to make sure that the [students] go into the test knowing, feeling confident enough that they know what's going to happen in it. What it's going to test. So yeah you try and manage the balance really and encourage people to keep believing in what we really do believe is authentic' P 7	Frames accountabilities and makes sense of it – need to know what you are yourself as principal and your agenda P 4 Sees school as functioning well P 4 Does not beat self-up about accountability – not just accounting for results –P 4 If staff are angst ridden (or not) about NAPLAN results or HSC this informs them of the type of response [that is	'I think if you have an understanding of what you're about yourself as a principal and what's your agenda then you can somehow frame accountability to make sense of it. ....' P 4 'I guess I'm in the privileged position of having a school that's going very well and functioning well' P 4 'I don't beat myself up about it. As I said, my role is not purely around accountability for results. I don't have a sense of that. I don't drive that agenda here. I never have in school ' P 4 '...where their sense of accountability informs or says your sense of accountability sets the staff for saying	Principals see in their assessment-focussed accountability to encourage and ensure that staff keep a balance between aiming for results and keeping what they believe to be authentic in learning. A few ways that they think that they can do this is by having an understanding of 'what you're about yourself as a principal and what's your agenda' (P 4). Principals are demonstrably clear that their role is 'not purely around accountability for results' (P 4). School processes and systems and 'a culture that makes sense it [the accountability] keeps it in perspective'

<p>to keep believing in what they do is really authentic – not give in to teaching to the test yet ensures staff prepare students go into the test knowing and feeling confident to know what’s going to happen P 7</p>	<p>to seek a balance in staff [thinking]. Staff professionalism drives this agenda P 4 Other principals would be heavy handed – it is the style of principalship P 4 Knows other schools do teach to the test. Yet they try to keep the balance right P 7</p>	<p>they're angst ridden about NAPLAN results or HSC results - that then informs your response as principal.... Here there are really good processes and systems and a culture that makes sense of it - keeps it on the agenda but keeps it in perspective. . It's people's own professionalism that drives a lot of the agenda' P 4 '...it's a style of principalship as well. Some would be heavier handed with them and demand greater accountability' P 4 '...well I'm not in the classroom with them so it's trying to encourage people to I suppose not - to keep the balance right. To not give in to just - and I know that there are some schools around here that teach to the test in NAPLAN and we don't P 7</p>	<p>(P 4). Principals see it as important to keep this 'balance and not give in' (P 7). In some ways the views of principals here is about holding a line – taut but not too tight (P 4; P 7).</p>
<p>Walk the walk [when teaching the class] P 6</p>	<p>‘But I think a leader has to walk the walk. You just can't talk about it P 6</p> <p>Models teaching through showing student work...not one rule for principals and another rule for everyone else P6</p>	<p>‘You have got to - people have got to say - you know, when we use examples and stuff like that, I don't hesitate in pulling up one of my kids and saying well, this is what my student is doing.... It's not one rule for me and one for something else. It's the same rule for everyone' P 6</p>	<p>Modelling is seen as a strategy in principal’s leadership for learning and at the same time uses this modelling as a sense of their own accountability to staff. For example shows the staff how they are working with students in their class ‘I don’t hesitate in pulling up one of my kids and saying well, this is what my student is doing’ ( P 6).</p>
<p>Sets global targets for themselves around how many Band 6s the school can attain - P 6</p>	<p>‘Well, these measurements that we're having is what I use in my targets. We've got so many Band 6s. We've got so many - they're mine. So, if you like, my global target is the amass of all those individual targets, is what we - so, I'm driving that, to say our targets are higher than last year, because of these</p> <p>Believes that target setting will improve the whole school and also that is how the school is measured P 6</p>	<p>‘Why am I setting targets? Because I believe that if we were setting the targets, then the whole school will improve and that's my job making sure the whole school improves’ P 6</p>	<p>Principal requires of staff to set targets in how many Band 6s they can achieve. Principal sees that they need to hold themselves to account as well with this regard to target setting. They set their own global targets ‘from the mass of all those individual targets’.</p>

	and that's how I - and that will be one of my measurements' P 6			There are several layers of reasoning being Band 6 target setting; the first is about 'being higher than last year'; the second layer is that this is their (principals') measurement; the third layer is that this is how they see that they (principals and teachers) are judged P 6
AP sets targets for student presence – takes up the agreed target setting by principal P 6	'Like my AP this morning stood up and our average is around 96 per cent of presence. I'm going to go for 98 per cent. He is talking it up. He said well, I'm going to go for 98 per cent. He is talking it up..... He has got the message that we are all about targets and he is a great deputy' P6	Some staff are reluctant to target set and happy when AP talks the same talk P 6	'...but I mean, I know why he was doing that, because he was - for those who were reluctant to set targets, and I've got a few, he is saying well, we walk the walk.... To me, as a principal, I'm happy, because it came from me.' P 6	Expects and encourages leadership team to speak and act in unison – for example setting targets. Principal views that the leadership team need to be in unison with their talk and actions; there is a sense of happiness (P 6).
Asks questions of self about whether the students are learning P 1	'My accountability factor would be high enough anyway, to be asking those [accountability - are the students learning] questions of myself anyway' P 1	High expectations of self and of staff; kids at the centre of decisions P 1	'So irrespective of whether there was a system asking me to do that or not, I have high expectations of myself and I have high expectations of my staff... and that the kids are at the centre of every decision that I make' P 1	Principal holds also accountability for themselves and then staff. These interactive expectations are similar to P 6 who holds certain expectations of themselves and also of the staff. - - targets for Band 6s
Acts as human shield between own school needs and SS needs P 3 Manages SS accountabilities through filtering P 4	'So the CEO says, will from time to time say you must have people at this meeting....I am the human shield between the system, the buffer. So don't worry about what CEO says, I'll call him, I'll sort that out. ...But I'm not going to employ an ESL teacher because there are people with vested interests in the office who are ESL trained who want to build an empire of ESL teachers who they can control' P 3  'So you know, I see my role as managing the accountabilities from the system at my level so that what needs to be filtered is filtered through the school' P 4	Influenced by visits to England where principals described their role as a shield, sees themselves as a human shield P 3  Needs to determine priorities because of high accountability as a school with the NP program – therefore acts as a filter P 4	'...the inspectorial arrangements from OfSTD and how they impacted on the morale and also the work of teachers and he said, my job - almost word for word he said this - my job is to be the human shield between OfSTD and the teachers....So that resonated with me because that's how I see myself' P 3  'So in a lot of ways I see the role of principal as a filter to what is and what does - what is a priority and what isn't a priority. In terms of government accountability, well we're highly accountable with SSNP' P 4	Principals use their professional learning experiences – travelling abroad to make sense of their role in managing their accountabilities. Part of this sense making is the utility of the metaphor i.e. human shield (P 3). Others make sense by using different metaphors i.e. the filter – prioritising which SS programs can be adopted or not (P 4)

<p>Tells the SS to back off when SS tells staff what to do P 3</p> <p>Monitors and paces the [SS] initiatives i.e. the Leaders of Pedagogy (LoP) P 3</p>	<p>'Sometimes the system thinks that schools exist to serve their purpose whereas my message very clearly to staff is we love the [SS], we want the [SS] in here and on every occasion because they're a great resource to us but we're in charge and it's our agenda and if they're telling you what to do I want to know about it because I'll tell them to back off because it's not' P 3 'So [LoP] would go in there. She would get her riding instructions from head office and she would come back here and she would say, we have got to do this, this and this. No, no, no, slow down, Miriam, slow down' P3</p>	<p>Accountabilities are not to SS rather to teachers and students and community P 3</p> <p>SS not running the show p 3</p>	<p>'So in that sense about - talking now about accountabilities again - the accountabilities of the teachers are to the students and to this community, it's not to the [SS]' P 3</p> <p>' They're [SS] not running the show here. They have got a big picture sure. They have accountabilities to government sure. I understand all of that, but we've got to stop and just reflect what are we trying to achieve here? How does what they are seeking to - we don't want to work absolutely not contrary to them, but how does what we are trying to achieve marry with what they are trying to achieve? How can we massage what's being asked of us into ways which are supportive, helpful and productive here rather than just giving people more work?' P 3</p>	<p>Principals are clear with the SS about what they can and cannot expect of staff. Principals position their first priority to the students and the community members (P 3). Principals try to align onw needs with SS needs; 'how does what we are trying to achieve marry with what they are trying to achieve?' (P 3)</p>
<p>Knows what they would see if accounting for learning in their leadership role – track students' results and see improvements there P 7</p>	<p>'That those things [culture of learning] would be evident so it might be that you are able to track and there's your data comes in handy. Track the students' results in various things and see an improvement there, to see students engaged' P 7</p>	<p>Knows what to look for : 'evidence in pedagogies' see culture of learning, student informal and formal feedback; engagement in the classroom, work produced results; various data</p>	<p>'Effective leader of learning in the students, I suppose you would see the evidence of the pedagogies. That you would see a culture of learning at least starting to take hold - after all we're talking about teenagers. .... You do get feedback. The girls are very happy to tell you what they like and what they don't like, So you do get feedback about that so that's another means of finding out. But I suppose seeing engagement in the classroom, seeing some of the work that the girls produce, seeing their results - the data of various kinds. .... The feedback that the girls would give would be more about what they're learning, how their learning and how that suits their learning. .... Yeah so that would be</p>	<p>Some principals hold skill and knowledge about pedagogies. They know what to look for when evaluating whether the students are engaged in authentic learning. They use feedback mechanisms not solely focussed on results, whether the student are happy in the classroom, what they are learning and how they are learning; engagement in the classroom, the work students produce. Parents also provide such feedback (P 7).</p>

			a form of the students feeding back. Our parents are quite good at articulating what they like and what they don't. As you can imagine you hear more of what they don't than what they do' P 7		
	Analyses data to inform plans to meet accountability responsibilities				
	Uses data to inform P 12	'It's about using data to inform. You don't use that - the gut's gone out long ago. You go and look for the data, look for the evidence that says, either this is working or this isn't working' P 12	Data is seen as evidence. Using data to inform- is authentic – not just ticking the boxes	'So part of it - part of the authentic learning is looking at the real learning, not necessarily looking at whether the compliance tick box with curriculum is being carried out...' P 12	Principals see that authentic learning is looking for the 'real learning' as opposed to ticking the boxes of curriculum compliance i.e. SS curriculum reviews The looking is equated with seeking the evidence- which is in the form of data ( P 12).
	Needed to educate staff on the importance of using NAPLAN data P 14	'I think our school's had to do some re-evaluation around NAPLAN and try to educate some of our staff and perhaps students around the importance ... So that we've had to do a little bit of work there, but not at an over-arching or significant impact on [function] learning parts of what they do in their curriculum' P 14	Results in NAPLAN not taken seriously hence 'true capabilities not reflected P 14	'I think stopping everything and preparing for NAPLAN for a week or two before hand I think is unnecessary. ...[however] I think it was perhaps dismissed and therefore I think probably didn't really reflect our true capabilities in those areas' P 14	NAPLAN gains more focus is secondary schools as the results are taken more seriously by principals – as SS make expectations - yet not necessarily teachers (P 14 and see P 7).
	Works towards with staff analysing data from NAPLAN using the SMART pack...and how the analysis help them in their classroom P 7	'So that's what we've been gradually working towards with them, using the smart pack, looking at the data, looking at the girls, getting them to look at their class, all the things that you've been able to do for a little while, to look at the students in their class, what have they achieved, what are they seeing in the classroom compared to that, how can they help those girls to improve their learning?' P 7	NAPLAN was not important P 7	'But then talking to people here there was a, it's not very important. NAPLAN is not important. HSC is important, NAPLAN is not important' P 7	
	Improve the esteem of NAPLAN with staff P 12	'I haven't got anything in front of me to be specific, but one thing we did with that was as a leadership team, we made the decision that each of us would supervise a year nine class, which I think said to them, we think		'Over the last couple of years, year nine was always our worry. I think, in most secondary schools, we don't tend to own the year seven. It gives us the information of where they're sitting and what we need to do. Year nine tells us whether we've achieved anything. I would say with year nine, we've brought the bottom up, but the top lose interest whether that's because it is another test I don't want to do it, not sure' P 12	

	<p>this is important. We want you to do well' P 12</p>		<p>'I think NAPLAN is more important in terms of it gives - I mean it's different. One's end data and the other one's probably more, well, there's more potential with the data with NAPLAN in terms of where students are. So, in terms of that, it gives you more information to work with. So therefore, I would value it probably more in terms of; well this is where our students are at, where we can move with it. Whereas by the time we get our HSC information, it's really just - gives us a result on how well we went at the end' P 14</p>	
<p>Works with staff analysing data and implementing from the analysis – NAPLAN and HSC P 1</p> <p>Sits down with staff to look at the NAPLAN data and see who is in their classes P 10</p> <p>Uses results from NAPLAN to inform learning across the school P 8</p>	<p>'So we look at the data. We've identified the needs of our kids, we haven't done the blame thing or anything - it's been this is what our kids need to do, so we need to spend time teaching our staff. Learning together, in order that we can decide on what's best for our kids' P 1.</p> <p>'We actually, you know that will be out very shortly that NAPLAN data, we will sit down with staff at an opportune time and ask them right at that point in time, to look at the data of the students in sevens to nines of who they will have in their classes, so there's a generally level of awareness...' P 10</p> <p>'So yeah, look we do use it in analytical ways and that's we've said to staff again and again the SMART 2 data which is the analysis tool for the NAPLAN stuff gives us a data set which makes us' P 3</p> <p>'I do use the results of NAPLAN to help inform the learning of the school' P 8.</p>	<p>Recognised need for change – decline in results and enrolments P1</p> <p>Accountability is to use the NAPLAN data P10</p> <p>SMART data gives information that never had before – sees this positively</p> <p>Sets a benchmark across all schools P 8</p>	<p>'So because it's been data driven and evidence based, because there's already been a catalyst for change... because staff know they have to, and that there has been a decline in results over the past, they know that if there's no accountability and they know if there's no action, we could lose staff as a result of declining numbers. So in a sense they know that in order to maintain pride in the school, in order to maintain numbers, action needs to happen' P 1</p> <p>'...part of our accountability is to use that data' P10</p> <p>'Gives us more information about students' abilities and capacities and weaknesses than we've ever had before. It's just fabulous, and certainly it's used that way' P 3</p> <p>I suppose it does set a benchmark across all schools P 8</p>	<p>Principals use the NAPLAN data-SMART 2- for various reasons; SS expectations (P 2); NP accountabilities (P 4; P 8); student target setting (P 3); to improve results, stop the decline in enrolments (P 1); self-accountability in using data to inform learning and teaching plans (P 10).</p>

Looks at NAPLAN results when enrolling P 8	‘When I’m looking at enrolment of boys and girls into Holy Spirit I do look at their NAPLAN results, not necessarily as an enrolment criteria but it is a wide brush of how boys and girls have gone in that exam’ P 8	NAPLAN is a benchmark and more meaningful than Primary school reports, which is difficult to read how they are really achieving in literacy and numeracy P 8	I suppose it does set a benchmark across all schools. Sometimes reports, in particular primary reports, sometimes it’s hard to read into exactly what they are achieving in things like literacy and numeracy Lots of their reports are really good at saying what the kids are doing in terms of social development and they’re usually fairly consistent in terms of social development and learning development. So I do use the NAPLAN test for that purpose.,.,.,[yet] In terms of NAPLAN being published in things like the My Schools website, I don’t know if there’s great value in that’ P 8	Principals use the NAPLAN results as part of the required documentation when year 7 students are enrolling – they see the results as helpful data (P 8).
Uses NAPLAN data for the purposes of target setting for students P 3	‘In using it [NAPLAN data] for target setting we’ve found a use for it which is genuinely allied to its stated purpose, although of course is has another stated purpose in terms of accountabilities and measuring of places’ P 3	Sees NAPLAN data as useless – due to the data release date P 3	‘It’s [NAPLAN data] useless. The Government wants it to be, and has expressed again and again, it’s an analytical tool for student growth. What they’ve never acknowledged in their public discourse with the Australian people is that when it comes out in September it’s next to useless because the year has gone’ P 3	Yet one principal while using the NAPLAN data for individual target student target setting at the beginning of the year - sees the data from NAPLAN as ‘useless’ due to the late release data (P 3).
Make strategic plans from data P 1 Analyse the data thoroughly and make plans P 10	‘It’s important that you have a strategic plan, and it’s important that you use data to guide your decisions’ P 1 ‘Analyse the data thoroughly, they then expect us, a synopsis or a summary of that data, and then from that data they ask the school to make plans about where to next’ P 10.  ‘I could tell you my annual plan for the next three years’ P 1  Each KLA here does that. We do an unpack of the whole data. I don’t think teachers use the SMART data enough. But that’s a bit of	SS expectations ( P 1; P 10) Declining enrolments – fortunate so staff curious about improvement P 1 Local plans are done much faster than SS ‘glossy plan’ P 1	‘They [SS] expect us to first of all to analyse... P 10. Now I am going to have to put together in the holidays some glossy plan for SS (P1)  ‘So I have been fortunate on one level to walk into a school where we’ve got declining enrolments.... So staff have a natural curiosity about how they can improve what they’re doing. Because they understand things are slipping, and their results are not great. P1  Document speaks the language and is a working document’ P 1	SS holds requirements that principals analyse their data to inform their strategic plans (P 1;P 10;P 12). Common across both SS.

	a network issue, too, especially if we all want to be on the network at once out here. But each faculty then looks at the strengths of year nine, the weaknesses of year nine. The same with year seven. Those specific skills are built into their teaching programs for the following year' P 12		'I think it makes us look at what they can and can't do and then we need to build that into our teaching programs' P 12	
Given time to use the NAPLAN data to really look at the kids P 2	'So what we did is we actually gave every staff member of - the teachers of Year 7 and Year 9 some time out. They sat with the data and they - the data package is excellent, because you can actually create your own classes from it.... They've had a little bit of time at the beginning of this year to look at the NAPLAN results of the kids in Year 7 and 9 from last year.... So if you're teaching Year 8 and 10, you've got some time now to really look at these kids and get that information' P 2	Due to the poor timing in the release of NAPALN data principals make time for staff to utilise the data P 2	'The NAPLAN data doesn't map til September, and it's a really foul time of the year for it to come out... Because often what's happened is, is you're starting to think about next year... You're starting to think about your classes next year' P 2	Principals P 2 and P 3 see the release of NAPLAN as ill-timed. However both principals work around the poor timing; one uses for target setting the next year (P 3) and the other provides special time for staff to example the data ( P 2; P 3 also see P12 who simply thinks secondary teachers not interested in NAPLAN anyway)
Need to use data from DeCourcy as well as the number of Bands P 12	'You've got to look at that,[DeCourcy] rather than just look at the number of band fives, sixes, which is what the media focuses on' P 12	DeCourcy data shows what the teacher adds to the student's learning growth – at times the addition is 'pretty amazing' P 12	'But it's when you look at that learning growth and you look at a senior science class - no, a physics class that had kids in there who should never have done physics and you look at that one teacher added to that kid's learning growth, you think, hey, that's pretty amazing. Pretty amazing' P 12	Principals esteem the DeCourcy analyses because they see the analyses as an indicator of 'learning growth' (arguably the analyses is shows a growth in performance results). Placing this argument aside the DeCourcy analyses is viewed is popular in use for the very reason that P 12 suggests that it shows growth in students' performance and is an indicator to the teaching and learning that has taken place.
Has not sat down with coordinators and had the DeCourcy questions P 7	Fac: You spoke about - because everyone in the ideal school would - this has been advised by different systems across New South Wales, Catholic systems, that you get the DeCourcy result and the principal sits down with the KLA coordinator and has the	Relationship building needed before meaningful conversations about growth in results / and need to see what is	'I've had to do a bit of relationship building in those things - before you do those things. But I think we're now ready to take on some of those, to sit down and look at the things that DeCourcy talks about, asking the hard questions.... h, I	Not all principals have used the DeCourcy data analyses. One principal explains that relationship building was more important than working with the data for DeCourcy. They believed it was more important

	<p>conversation, the four questions. What's your thinking around that for this school?</p> <p>P 7: 'We haven't done very much of that up until now'</p>	<p>working and what is not before 'fixing' P 7</p>	<p>think you need to see what's working and what's not before you try and fix things, and I have seen people do it in the past where they'll come and say, look, I've had this great idea from another place. ... Yeah, you've got to get to know that [the school complexities]before you can have those conversations in a meaningful way' P 7</p>	<p>to 'get to know the complexities of the complexities before you can have those conversations in a meaningful way ( P 7)</p>	
<p>Uses data analyses to account for teacher performance</p>	<p>Uses DeCourcy data from the to confront teacher performance in relation to low performing teachers and to take these teachers off senior classes P 10</p>	<p>'...we've worked with DeCourcy from day one, it's about a conversation rather than judgement, and even in those early days I was probably looking - I was approaching it naturally with a judgement hat. ...in relation to low performing teachers it's [DeCourcy data] been helpful, it really has.... been used to support me to say to a staff - two staff members; I can't put you on senior classes anymore' P 10</p>	<p>Data provides information to challenge low teacher performance and to remove from certain classes P 10</p>	<p>'It's been a piece of evidence that's been used to support me to say to a staff - two staff members; I can't put you on senior classes anymore' P 10</p>	<p>'Secondary data analyses i.e. DeCourcy is used as a conversation tool with teachers. Some principals have used the data and the guided DeCourcy questions to remove teachers from class or others have let the teacher decide the removal themselves' (P 10; P 12).</p>
<p>Teachers self-evaluate through the data and questions from DeCourcy P 10</p> <p>Most schools use DeCourcy analysis P 4; P 12. Some now excited about the DeCourcy data P 12</p>	<p>'But in the end the teachers bring themselves to their own judgments far quicker than what I can do' P 10.</p> <p>'Like we do, obviously, like in every school I presume or in most schools, we do the [DeCourcy] analysis P 4</p> <p>'We now have staff saying, okay, when are we getting DeCourcy? When can we get DeCourcy? Even though they're happy, always excited around HSC time P 12</p>	<p>Principals prefer teachers to arrive at own conclusions about their performance P 10</p> <p>Expectation from SS to use the DeCourcy data P 4</p> <p>Now part of the practice - 10 years P 12</p>	<p>'....and it's better that they do it than I do it .... the growth didn't come, they didn't go in the class, and ultimately that was their decision not mine' P 10</p> <p>'It [using DeCourcy data] forms part of the expectation' P 4</p> <p>'Then with HSC, I think it would be nearly 10 years ago we started to - maybe longer. Probably about 12 years ago, we started on the DeCourcy journey and we've shared those results publicly. They go on the network. Every one member of staff can access it and see how each faculty is going' P 12</p>	<p>Some principals have used the data and the guided DeCourcy questions to remove teachers from class or others have let the teacher decide the removal themselves' (P 10; P 12).</p> <p>Principals view that the DeCourcy analysis tool has and is part of the practices in their annual data analysis of the HSC measure. Teachers also now welcome this data and ask for it (P 12).</p>	

<p>Uses data to make staff face the facts about results when compared to 'like schools' in the region P 7</p>	<p>'I asked [SS] to give me the data on the other girl's schools in the other regions, schools that do very well. I said - now, let's have a look at this data. So that's where the conversation is moving to now and that's just me challenging staff to say well stop being smug, we always need to do better. We always need to say what are we doing well? That's great, let's celebrate that. Where can we improve?' P 7</p>	<p>Staff see that school is doing well compared to schools in the region – smugness – no need to look at improvement P 7</p>	<p>'...that's just me challenging staff to say well stop being smug, we always need to do better. ....See, even if you look - I've said to staff here because they come back from meetings and they say we're doing so well compared to everybody in the inner west. I said excuse me, the other end of the inner west, they're coming straight off the boat, so could you please not look at' P 7</p>	<p>Principal draws upon regional data to persuade staff to look at their own results with a realistic lens and to hold the view that they can always improve ( P 7).</p>
<p>Uses data as evidence for accountability P 10</p>	<p>'But I find that in engaging in the accountability there is a lot of useful data and information and evidence that comes from that.... You know unless we have that we're just operating on opinions and we all have opinions which unless they're backed by evidence are worthless' P 10</p>	<p>Using data is a professional responsibility P 10</p>	<p>'Responsibility, you know I have a responsibility to the teachers, parents and students of this community to ensure that we are being professional' P 10</p>	<p>Some principals experience a relationship between being accountable- in their thinking this is using 'data and information and evidence' that comes from accountability - and being professional. In this principal's case being professional is described as holding 'a responsibility, you know I have a responsibility to the teachers, parents and the community' (P 10)</p>
<p>Immerses staff with data about their student on professional development days P 10</p>	<p>'...PD days - immersing ourselves in all aspects of data available to us, about the student that's sitting in front of that teacher, in that classroom for the rest of 2014 or for all of 2014' P 10</p>	<p>Positive outcomes focussing on data to improve learning; increased understanding of where that student is in that point in time; provides for structured intervention programs which focus on the building blocks P 10</p>	<p>'So that there's an increased understanding of where that student is at that point of time in their learning. With the understanding that literacy and numeracy are the basic building blocks for all things that come from that... It's not about teaching to a test or getting a result, it's about again empowering them with those basic skills which are the essential building blocks for them to grow. .... There are now students in our year nine classrooms who don't need the learning support that they would have otherwise needed in the area of mathematics' P 10</p>	<p>Principals have a sense of efficacy and determination about the utility of data which will allow for the targeted learning programs to be implemented to help certain student in their foundational understandings in literacy and numeracy (P 10).</p>

Knows (personally) and uses BoS RAP data P 7	<p>'The Board of Studies, the RAP is a very good tool for teachers just to play with their own data and say what questions did my kids get wrong. I think that's data at its most valuable, rather than big brother's going to come and get us..' P 7</p> <p>Facilitator: So using data as diagnostic. P 7: As diagnostic and because there is such a concern to do the best that we can for the girls, I think that with staff that data managed well with the staff here as diagnostic and then to reflect on it.. Then to plan for their learning, the student's learning for the future, for the next lot coming through' P 7</p>	<p>Important to have the balance right between results and learning; feels comfortable that they have the balance. Do enough in looking at data to improve the current and future – next lot coming through P 7</p>	<p>'I think I'm comfortable with that we've got the balance right. I hope I'm not proved wrong. That we do enough to look at the data and explore it and I think there are some good tools there. We use that to see where the weaknesses are' P 7</p> <p>'That's far more valuable than any other use of data' P 7</p>	<p>Principals see that the use of data is far more valuable if the focus is on learning for the students 'rather than bug brother's going to come and get us' (P 7).</p>
Exhaustive review of HSC – with more focus on DeCourcy and attributes improvement on the utility of the analysis from DeCourcy data P 10	<p>'We do spend a lot of time, we do exhaustive review of HSC data more so from a learning gain point of view, a DeCourcy learning gain far more, and I would suggest that our results of the last couple of years are actually a result of efforts that started four and five years ago, where we were examining DeCourcy data' P 10</p>	<p>Relies heavily on DeCourcy because of own beliefs about equity and equality and religious beliefs P 10</p> <p>Happy about the students who are the surprises P 7</p>	<p>'Holding myself accountable, I'm far more interested on every individual deserves equity and equality around their dignity as a learner. ... Whether they come from a low base or whether they're a high flier, we have an obligation to work with every student, to improve as learners, to gain more knowledge and understanding, to apply that knowledge to real life working context,.... So we are all created equal in the eyes of god and I do believe that, strongly believe that all learners should receive the same amount of respect for us as teachers to work with them' P 10</p> <p>'But I'm just as happy looking at the girls who are the surprises and go, wow, didn't they do well? They got 75 for that subject, as I am for the ones who - they're band sixes. I think we can get too hung up on the magic band six at times' P 7</p>	<p>Principals perceive the DeCourcy data favourably for several reasons: honours students who may come from a high or low base P 10; the data has helped the HSC results improve P 10; shows up those students who were the surprises P 7; the student who takes the subject when not suited and they better than expected ( P 12)</p>
Uses DeCourcy data as their own measuring stick P 12	<p>'I mean, when I look at that DeCourcy, I just look for that one graph. Achieve versus expected for the whole cohort and it's always great to see it above the line. I don't like it to dip below the line and then you wait for that other graph, whether you're in the top right quadrant and last year, you weren't and I knew we wouldn't be' P 12</p>			

Personalises the data, puts faces on the data P 7	'Bring it down to the girls they know in their class. For us the other thing is that putting the face on the data, putting the name, why did that student who you teach, that sort of thing' P 7	Goes with staff strengths [they'll do anything for the girls] to persuade staff to use data to meet accountability responsibilities ' that's the way we connect with our teachers here...that does allow engagement with staff P 7	'Because there was good at the top, but there was a huge tail. This year, we've got a hundred in year 12 with a huge tail. Kids with no commitment, but you just bash your head against - keep bashing your head and bashing your head against the brick wall and you try and lift them. I know that teachers run tutorials before school – after school – we set policy around the number of drafts they can email and send to people. People give up their lunch times. People come in on weekends. They come in on school holidays. Some kids lap that up. Then you get these ones that think, I've got an HSC, I don't care about my bands. I'll just get the HSC...' P 12	Principal recognises how staff is engaged with data. Further they recognise the leaders who know how to engage staff as well (P 7).
Continues to have conversations with	'So I think it's just a matter of continuing the conversation with them and bringing that and asking the questions of the data will tell us. Data is interesting because of the questions	Allows principal to ask questions about the data. This makes data interesting .... what are	'I still think we've got a way still to go. But that's the way I view things anyway. That tends to be my - okay well that's good, now what are we going to do to	Principal does not allow complacency; continues to ask questions of the data-finding the data useful even when statistically the 'growth of top

staff, asking questions of the data P 7	you can ask. The thing this morning was about that it's the top students that are falling off. That would be our pattern as well as the state pattern would be.... P 7	we going to do to improve P 7	keep improving that. So I think it's very easy for the teachers here to focus on the HSC and forget some of the other things in terms of taking those results with any sense of seriousness' P 7	students is not expected to be the same as the growth from the lower ability or the lower achieving students but I still think you can ask the question' ( P 7)
Princ. And Crm Co-ord. look for common problems from data across KLA, groups KLA Co-ord. together for the accountability conversation after Co-ord. have analysed RAP P 1	'The curriculum coordinator and I interview a group of heads of department rather than one on one and we give them a series of questions, they have to go and do a data analysis of their results, we give them the RAP analysis, they have access to that so they can actually go hone in on particular questions. What we found was that there were some commonalities around kids who weren't able to do some extended response questions very well, kids - and literacy was a big part of HSC and numeracy was.... Any question that had stats in it, our kids did badly in it regardless of the faculty' P 1	To develop cross fertilisation in pedagogies to address common KLA problems P 1	'But at the same time we also asked them from their own point of view what can they do, so we as a group - so I might have had an English person sitting with a drama person sitting with a geography person. English person might say actually this year to boost band 6 results in our extended response we're going to do X. Geography person says that'd be really good for us too, I might have a chat with you later about how you do that. So we started to do some cross-fertilisation of strategies because what we were finding - I spoke to the coordinators.... You can come and keep thinking about what you can do differently or you might come to a meeting with a different faculty head and you might learn some other strategies that work in other departments that may springboard your thinking, so they said actually that's not a bad idea and we'll get over the issues about how badly or well my kids have done and how we feel and maybe we can use it as a bit of a learning opportunity' P 1	Principals try different strategies to open up KLA Co-ord. thinking. They use cross disciplinary techniques in groups of KLA Coordinators meeting together and sharing the patterns that they each see from their data ( P 1).
Engages an external consultant to gather data and analyse P 1	'...having a look at our data gathering a student profile, looking at the weaknesses of our kids, interviewing staff as well, and saying what's difficult here - what's challenging for you as curriculum leaders, and what needs to happen at an exec level? Then gathering all that, feeding it back to	To establish and enact plans from the data because of unfavourable results, the consequence of not 'anything –	'...putting some people together and saying okay, we've got to make this happen for next year, and literacy and numeracy being two areas of weakness - staff know that. That's been the consequence [unfavourable results, declining enrolments, staff	Principals engage outside personnel, sometimes for the SS and sometimes independent, to gather data and analyse it and then present to the staff. The reasons for the external data gather- analyst were varied; one was the unfavourable results (P 1) and the

	<p>them, putting some people together and saying okay.... So she interviewed about maybe 30 per cent of my staff, and then she was...and she looked at all my data - my NAPLAN data over the few years.. and my HSC data over the last few years, and my DeCorcey data' P 1</p> <p>'I've asked [SS] to come in and do it because I actually think he can be a bit more no holds barred, say what needs to be said, leave and you don't have to be around and do the personal stuff' P 7</p>	<p>disastrous- and staff know that' P 1</p> <p>External says what needs to be said; perceives not enough being done with more able students – uses Martin's research for justification..</p>	<p>redundancies] that we've been able to put together something in place for next year. The consequence of not doing anything - disastrous, and staff know that... as a group, has been a powerful way to change. ... Then, as a result of the data, we were then able to very clearly articulate to staff one year [unclear] cohort, but the consistent pattern of negative growth in terms of literacy we've got to take responsibility for that...'P 1</p> <p>'I don't think we're doing enough for the more able girls. I think that we're losing them in 9 and 10 somewhere, and I know that that's statistically from Andrew Martin's research at Sydney Uni. He said that's where they do lose motivation and all the rest. But we're not picking them back up in the way that we should be. .. Martin's research would say that girls come back in Year 11, should bounce back. I don't think ours are bouncing back as well as they should because boys tend not to' P 7</p>	<p>other was because the more able students were not performing (P 7) - also uses empirical research Martin's of 'picking up' students in later years. The external person can come in and then go and allows the principal to 'pick up the personal stuff' (P 7).</p>
<p>Slow to move on certain change processes if there may be staff resistance P 1 P 7; constantly having conversations with them testing out the waters with some key people on staff' P 1. Focuses on building community rather than results P 6</p>	<p>'Sensitive to where staff are and have been and perhaps what their expectations were in the past, which if different to mine I have to be careful' P 1</p> <p>Interview 1: 'I'm impatient but you've got to take it at a pace at which your staff can move if they've already got a staff offside P 7</p> <p>Interview 2: Yes it's about getting people on board. Bringing them, walking slowly with them at times to get them to understand new things. Helping them to understand, to learn about it and I suppose you try to give them</p>	<p>New principal and different expectations and style of leadership about previous principals and credibility not built P 1; P 6</p>	<p>'...Perhaps different style of leadership with different expectations ...but I suppose there's that credibility factor for me to too so I'm still a new principal and new to the school...and not wanting to push them too quickly and therefore losing trust in me' P 1.</p> <p>'I spent more time in - see, I suppose the principal, when you first come into the job, well firstly, the first year or so, you are just learning the job. It's damn hard. It's so big. You don't - everyone is watching to see whether you've got any</p>	<p>Principals in their first years and also if new to the SS acknowledge the importance of building credibility with staff. Some see that they need to establish credibility before acting on their accountability responsibilities, with some building community ( P 6) and others establishing relationships (P 7), making sure trust is not lost ( P 1)</p>

	<p>the tools so that they can understand what you're trying to achieve and so that they can have the capacity to get on board with it and feel that it's something that has, I suppose, adds value to their own repertoire as a teacher' P 7</p> <p>'I focussed on things that I thought in my first years were easy things to focus on and the two things was one, was to build community, because I felt there was an issue in the school on the staff about how we treated each other and two, was looking at enrolments, in particular. So, after my first two years as principal, we took in the largest enrolment into Year 7 and the following year' P 6</p>		<p>credibility. It's damn hard. It's so big...you are still a P plate principal and you are learning the ropes' P 6</p>	
Reviews practices of their leadership strategies in the first years and thinks would start earlier P 6	'I suppose if I went to another school, I would probably start it a lot earlier' P 6	Would have grown the leadership team earlier P 6	'But then after that first year, I then focussed on other things and really now - and I probably, on reflection, could have done this a little bit earlier. But I am in a position now where I feel very strongly that - I also built a team. We have nine on my leadership team. I quite purposefully grew my leadership team because I felt that if you are going to be collaborative and delegate the leadership, then you've got to have people to delegate to' P 6	Reflect on the strategies they used in their early years at the school. Some reflect that they 'could have done this a little bit earlier'. Connected with this idea of acting earlier they also spoke about how their trust and credibility had grown. Signs that credibility had grown were that enrolments had increased, staff changed their thinking and were willing to engage in new practices and (P 1; P 2 and P 11).
Initiates and aligns learning programs with data				
Project based learning implemented, embedded in a school wide pedagogy – if done well should be reflected in results – P 7	'So when I look at project based learning in Year 9 and Year 10 in particular and saying, well, that should be developing in our girls' thinking skills, ability to work cooperatively, collaboratively, to think globally, to do all those sorts of things, then if they've learnt that in 9 and 10 they're already thinking critically, and [unclear] writing, then when	Chooses programs such as project based learning because learning is more than the band sixes – it is all the other opportunities – believes students should have a variety of	'Need a vision for learning; 'because I do like to be very hands on with the learning'.... Yeah, okay, band sixes are important but it's more important that they're all getting the best that they can get....That's not just about results, is it? I mean, learning is about everything else that's happening in the school as well, all	Holding a vision for learning which enacted through a school wide pedagogy is important to be able to articulate this to parents when they may looking for performance results P

	<p>they get to 11 and 12 if you're doing the right things that should reflect in their results .... But now I look at the Year 12s this year and I would be very disappointed if they didn't do well because they are collectively an intelligent bunch, they've had a lot of rich experiences of learning in the classroom and outside the classroom' P 7...</p> <p>Interview 2: 'But our sharing that [school wide vision] so we, having a school wide pedagogy, having a school wide vision for learning and being able to say to parents and I suppose the community as a whole - this is the way that we see learning here and what we consider to be important. So when I'm talking about the big picture I mean pedagogical approaches and things like that. So for example, we use project based learning P 7</p>	<p>experiences. Having a vision for learning or a school wide pedagogical approach is important to be able to say to the parents this is what we consider as important- helps alleviate possible expectations form parents P 7</p>	<p>the other opportunities that the girls get to learn and to grow and get experience in a variety of things' P 7.</p>	
Aligns rich learning initiatives with results which also needs monitoring that this is happening P 7	<p>'I suppose deep down inside I believe if there's rich authentic learning the results will follow, and I think as long as you're monitoring so that that's not a fairy land, that it is actually happening' P 7</p>	<p>Justifies that good learning brings results</p>	<p>'So when I look at project based learning in Year 9 and Year 10 in particular and saying, well, that should be developing in our girls' thinking skills, ability to work cooperatively, collaboratively, to think globally, to do all those sorts of things, then if they've learnt that in 9 and 10 they're already thinking critically, and [unclear] writing, then when they get to 11 and 12 if you're doing the right things that should reflect in their results' P 7</p>	<p>Belief that rich learning will actually produce favourable performance results – this view is tempered with the importance of monitoring that this is actually happening 'not fairyland' (P 7)</p>
Aligns big picture thinking about learning with the the SS plans. Esteems formative assessment (over summative) yet sees formative in	<p>'[in response to the diocesan strategic plan] So there would be big projects around the enquiry cycle. The big one for us is getting to the notion that the whole formative assessment push which we have is far bigger than just measuring kids' learning or responding to kids' need. It's ultimately a</p>	<p>SS encourages staff to get to the big ideas – for example assessment is 'a big idea'. Holds the view that assessment is an important part of the learning cycle – for</p>	<p>'So the notion of getting to big ideas, I think, is really important, and I think we're being encouraged to get the big ideas ... Assessment is really a measure of how effective you are as a teacher. In a school where assessment is two tasks separated by a term, sometimes with</p>	<p>Principals recognise that the SS also has a big picture thinking approach (SS 2) and are happy to align their big thinking projects with it. One example of such project is the way formative assessment is thought about and used (P 11)</p>

broad terms. Sees formative as not just measuring student learning and responding but also a measure of what students need and then what needs do staff have because of the needs	measure of what kids need, and therefore what sort of professional learning do our teachers need to deliver that, fill in the gap, giving it a go, and continuing' P 11	students and teachers. Assessment needs to be used for feedback for students- recognizes the staff have a long way to go here	very little feedback, that get added together to make a mark that gets turned into a grade on a report, we've come a long way, but we've got a long way to go' P 11
First years as a principal focus is not on performance results rather on three important areas (that matter); formative approach to assessment, the expert teacher, a team project P 11	[When asked about their approach in their first years as principal] 'I would do just exactly what I've done in the two occasions when I've walked into a new setting... I would pick the three most important things that I believe are central to the way we run schools now, and I would just push them. They are our formative approach to assessment, and the expert teacher rather than the experienced teacher who's just trotting around the same thing, and a bias for action, not necessarily innovation, because lots of innovation is bad, but a bias for things that we know that work in similar settings. I would encourage every team to have a project, to have an improvement project that's based on informed understanding of a particular need. Once you toss out that notion, and you say, I just don't accept, and we can't accept, that if we haven't looked outside for ten years, or haven't read a journal for the last ten years - so you've stopped thinking. Get in a car, drive down the road, and have a look how its done' P 11	Confidence in own ways of seeing leadership in the first years of principalship due to empirical evidence P 11	'Get someone new in, a fresh set of eyes, because you can't turn the school around without fresh leadership ... Similarly, what makes an effective principal from the KLA's view? It's all out there, and it's not just someone's ramblings. It's based on observation' P 11
Has implemented some 'good' projects	'...so we have done some really good things in this school to make learning real' P 8	Sees that results 'between 35 and 40 per cent above state average' are attributed	'So we've gone through, you know we'll probably have somewhere between 35 and 40 per cent above state average. So we have done some really good things in
		Principals identify relationships between learning projects and university placements. Principals believe that good learning projects	

to make real learning P 8	to the work the staff have done with real learning. Esteems another outcome of being above state average brings opportunity for university; sees the opportunity as best PC P 8	this school to make learning real. .... With that has come more boys and girls have the opportunity for university and probably an argument that I would put to staff in terms of pastoral care, that's some of the best pastoral care you can do for them to give them an opportunity in life' P 8	lead to real learning which in turn leads to above state average results. Opportunities to university occur because of these results. Principals then link the opportunity to University as the best form of pastoral care for students (P 8)	
Maintains alternate learning programs – i.e. lap top program P 7	'Our girls do a program called High Results, which is I suppose partly leadership development but it's also encouraging those critical thinking, global awareness sorts of issues. .. Then when we look at our college leaders it's quite interesting, they've all done it when they've come through' P 7	Knows (through their first hand – teaching experience) that learning programs (not necessarily focussed on performance results) does not hinder results but improves the results. Believes that learning should be 'about learning and not the number on the page' P 7	'But yeah, there is always that little tension there that you think learning should be about learning, not about the number on the page. But the reality is that [unclear] were measured by and probably that was more a tension at my last school than it was here and that was because I was the one challenging them to do things differently because I was with them with the laptop rollout. Their big fear was what happens if our results fall down after this laptop business, because they were convinced that they were. So I taught Year 9 RE with my teachers there because I knew that otherwise I would be told this is just rubbish and it doesn't work. They weren't quite so [unclear] because I was doing it too. So I was experiencing all the frustrations that technology does with them, but also able to show them what my kids were doing and what they were learning and how it was impacting on them. Well, the results that those girls - because they would have finished Year 12 at Cronulla last year and I was able to have a little look at their results and they	Efficacy that learning is about learning and not performance results due to past experiences of learning and getting results P 7

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			did very well, very, very well actually' P 7	
Identifies and implements a variety of key strategies to improve learning [and performance results in this case] P 6	'These are the key strategies not just what we are doing, but how effective we are and designing and developing quality programs, lessons and assessments, setting targets, using data to inform practice, providing quality feedback and committing ourselves to continuous learning of new skills, as we aim at helping all students learn. That's our moral imperative" P6	Knows the effectiveness of the key strategies in improving learning...sees the implementation of these key strategies as their moral imperative to improve learning [really results in this case] P 6	'...as we aim at helping all students learn. ...That's our moral imperative' P6	Sharp clarity around what improves learning; knowing the effectiveness of lessons and assessments, setting targets, using data to inform practice, providing quality feedback and committing ourselves to continuous learning of new skills...yet this participant already states that their moral imperative is to improve performance results (P 6)
Holds parent sessions to educate about project based programs – to ward off expectations of testing from parents P 7	'One of the best things we've done, both in terms of our e-learning and our project based learning is to have some sessions for the Year 7 parents.... Not big sessions but small group sessions. So we run those through the first couple of terms of Year 7 and so we had sessions on - this year we've got iPads in Year 7 so it was your daughter's iPad. ... this year we introduced the ones on project based learning because they've had two sets of information on it where you've got a couple of hundred people. Then we enabled them to come in and we've had far fewer concerns expressed from parents of Year 7s this year because the concerned parents came to those meetings and they were taught - they did project learning themselves so that was a bit of hands on learning. So they understood what it was and how it was supposed to benefit their daughter' P 7	Parents discontent because there is not enough testing.. parents see that testing is a learning tool- principal knows parental expectations and educates them differently P 7	'So this was a dad, an [culture] father who's taking his daughter to go to a [Xxxx] school up the road where he thinks they will have more focus on the core subjects, English, maths and science, than we do here. He didn't read the documents very well before he sent her here because we would say we were looking at the whole person. [Religion] schools do. He was saying to me well you don't test them enough. You don't do enough tests, that's what's wrong. So the feedback from parents comes in a variety of forms .....' P 7	Principal hold their beliefs (and actions) when parental expectations are not met e.g. testing, and the threat of losing a student enrolment. Instead principals educate parents of the importance of certain learning over performance results and that certain learning projects can also bring about favourable performance results (P 7)
Checks parent learning	'It's quite interesting when you ask the question and you get a mixed response. You think okay well then they're not understanding what we're trying to do and why we're trying to do it, so it's then a matter			

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	of getting that information to parents. So we've used that means of survey tool as a means of assessing parents understanding of the learning' P7			
Articulates vision for learning however performance growth and results not part of the agenda P 4	<p>'I think I'm at my best when I can articulate that well, engage staff and kids in the movements towards that vision for learning by doing practical things.... because if a community can articulate clearly it's principles of authentic learning to use your phrase, then it then aligns with a lot of other processes in the school...' P 4</p> <p>Fac: Does accountability, the accountabilities for learning, performance growth or performance results factor into it anywhere?</p> <p>P 4: Oh yes, but obviously not high on the agenda if I didn't mention it first off P 4</p>	Belief that too much of a heavy focus on NAPLAN and HSC results narrows learning...however recognises that if the results were a 'real concern' then the focus would need to be on improving HSC results P 4	'As I see the school at the moment things are going well, there is improvement, there are good results, then the improvement is around the common vision and the implementation of the new directions, particularly around Australian curriculum. If on the other hand I was in a position where the HSC results were a real concern, then I think Blind Freddy sees that the nature of improvement needs to be around HSC results. That would be a focus of my leadership of learning about how are we getting that improvement.... learning's a lot bigger than the HSC and NAPLAN. If you're so focussed on the HSC results and NAPLAN you're driven to see the learning as fairly narrow' P 4	Principals see that focussing on HSC and NAPLAN results is a narrow driven vision of learning. However if the results were unfavourable then the nature of the improvement needs to be ofucusse don't he resylts P 4* *Axial – NP school
Aligns learning initiatives with reform agenda for NP outcomes. Asks the question what is the best for our kids here? P 4	'The reform agenda is what's driving SSNP and the reform agenda has a number of accountabilities. off the top of my head, one that's timely for us at the moment is the provision of tailored and innovative learning opportunities for students. ... let's think about what's the best approach to learning for our students that's tailored for the kids' P 4	NP funding	'To get tailored and innovative learning [TIL] what we've done is used the financial resource to employ additional teachers in the school... Those additional teachers have then had a load created for them that's reduced the teaching load, the face-to-face teaching load of about 30 middle managers in the school so they're down a class or down a part of their load' P 4	NP funding used for innovative school wide pedagogies – in practical terms staff are given reduced loading to implement the school wide learning. The interventions are seen as positive as the funding allowed new ways of approaching a school wide pedagogy ( P 4)
Seeks to understand (tackle) and deal with some of the questions around PBL at the	'I haven't seen addressed in the whole problem based learning model (PBL). I think what they are doing is good. But I'd like to tackle this issue. Now, whether you create a group and then you break the group up into	Reluctant to use project based learning – concern that it will bring the desired results P 6	'...so if they don't perform well in the Year 8 RE test or if they don't perform well in NAPLAN or if they don't perform well in the HSC, they're our measurements... because we've used	Principal uses the concepts of project based learning and problem based learning interchangeably – wrestles with the tension between trying new pedagogies i.e. PBL and maintaining

same time as driving perf. results P 6	<p>small projects and I'm in charge of a project group of 20, 15 kids, similar to a class that would be the model that I'd be...’ P 6</p> <p>Fac: So they do problem based learning and large groups?</p> <p>P6 : They do large and what they do is the teachers come in and I might be the expert maths teacher, so everyone this is what maths happens or English and then the history teacher does the history’ P 6</p>	project based learning, then it's a reason to say well, one, the moral imperative’ P 6	<p>results. Questions whether PBL will deliver the desirable performance results – if not then the moral imperative (of results giving students the best possible chance in life) will be returned to in terms of their belief (P 6)</p> <p>Axial - This principal uses target setting, up to this point, for getting favourable results. It is their lead strategy in responding to accountability. Not clear about learning – leading learning is form a base of target setting not an understanding of learning P 6</p>	
Works with SS and uses their skills as a tool for improvement; not as an authority to account to P 7	<p>‘.. - when they came out to do our results, to look at it. They said oh look we're concerned about this area and I said fabulous, now I'm concerned about this area. Could I have somebody from the office come out and work with this co-ordinator to look at - they identified science. I identified maths - girls' school, not surprising. But of concern to me was - our girls did very well in general maths but mathematics the co-ordinator was very happy with and my frustration was, well she's saying look we got band sixes. We did really well. I said but have you looked at where we are compared to everybody else....I don't think they're as good as you are. Are the girls in the right course? Are they taking two unit because you're saying to them it's a great course and all that or is that what they should be doing? Should they be doing general, should they - so I asked the experts then to come in from outside and to have that conversation. So that's when I'm saying use the system as a tool. They're</p>	<p>Sees their responsibility as being a leader of learning – this is to the students – not the SS. The responsibility described as ‘That we're sending them out - I mean we've got our vision and we're sending them out to be who we say they're going to be and to make a difference out there in the world. Then that's not achieved just by excellent numbers on the page’ Sees this as their moral imperative P 7</p>	<p>‘I know they [SS] pay the bills but no the responsibility to be a leader of learning is with I think within your school community, to the girls, to the students. The accountabilities are certainly there with this system. I suppose I would say morally I feel responsibility for the girls to ensure that we're doing the best that we can for the girls. That we're sending them out - I mean we've got our vision and we're sending them out to be who we say they're going to be and to make a difference out there in the world. Then that's not achieved just by excellent numbers on the page. That we're talking about the whole person and so I would see that that's my moral imperative if you like ... If the numbers were very bad then I would have to say well what are we doing wrong. But I wouldn't need the system to be over my shoulder to be</p>	<p>SS is not seen as an authority to account to rather one that is there for support – ‘a tool’. Has own internal locus of control. The authority of the account is to the students and also to what the principals and staff claim they will do for learning P 7</p> <p>Axial- P 7- second principalship- hands on leader of learning</p>

	resources, so they're resource people so they will trot away and have a look at the data themselves. Come back in, sit down with the co-ordinator and say, this is what we've seen. They ask me then can they get into our RAP analysis on the Board [BoS] site' P 7		doing that and more inclined to use the system as a tool than anything else' P 7	
Adopts (as opposed to adopts or puts off) SS learning programs eg RAMP	'RAMP's a perfect example of that [other internal evidence systems – i.e. PAT analysis]. You have to do pre-test, post-tests' P 2	SS required schools to adopt the program due to numeracy results	'We were told we had to come on board... this was every - every school in the diocese has got to be part of RAMP within two years. So that was imposed on us straight away. [due to ] 'concerns about numeracy' P 2	At times some principals adopted SS learning programs because they thought they were obligated to. These caused stress especially when the principal was held accountable to the outcomes of the program in performance results. At times the internal resistance problems with staff made the program difficult to be implemented in the ways the SS would expect. These problems along with the account to the SS created stress for the principal. One principal needed to step in and be more hands on in their management than they wanted' (P 2)* *Axial – early career principal – also anxious about PRP – views about leadership – 'not the at the centre'
Aligns SS learning initiatives that align with own - uses the filtering system	So there it's not so much about let's take this next initiative and obediently bolt it on to what we are doing here, but rather saying, well what's the intention of that system initiative? How does that align with what we are already doing here? How can we leverage what's on offer in terms of resources, human resources and financial resources and other resources, how can we leverage that to get behind and to drive the direction that we are already heading strategically in this or that initiative which is	Knows the importance of seeing the SS programs as stress relieving rather stress inducing – knows that the SS does not want this either and reasons that the SS models this kind of filtering in their own (SS) actions with the Oz government P 3	'It's stress relieving that's supportive rather than stress inducing because it's what not - the bad way is yet another thing to do, another imposition, another answering to yet another master ..... They [SS] make a suggestion which is a guide, just a guide and a template. P 3 .....The system doesn't want you to take it up lock, stock and barrel. There's no one who's better at being a bulwark against the system than the system itself against government intervention. The	Comfortable in aligning SS learning programs with own – when using a filtering system. Principal thinks that the SS would not want them to take on programs without aligning to their own initiatives because this is how the system works as well (with government) P 3

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	part of our plan and which matches what the system is doing?... but we need to filter what we hear at the system level, be faithful to it in as much as we can say honestly with hand on heart, this is how that programme is being enacted in this place, but we do it in a way which suits the needs of this place. P3		system is brilliant at taking Federal Government interventions and then being the human shield for the principals in taking those accountabilities, getting the money for them, then explaining to government how the system is implementing changes to address government's agenda.... So they cleverly are not reinventing the wheel. They are adapting and absorbing the Government's agenda into what's already happening....  They are doing at a larger level what we're trying to do here.... The system is brilliant at it. They are masters at it. So we are only trying to do what they have taught us to do well' P 3	
Aligns all aspects of pedagogy with the SS plans P 13	'Hence, our pedagogy, our assessments, all of the teaching side of what we do, I'm thinking is aligned to the school, the system around that' P 13	Sees the alignment with the SS plans as more their accountability than to other schools – comparisons and ranking around this P 13	'So that's important. That counts and we are accountable to the system. We're not necessarily accountable to the other schools as a measuring stick around it. It's like, well, this school is doing better than that school [not similar to understandings about learning] ... I don't see it as - it's not as important that the outcome, the results, the HSC results that we get here have to be better than the HSC results at one of the other schools. I don't - I'm not judging my students and my school and my staff on that criteria' P 13	Principal aligns their programs with the SS plans because this is where they need to account for their school not their rankings in results compared to other schools (P 13)*.  *Axial – HSS- high ESL – results reasonable for local region – deputy in pastoral for 10 years- deputy to a principal who had strengths in curriculum
Let SS know they have it wrong in their analysis of HSC results P 3	'When [SS advisor] said, wrote to me at the start of the year and said, we've had a look at the HSC results and this is where we think you need support' P 3	Sees this as poor leadership in following SS direction when they view the SS as wrong P 3	'I think it would have been poor leadership for us to say, yes [SS advisor], no [SS advisor], three bags full [SS advisor], we will go in the direction you need P 3	Principal hold firm to their beliefs and actions in interpreting and enacting on plans for HSC analysis – irrespective of SS interpretations. Following the SS advice the principal in this instance views this as poor leadership (P 3)

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Adopts SS learning programs as a means of accountability and in their role as leader of learning makes sure everyone 'is on board' and be seen to be part of the project P 2	'You can support projects - I might use the Newman Stream as a good example there.... I was very much in the early part of setting that up in the school. made sure that I had somebody who was going to head that particular program in the school because I 1.don't have the time to run every single project in the school. I think one of the things you do as a leader of learning is you make sure that everybody is on board with it to start with. .... I've got to be seen to be part of the meeting, as I was this morning' P 2	Yet cannot be in everything P 2	'I guess when you're leading learning you can't be - you're in a position as a principal, you can't be in the middle of everything that's going on' P 2	When leading learning – through SS programs that are accountable there is a difficulty because principal feels that they are accountable yet they cannot be in every single project in the school. Some principals involve themselves in particular programs (e.g. P 2 with G and T) and then cannot stretch to other programs i.e. RAMP–(which held considerable staffing problems) (P 2*). Axial* - early career principal – PPP same year
Learning focus – a year of basics, that is literacy and numeracy – nominated coordinators share the action plan to staff P 1	'So I said we're going to have a year of basics - we're going to streamline our process,... my two coordinators are sharing with the staff their action plan for next year' P 1 .	To improve areas of need in numeracy and literacy – in the short term sees that this is what is needed to improve results	'we're going to go focus on improving literacy and improving numeracy in the areas that our kids need' P 1	Principal decides that there is an immediate intervention and yet short term (12 mos) to just focus on the basics i.e. literacy and numeracy (P 1*) Axial* decreasing enrolments and redundancies P 1
New pedagogical framework P 6	'But we are just about to publish our school wide pedagogical statement' P 6	All aspects of learning will stem from the new pedagogical framework People coming to the school will know what [the school] is about...sense that the new staff need to 'fit in' P 6	'Once we do that, everything will stem from that. This is what learning is like at Marist Eastwood and so when someone is new to the school, that's the first thing you know you are going to be asked. That is what we are on about. If you come from another school, you need to familiarise with us, because this is what learning is like here' P 6	Principal uses school wide frameworks to place expectations on staff to 'fit in' and to use this as a foundation that all aspects of the school come from this (P 6*) Axial* – describes self as bulldozer-pushes for performance results although knows it is not quality education
Staff meetings –for next 12 months set aside for professional learning focussed on data from NAPLAN – aligned to the goal of the year of basics P 1	'Every staff development day has already been identified next year for what purpose' P 1	Poor results in NAPLAN, lowered enrolments – staff redundancies P 1	'...and our results are not going anywhere' P 1	Principal recognises that staff redundancies are occurring through enrolment leakage which in turn stem from performance results. When this occurs principals place in short term and immediate measures (i.e. all professional learning days for the year

Implements a 3 tiered reading system and tests whether the system is working P 1	'We're looking at the literacy team taking through that whole three level tier. - and working on vocab and all that sort of stuff, and that will be evidence in the programme...' And we'll be measuring the kids . we'll do some testing at the beginning and end of the year... P 1	To see whether they have 'grown them' – that is to evaluate whether the intervention has worked and students have learned; which is broader than NAPLAN data – looking for richer skill development than the skills in NAPLAN P 1	'And we'll be measuring the kids . we'll do some testing at the beginning and end of the year...and we'll see if we have picked them up and whether we've grown them in terms of their learning (P1)	targetted on literacy and numeracy) to rectify the situation – a year of basics – to fix the short term problem. A the same time other longer term interventions – through other types of measurement occurs (P 1)  Principals use their own evidence systems apart from the NAPLAN data and the HSC data. They use other measuring tools which measure other skill development (not found in NAPLAN) and evaluate whether students have grown in the outcomes from these instruments (P 1*)  Axial*- describes themselves as a pedagogical leader and believes they were employed because of their expertise as a pedagogical leader – performance results were down and enrolment leakage – staff redundancies
Manages changes strategically and sees that they themselves are accountable for this strategic management P 4	'I think the other thing is that I'd say in terms of my accountabilities is to ensure that change to learning and changes are managed well and that the schools response to requirements for change and accountability are managed well and strategically and resourced correctly. As change happens with the Australian curriculum..... do it well and do it methodically, strategically' P 4	So that teachers can implement properly major curriculum changes properly P 4	'as much as possible teachers have the resources, particularly at the time to do it properly P4	Interestingly principals determine their own self accountability on the degree of strategically managing large change processes i.e. as the national curriculum. The ways they would determine their effectiveness of such management are whether teachers can implement properly ( P 4*)  Axial* - builds a sense making culture – not overly focussed on performance results – does not see SS as a pressure – 'light touch really' P 4
Initiates target setting for students instead of	'We're, on Friday night we'll have parents in and we'll explain to them a process of target	Believes certain schools achieve high results	'Not to put too fine a point on it they have a better quality DNA pool from	Principal who believe that students cannot perform better than they are

global expectations in performance results P 3

setting for their [students] which will take place on .... where we bring them in and we'll set a target for every student seven to 12 for every subject from, as an A to E grade' P3

because of the type of student 'others have a better quality DNA pool' they attract P 3

which they draw so you're going to get brighter kids to start with. ...So you get decent results....Well I think it is genetic to some degree but also other factors which are known to advantage students are there as well....Books in the home, educated parents, parents who are aspirational for educational success....and that is that in Australia your wealth is an absolute determiner of your success at school....The wealthier you are the better you will do. We always suspected that but I think the NAPLAN data nationally proves that.... Because I believe - call me a cynic - but I believe most principals who have improved HSC results have done it because they began, they might have made some cosmetic improvements to improve the culture of a place which is a starting point, but then further improvement to student results comes because they need better students, they cherry pick P 3

Previous school cherry picking occurred; judges that all principals cherry pick

Initially when I came here, because I thought, I came here from Lewisham where that was our modus operandi. Absolutely because that's what everybody says. Once you get more students and you're oversubscribed then you can pick and choose and then you know you'll attract better quality students' P 3

'...but then further improvement to student results comes because they need better students, they cherry pick...'

'Then the My School website, despite the fact that the ICSEA is some attempt

now is because of what is in their DNA and family circumstances i.e. parents education or the ways that they may be educated in the home – e.g. books. This belief influences the expectations the principal has with regard to their expectations of the students – they do not make their expectations on number of bands known internally rather they make their expectations known in terms of the student meeting their target. However interestingly enough the principal records their results externally in terms of the number of bands not how many students achieved their personal target (P 3\*)

Axial\* - the same principal sees that the SS will say that they are only interested in learning growth yet their public rhetoric to the community is about achievement in terms of performance results – this principal appears to mirror the SS internal and external actions

<p>Needs [self and leadership team] to be self-reflective in managing accountability: Set targets, need to use data work collaboratively ; design and deliver programs 9patters this out decisively and almost aggressively P 6</p>	<p>'So we need to be self-reflective. We need to set targets. We need to use data. We need to work collaboratively. We need to design and deliver programs, lessons, assessments of highest quality' P 6</p>	<p>Students deserve the best possible chance in attaining the best performance results. Sees this as a moral imperative...links to literature that supports the idea that there is a moral imperative in giving students the best possible chance P 6</p>	<p>'They deserve it. Call it a moral imperative, whatever you want to call it. Literature is full of that stuff. But I think that's the power and that's what I'm trying to do with my staff, is to say we've got to give these kids the best possible chance and that's the reasons why we are doing it, full stop' P 6</p>	<p>Principal appears non-negotiating in their assertions that working towards performance results is a moral imperative that gives students the best possible chance. They explain that there is a plethora of literature about the moral imperative(P 6*) Axial* - uses the moral imperative as an argument of persuasion with staff who may be resist in working towards performance results</p>
<p>Utilises the system's access to data P 10</p>	<p>'Utilise system with their data accessing measures and try and minimise your personal expenditure of time effort and energy on that, around focussing on responding to accountability, utilise that data and the evidence that comes from that is good' P 10</p>	<p>Uses SS ways of accessing data to minimise accountability and keep the focus on the bigger picture of learning P 10</p>	<p>'minimise your personal expenditure ...but don't lose sight of the bigger picture, which is about learning' P 10</p>	<p>Principals use the SS as a tool for them to provide information on data rather than the staff spend hours on data analysis – principals use opportunities creatively i.e. the SS data analyses so that they remain true to their own goals (P 10)*</p>

Against MySchool website comparing schools and staff

to compare apples with apples they didn't remove the boxes of red lights and green lights. The green colours performing above the ICSE group and red colours performing below the ICSE group. That's ultimately all about naming and shaming and...Yeah, because that will drive the market...it punishes and then you create low morale in a place which then creates greater residualism and that ultimately doesn't do anybody any good...That's certainly the intention, but when you overlay that intention [NAPLAN for diagnostic purposes] with such a powerful rhetoric as the comparison of staff all the diagnostic stuff gets lost' P 3

Will not cherry pick students in response to accountability P 3	'Of course you will (attain favourable performance results) if you can pick and choose. But no, that's not what I want to do' P3	Religious beliefs, cultural issues - boys tribalism affords a sense of pride P 3	'...because here I come in, like I believe that charism, in a Catholic school the charism of the school you're in is a really significant, it's something really significant that, it's a set of values that there's a story to tell and a way to understand the gospel and a group to belong to. We go on about being Patrician here until the cows come home because it makes us, it's our point of difference, it makes us distinctive, it makes us proud and it's pretty tribal and boys like tribal, you know.... We'll take the first boy who comes, it doesn't matter if he's Catholic or Callithumpian, we've got the highest non-Catholic student population in the archdiocese alongside Marist North Shore' P 3	Axial* – not swayed by public image – or enrolments – empirical understandings of learning – knew there was a deficit in their understandings about learning to be effective in leading learning – irrespective if there was a public account of performance results – had bigger issues going on – i.e. a lack of focus on learning – structures did not support this .  High level of competition just too much P 3*  Axial *influenced principals thinking so much –residualism cherry picking – made sense of the competition by aligning their thinking to leaders in Ofsted – filter, buffer
Changes school structures and/or processes sensitive to accountability expectations				
Collected Year 6 data, other than NAPLAN P 2	'So what we did last year, was that - we normally - what would normally happen is that, as the Principal, I would be taking the Year Coordinator for the next year with me, and we'd go and visit each of our feeder	Concerned that Year 6 student data was not going to the teachers who need it – generated	[Under the spotlight for Year 7 NAPLAN results...so collected data....] 'But the information [year 6 student	As pressure grew for using Year 5 NAPALN data and there was staff resistance in using it – the pricno9pla generated their own data that seemed more acceptable and palatable for

	<p>primary schools.... But what we did is we did it in a much more targeted way this year. So we had a series - so rather than tell me everything about Mary Jane. Okay. We had certain - we created a bit of a pro forma for a database. It was in all sorts of areas. We initially put in their NAPLAN results, their [unclear] results, and then we found out from their teachers, their learning styles. What intervention they'd had in terms of ESL, and gifted and talented?... But what we wanted to make sure is that people knew something about their kids, as they walked in the door' P 2</p>	<p>their own data for increased ownership P 2</p>	<p>data] was never getting to the people that it needed to' P 2</p>	<p>staff. Some of the data was learning styles, interventions students with special needs – gifted and talented. They also made a student data base with this information (P 2).</p>
<p>Focuses on the curriculum – no excursions, when performance results are below benchmark P 14</p>	<p>'But, there'd been a push right across the curriculum, like no excursions' P 14-</p>	<p>Results are below benchmark</p>	<p>'So it was really just to focus in on their last term of school and to do revision and things like that' P 14</p>	<p>Where results are below the state average principals concentrate and 'push' curriculum and minimise other learning experiences i.e. excursions and sporting events (P 14*)</p> <p>Axial*: acknowledges that learning is a weak area and needs to catch up ...also wonders if they ever will P 14 - --interestingly this principal does not see excursions a learning experience – and does not have a sense of confidence about leading learning</p>
<p>Staff restructures Leaders of Pedagogy (LoP) installed</p>	<p>'So we decided that the subject coordinators would split in two' P 1</p> <p>So the LOPs, the Leaders of Pedagogy which was the lead strategy of the system were employed in late 2010 and at that time, late 2010, there was, I believe, a clear perception in the system P 3</p> <p>'One of the first initiatives, and this was placed on schools, was that in the primary schools they'd have teacher educators and in a secondary school we'd have leaders in</p>	<p>Low results in certain learning areas</p> <p>Staff confused with learning direction</p> <p>New roles charged with more of a data driven approach to learning</p> <p>SS identified certain school</p>	<p>So we said our kids are not reading well. The inferential reading needs to improve. Our kids are not scoring those high levels. They're not good at creative writing, and they're not good at numeracy.</p> <p>the staff said to me, Viv we've had too many whizz bang ideas come in,.. none of us know where we're going and our results are not going anywhere. P1</p>	<p>Principals changed certain staffing structures to attend to unfavourable results (P 1) or to respond to the national partnerships accountabilities; which in fact were one and the same. Some of these accountabilities were an initiative by the SS – such as leaders of Pedagogy (LoP). Some principals were not quite sure why the SS chose their school for NP program. However all NP were favourable</p>

	<p>pedagogy. ,,,, Our system, for example, had literacy the next step which is a very good little programme but over say 15 years so we might have had 25 people trained it. You could sort of get a couple of people trained each year. Our leaders of pedagogy have trained probably 30-40 people in two and half years' P 8</p>		<p>This diverse learning and innovation coordinator who will still teach a bit but who will be charged with more of a data driven approach to learning P1</p> <p>'Oh gees, [own school] is a very poor performing school, we've got to do stuff to improve them, and the measures that they were using were as much as anything performance on HSC and not DeCourcy Analysis' P 3</p> <p>'In hindsight I would have to say it's one of the best initiatives that our system has put in place because those two people don't have teaching classes as in a science or a maths, but they're focussed on teaching the teachers. They have made a huge difference. We have two here' P 8</p>	<p>toward the LoP – as most were working well (P 3, P 4 and P 8*).</p> <p>Axial* – context NP schools</p>
<p>School staff has gone along a journey of looking at the grades /bands or results as a target and celebrates – however there is an upper limit P 8</p>	<p>'So somewhere if we've gone along a grades journey there has to be a sort of upper limit to that journey' P 8</p>	<p>Limit to the journey – how do celebrate the plateau? P 8</p>	<p>'NAPLAN comes out shortly. The results for NAPLAN, well, I don't know what they are, so you hope at some point that the work you've been doing is successful and is evidenced in the various tables that come out. I suppose part of the challenge is, in a school like ours, there has to be an upper limit of how much growth and how much improvement you can get. I think that's a challenge. How do you celebrate that people are still working very, very hard, but maybe the grades plateaued or something because that's challenge for our community - I think it will plateau. I don't believe you can take a community like ours and make it superior to any other community, but you can just have our kids doing the best that they can' P 8</p>	<p>Principal sees the problem with setting performance results as targets as there is always going to be an upper limit – as principal this causes a problem in rallying staff to be celebrate the plateau (P 8*)</p> <p>Axial: NP school</p>

Thinking ahead as leaders – Spends a lot of time in reflection – sees it as strategic preparing for the road blocks P 8	‘You know, working out where are we going. Being part of what is current, but also being part of thinking ahead, because if we don't think ahead, we just come to the road blocks and won't have any answer for them’ P 8	Making sure the people in leadership positions have answers for the staff P 8	‘I suppose that's part of when we talk about leadership that strategic thinking is probably where I spend a fair bit of my reflection time’ P 8	Principals spends time in reflection with their leadership team to think ahead and predict and respond to staff responses to accountability, especially if the staff will be disappointed about the results, i.e. as the plateau (P 8). The principal sees this as a strategic approach (P 8). Axial: School context NP school
REFLEXITIVYT				
Monitors student lateness (P 6; P 8)	‘I have two staff every morning who sign kids in who are late to school and check on absences, because if kids are developing patterns of absences, they can't learn’ P 6	Looks for at all the small aspects of school life that may interfere with student learning; Students cannot learn if not at school P 6	‘[goes down to the small things]The mantra I give my parents, for example, is students can't learn if they are not at school’ P 6 ( P 8 school also does this)	Principals connect even their small actions with responses to accountability – checking lateness to school and absences are named (P 6).
Implemented LoP as a replacement for LT coordinator P 8	[2 x LoP place dint he school]I was very keen on a leader of learning. It actually came out a couple of years before ... nterestingly when we set up the leaders of pedagogy we made the curriculum position a curriculum of administration because we didn't need a third leader of learning in the school P 8	Saw a benefit – LoP because they already had great credibility with staff P 8	‘There was a [cyclic] review of the school and that would be something that we named that we needed someone to give direction to learning... I suppose we had a sense it was it was happening but we were already looking ourselves. So I suppose we saw it [LoP] as a benefit. Some of the frustrations initially, because we had two very experienced people come to our school, in fact they both were working here so they had great credibility amongst the staff’ P 8	Principals act when they can see a benefit for staff. Part of this benefit was dependent on the nature of the LoP's influence with staff; the LoP needed to hold credibility with staff if the role was to work – principals was going to act on a role like this anyway because the principal or ‘we’ could see it as a benefit ( P 8) Axial : principal describes themselves as leader who distributes – forms leaders to go elsewhere - needs others to do the learning bit ‘we needed someone to give direction to learning’ – places these upfront – knows that there are other people who can do it better than he
Established a nuts and bolts curriculum administration position – separated	‘We did need someone that was looking after the curriculum particularly from an administrative point of view in leading	Knows from personal professional experience that nuts and bolts in crm admin overtake	‘One of my learnings, and it's been my view for a long time, there is a need for a curriculum person who is focussed on the nuts and bolts and there is a need for	Prinicpla srecognise that more leadership is required to lead leanirng – in a holistic sense – not just crm – at the middle management level. Hence

curriculum from teaching and learning P 8	Board of Studies requirements, meeting your own reporting programmes' P 8 So we advertised for a leader of learning and curriculum, and it's a really important position. Yeah. So yeah, he takes responsibility for working with the KLA coordinators at that level and helping them to understand the data P 7	learning focus: need to have 2 roles yet need funding P 8	someone if you like to be in charge of curriculum of learning. ... Every curriculum co-ordinator, I've been one myself, starts off with great passion and it's all about teaching and learning which all goes really well until the first week and the timetables have to go out.... So the time just gets eaten up on the administration but without those administrative tasks schools wouldn't run..... if you're talking in a partnership model you can make those changes happen because you have additional funding' P 8	the installation of learning and teaching roles – with the administration of curriculum i.e. the BoS requirements left to another role Axial: NP funding allowed this to happen more smoothly Leadership formation - Own experience as a curriculum coordinator – '... Every curriculum co-ordinator, I've been one myself, starts off with great passion and it's all about teaching and learning which all goes really well until the first week and the timetables have to go out....' Also recognises that they need others to lead learning...learning is more than results P 8 Did P 8 work with P 7?
Creation of a physical space for staff in curriculum, teaching and learning; – data of student's profiles and faces on data displayed in the area; professional learning focussed on learning and teaching conducted in small groups in the area P 8	'In fact in our school we've converted one of the very small classrooms into a curriculum office and I'll take you down at the end. It has a curriculum secretary, it has the curriculum co-ordinator and, I'll call it the back half, it has the two leaders of pedagogy and within the leaders of pedagogy's space there's an electronic whiteboard and a learning space. So there's a couple of learning spaces we use, but for small team meetings - so from a schools' perspective, the curriculum led by the, for the KLAs, and the leaders of pedagogy is all one. So they're not in separate spots P 8	NP initiatives benefit learning in the school ; principal very proud of this initiative – sees that for learning to occur in response to accountability that KLA middle management people do not sit in separate spots; sees that they need to be together P 8	All of those things [NP initiatives – new positions] have been benefits to the school in terms of learning. .... So they're not in separate spots P 8	Principal excited when they can see in a tangible way a hub that focuses on teaching and learning Principals also recognises that this could not occur without the NP funding P 8
Already had implemented a learning and teaching coordinator similar to	'We were already testing it [funding a teaching and learning coordinator] , but we couldn't do it and it would probably be fair to	Not satisfactory for a learning and teaching coordinator to have classes as needed to be free of classes to help	They've had to keep the teacher on a pretty significant teaching load as such and it may even be 0.5 but there's only then the 0.5 left to be leader of learning and in a practical way you want to work	Principal stepped outside of traditional ways of structuring secondary schools to focus on wide school pedagogies –

LoP before the SS initiative P 8	say in a number of our schools that are trying it' P 8	teachers; different way of thinking about such roles as traditionally these roles would create credibility by actually teaching a class – however the appointment were form teachers within the school who held credibility P 8	with someone in a classroom you find that there's not many periods where you're off P 8	even before the implementation of the SS LoP P 8
Changed Year 7 orientation day from gathering data (testing) to one of orientation to the culture of the school P 4	Previously I always had testing [Year 7 orientation days ] in the early days of founding a school.... Here Trinity had a testing day. I've minimised the amount of testing and have more orientation into the place there P 4	Perceives that testing frightens year 7 students and does not reflect the culture of the school P 4	'I don't want the first experience of Trinity for 250 kids to be four hours of intense testing. It frightens them. It's not a good induction. It's not what we're about entirely. It doesn't reflect the culture of the school' P 4	Principal changes practices with regard to testing to reflect their beliefs about what learning is and is not (P 4*) Axial: sees leading assessment-focussed accountability as building a culture of sense making- ensuring that staff have a balance between results and learning
Reduces meeting time and introduces PLC with specific foci on learning P 3	we've reduced a considerable amount of our meeting time and we've introduced professional learning communities (PLC) and we've got specific focus on things that make a difference to students' learning' P 6 P 3 also has PLC	Everything aimed at teacher and student at the classroom level P 6	'So, everything we do is aimed at what goes on between teacher and student at the classroom level' P 6	Whole school wide professional learning is focussed on learning and teaching ( P 3; P 6).
Principal reads reports not for proofing but for underperformance P 6	'...at the end of each term, I sign all the reports and I say to my staff firstly, I don't proof the reports. I have other people who do that. I read all the reports and I sign all the reports. So what I look for is kids who are underperforming. I look for kids who have a pattern of lateness and absences. I look for kids whose personal application to learning is poor. I highlight them and they became part of discussions the following term and interviews with staff. I just sit there with the	Principal uses data to inform practice and to set targets P 6 Belief any student can receive an A for effort P 6	'That is not good enough, because he is going to underperform if this continues. So it's being proactive. Using data to inform practice and similarly with lateness, absences. So, use your key indicators and you set targets' P 6 'What is going on? Any kid can get an A in effort. So why is he a C? What is going on there?' P 6	Principal uses data to inform practices – including student report cards. Initiates parent meetings when effort is low (P 6*). Axial: describes self as bulldozing; as being salesman to sell the moral imperative of performance results; describes actions as 'driving' staff and also drives students.

	class list as I'm signing and John Bloggs, 10 days absent, all Cs in these effort columns. What is going on? Any kid can get an A in effort. So why is he a C? What is going on there? What is going on? Any kid can get an A in effort. So why is he a C? What is going on there?'			Formation: curriculum ; career trajectory – some years left – enrolled in Master of SS leadership; sees that they are judged by performance results School context: enrolments increased each year
In response to assessment-focussed accountability the principal acts out their leadership as a teacher: 'leader teacher'				
Tests staff with their mathematical confidence P 1	and we're going to test staff in their mathematical confidence, because what we've also found out is the teachers are not very comfortable teaching maths P 1	Poor numeracy results poor and recognises that part of this may be due to teacher efficacy in mathematics P 1	they're [students] not good at numeracy ....., because what we've also found out is the teachers are not very comfortable teaching maths P1	Principals recognise that teachers have deficits in terms of confidence with regard to mathematics, because the principal understands maths and teaching of such( P 1*) Axial* maths background and formation has been through curriculum. Describes self as a pedagogical leader
Teaches a maths class P 1 Teaches teachers about numeracy P 1	'I just think there's - we're trialling something different next year and I'm going to teach Year 7 and my maths staff are really keen to try this new program with us because something's got to change. In many ways some of the kids at the top who came at Year 6 level who were at the top, those kids when they're in Year 10, some of them have dropped back' P 1  'We're going to teach them.... and looking at where each of those areas can work with the maths department' P 1	To try and understand and solve puzzle about poor maths results P 1 Poor numeracy results P 1	'In many ways some of the kids at the top who came at Year 6 level who were at the top, those kids when they're in Year 10, some of them have dropped back...so something is going on ...we're just not meeting the needs of our kids in that subject' P 1	Principals wrestle with problems in specific deficit areas; they use their teaching skills to understand what might be happening for e.g. teaching a class (P 1*) Axial* maths background and formation has been through curriculum. Describes self as a pedagogical leader
Articulates empirical knowledge about pedagogy to staff P10	'Which again even three years into my tenure surprised me that people would be taken back by the use of the word pedagogy when it's inherent to what we do as teachers it's about teaching and learning' P 10	With the aim of Staff considering the principals' views about learning P 10	'As recently as last year.....,bringing pedagogy - you know a term that was seen as quite silly when I first mentioned it two years ago, is now just accepted as part of the vernacular now' P 10	In response to accountability principals focus their attention and articulate their understandings of learning and teaching to staff. In turn staff focus their attention on learning

				as well as a way to address accountability responsibilities ( P 10) Axial: principal realised that they needed to understand learning from an empirical sense if they were to lead learning with any persuasion or integrity with staff
Uses themes – instructs at assembly, morning briefing, newsletters, based on values to emphasise the importance of results. Brings in the countries that are doing well in PISA P 6	‘So that's our four themes for the year. Tomorrow we have an assembly and I'll be talking about integrity. There will be another assembly where I'll focus on learning. I've already done belief, because we went [unclear] with belief... Every year we have respect and we have usually three others. I go through on the usual things, like that, improving academic results and I've focussed there on Korea, Singapore and Finland, which we know in PISA and TIMMS are very strong’ P 6	Students only get one chance...sees it as a moral imperative P 6	‘..whilst we need to be accountable CEO for compliance and review and improvement processes, I believe that we have much grander reason. The students we teach only get one chance - you've heard me going on about it. But essentially, raising the bar, closing the gap and students can learn central to our work’ P 6	Plays leader teacher as opposed to teacher leader; using assemblies and newsletter to interpret values with learning and results (P 6*) Axial: thinks others judge them on their performance results
Principals emphasise a style of leadership called cultural leadership in their ways of enacting assessment-focussed accountability				
Explicitly and intentionally builds an aspirational culture P 3	‘We hope to further embed an aspirational culture’ P 3	Move the accountabilities to students – need to be responsible for their learning. Individual students set grade targets for themselves at the beginning of the year ...P 3	We want to create accountabilities for the students for their own learning P 3	Principal establishes an aspirational culture in order for students to take responsibility for their learning (P 3*) Axial: also sees the students will not achieve favourable performance results. Sees learning improves when principals can cherry pick their students – not through the quality of the teaching or learning (views about learning)
Only spend an hour's focus on performance results P 13	‘The local paper gets in quick and so we make sure that we push our results in the best light we can and the results for the last few years have shown continual improvement. So schools are reading each others’ results as well. But as I said, I don't really - it's only a	Human story around results are important So that performance results i.e. HSC, do not override learning P10	I found this [this research interview] very useful, as reflective for me for what I think I'm accountable for. What do I really see is important for leadership, in leadership. I've used that word holistic, that whole person, because I think that's	Principal minimises the impact of the comparing performance results with other schools by only focussing on the results for an hour. Principal keeps their focus on the student who defies all expectations (p 13*).

	half hour or an hour's focus around it. The human story behind it is far more important to me. The human story around that student or tis cohort or that student that's got to where they are' P 13		- we can at times get very much lost in that world. We've got 56 band sixes and, da, da, da, band fives, but there's a time to focus on that. But there's students here that have come from extremely difficult circumstances and to see their growth and to see their light come out of them and shine and to help and to support other people, and to show leadership for themselves in particular areas of their life, gives me far greater satisfaction than all the band sixes in the world. But everything else around it is important, you know?' P 13	Axial*: HSS school, only Catholic high school in area; high ESL, long period as Deputy with a pastoral focus – AP employed at the school to lead learning
Implements the orientation program: Talk up welcome into the school and results and support opportunities to develop their talents ; where the crm is heading; show the resources P 13	We talk about our academic results. .... they're going to be welcomed into the school. There's going to be support for them, 13 wherever they might need it and there's going to be opportunities for them to develop their talents. So we talk about that and we talk about where the curriculum is going. ... We talk about our facilities resources and we offer a multitude of tours, so that they can come in and see those resources for themselves P 13	Families not focussed on academic results P 13	We talk about our academic results. There's a lot of families that aren't really focusing on that. They want their child to be simply happy. That they're not going to be stressed out by the work that is going to be in front of them P 13  They're the other aspects of learning that I think has been important without being measurable P 8	Principals impress that families see other aspects of school life i.e. the child's happiness at school, as more important (P 13; P 8*).  Axial*: High ESL
Principal enacts particular mantras about learning to focus staff and students P 10; P 3;P 2; P 6	'a mantra at [REDACTED] in the last couple of years has been our overall aim is to develop self-directed learners, who have increased choice around the style and pace of their learning.... it's seeing themselves sometimes as a co learner with the students, a coach and sometimes answering their questions with other questions and not necessarily giving them the immediate answer that they're looking for' P 10.  'I think it was Alberta, a woman, I can't remember her name, but she shared with	To make meaning of what is being asked of them- to show a way forward P 10; P 3; P 2; P 6	'it's about to be a self directed learner means to be an independent learner, and we are - well I am quite conscious of and have received a lot of support from leadership and people around in key positions, quite conscious around getting away from teaching to a test..... Even though there's tests of accountability there, but to get away from teaching from a test and letting students have more autonomy to discover the answer	Principals repeat messages about learning, termed a mantra, to staff students and parents. In this way principals believe that cultures are being formed. Principals take on the role of making sense of what is being asked and provide direction through repeated messages P 6

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	<p>Michael Fullan in this brief video clip what her key learning was. She said, I didn't appreciate before doing the job how often you need to repeat the same message over and over again. When I speak now with parents, with students at assemblies, with staff, it's the same message over and over again about setting targets, aspirational and achievable. I think I've told that story this year 100 times. It rolls off the tongue because you get used to telling it, but it's important because people don't get the message the first time P 3</p> <p>That's what I mean by collaborative. It's also about collaboration between teachers as well. That's been my little mantra, I think, the whole time I've been here P 2</p> <p>So I think when you sort of articulate those things really clearly, making Jesus known and loved and learning as a mantra all the way along and you've just got to chip, chip your way. I mean, it's constant. You've just got to chipping, chipping, chipping P 6</p> <p>'the mantra I give my parents, for example, is students can't learn if they are not at school' P 6</p> <p>I do a newsletter every Monday morning and this is how I talk to all my staff P 6</p>		<p>themselves, rather than being spoon fed an answer ' P10</p> <p>So when we get, for instance, our HSC results and we look at things like course averages and things like that, we don't want you to just simply be saying well, it's all about my HSC and I'm not going to help with her, and I'm not going to work with her and things like that. P 2</p> <p>'Yeah, this is their focus. This is really clear, the focus. So that's how I suppose - and that's really for us in - getting to the point about negotiating that public discourse, about league tables, we say, well we are not buying into that..... The public disclosure of performance results and the judgement of schools and the injustice of that, do you know that creeps down through every level of education?' P 3</p>	
<p>Talks to students about taking a community responsibility towards their HSC work, not just looking after their own score P 2</p>	<p>One of the things that I guess we've tried to talk to our girls about is that your HSC and your results, it's not just about you; it's about working as a community P 2</p>	<p>Because of their vision for learning which is about - collaboration P 2</p>	<p>It's about keeping in mind, for us, the vision about learning for our students, and that's about them 1. being collaborative and courageous learners who are going to make 2. a bit of a difference to the world as well P 2</p>	<p>Principal tries to help students see the sense of the HSC in terms of the test being bigger than themselves – of helping others. The principal, hopes that they would take this idea out into the world as well (P 2)</p>

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Improves HSC results by guiding the right kids doing the right courses – guidance occurs year 9. Everyone is then focussed – see increased efforts from students P 8	Yeah just in terms of we've got a number of internal strategies in place like one of our HSC results have improved I think because we have the right kids doing the right courses so the boys and girls from the middle of Year 9 know that if you want to do say legal studies in Year 11 and 12 you have to be working towards it might be a C in commerce or a - so you know, I think what you notice is that because everyone is aware of it, then in Year 10 you start to see some increased efforts because they know they've got to get there to get to the next level.... That's probably when they had the School Certificate, you started to see the School Certificate results improve. P 8	Building a learning culture – has a momentum P 8	Because there's an improved learning culture it's the momentum. You're building the momentum through the school P 8	Sees guiding students to pick certain courses – which improves HSC results, as a way to build a learning culture P 8
Will not cherry pick students at enrolment as others do P 3	I think there's a lot of lessons that I can learn from [mentor] to take us in the same direction. In fact most of what we do is just copying what [mentor] did [which is not cherry picking]	Mentor influenced his views about cherry picking	I've known him a very long time and he took a community from 36 band sixes to 180 band sixes in 12 years. Now you would say well did he cherry pick the way most cherry pick?... That's why I'm confident there wasn't cherry picking' P 3	Uses strategies of their mentor as a reason for not using cherry picking as a strategy to improve results P 3
Uses own measurements to gather data (desire to take control – internal loci of control)				
Implements own data gathering tools: i.e. exit surveys, PAT, P 6.	'We bring kids in and we test them at year six level. and we re-test them at year 10 level and do a longitudinal study... We do an Orwell testing, so when the kids - in term 4, the Year 6 kids who will be Year 7 next year, we test them on their general reasoning, their mathematical reasoning and reading and writing comprehension, all that sort of stuff' .. we've got this new package called Central which allows us to import all this data from NAPLAN, from PAT tests, from whatever kind of data we have to build a profile of each child P 1.	To find out more information about students in the broader aspects of learning and teaching and also why certain targets are not being met – i.e. NPALAN and HSC P 6	As I said, it's like I said to my staff, the targets are a measure, not the only measure. But if the targets aren't being reached, we've got to ask questions as to why P 6	Principals use their own measurement tools, for differing reasons. One is to gain more information as to why students are not performing on the external tests (P 6) and two is to build a profile on the student so that they may be able to better meet their needs – which then will improve their results (P 1) Axial: P 6 sees that they are measured by the results; P 1 sees that eh results need to improve but also believes that

	<p>We know, for example - we were part of a wellness survey a few years ago and the kids here are very happy kids and enjoyed their school and data from our ideas survey was very affirming. The HSC exit surveys. Interestingly, we focused on feedback last year, talking about an indicator. From the Year 12 exit survey or data, the three lowest rated responses - I've already - I've outlined the full thing in some of the points P 6</p>			internal and external should be able to 'work together'
<p>Uses internal data gathering for other and specific areas (for eg the poor use of feedback) of student growth P 1; P 6</p>	<p>So we've got some data about maths and English but we want to also beef that up with other sorts of data that's more holistic P1</p> <p>They were the lowest three responses and we spent all year talking about feedback last year and that was Year 12 last year.</p> <p>Fac: So, what's your thinking?</p> <p>P 6: I don't think what we think is feedback, the kids think is feedback. I think we do mass feedback really well. ....We know. It didn't work. It didn't happen....But we are not giving individual feedback really well. But what is the feedback? Tick and flick or is it - and the kids, when the flesh that out in their comments were very articulate about - and particularly that faculty that is not performing.....Don't tell us what we did wrong. Tell us how we could do it better. That's exactly what feedback is P 6</p>	<p>Use data to develop a growth mindset P 1</p> <p>To improve results P 6</p>	<p>So they have found that kids with a fixed mindset will talk themselves out of maths. So we're going to try and work with that bit of research and find out if we can as maths teachers develop a growth mindset language around what we can say to kids to affirm them and not say to kids P 1</p> <p>P 1</p> <p>This is what good feedback looks like. This is what poor feedback looks like P 6</p>	<p>Principals have a specific understanding of where the deficit areas are with regard to learning is as a whole. Internal instruments help them with finding out these deficit areas ( P 1; P 6).</p>
<p>Uses internal data tools to establish direction P 12</p>	<p>'Assessment. They're [students] not so happy with assessment, so it's that toe in the water and of course, that's where we're moving' P 12</p>	<p>Which also aligns with national improvement agenda P 12</p>	<p>'It's the whole national plan for school improvement, so...P 12</p>	<p>Principals note alignments between student survey data and where the national plan for improvement is heading P 12</p>

Uses data that government decides is important P 1	'Because I've picked up – I mean I've used data that the government has decided is important' P1	Does not teach to test however uses data to ask questions of staff what is the data saying our students need P 1 Maths background	I don't ask my teachers to teach to the test I won't but I've picked up the data and I've said look at what our kids need... I think that is different ' P 1 ' I am also a mathematician....so in a way I have a bias. Irrespective of whether NAPLAN had a numeracy focus I would have' P1	Principals do not teach to the test however uses the data to ask questions about what students need. These principals also question whether the focus on literacy and numeracy would occur if they were not tested – they think so because of their own commitment to mathematics (P 1*). Axial: describe self as a mathematician ' I am also a mathematician....so in a way I have a bias' P 1
Develops data gathering tools for year 7 enrolment – entrance exam, plus other tests to build a 'data bag' - excited about P 2	'The girls then come in and do an entrance exam. It's the [unclear] testing. We get all this and you can see, it's all sitting up there. You get it all in this big bags of – isn't that fabulous? We get information on Stanines and all of those sorts of things' P 2	SS places them under spotlight to know year 5 NAPLAN data P 2	Then all of a sudden, you're then put under the spotlight to say well you know, what have you done about those results? P 2	Principals have increased their data gathering before students enter the school. IN part this is due to the perceived expectation by the SS to have responded and acted upon year 5 data (P2*). Axial*: early career principal – anxious about appraisal processes; context of staff resistance to some SS learning programs i.e. RAMP
Responds to specific areas of learning from the data story				
Works on improving maths results P 1	It's the one subject in the school that's highlighted as being very weak in terms of performance P 1	Employed to improve maths results and sees a deficit area according to the data P 1	'When I was at my enrolment panel, when I was being interviewed, they said to me the one area in the school that we need you to work on is to improve our maths results. That was a very direct - from the interviewers when I arrived. That's what we want you to do, fix our maths results' P 1 That's [numeracy]been a struggle at times. We've got some good people, we've got them on board but yeah that's	Principals work towards the specific areas of deficit from the data – directed by the SS and also confirmed by their own judgment P 1 Axial: describes self as a pedagogical leader – also thinks that SS does not realise that there are leaders who know about pedagogy

Principals use data analysis to make judgments about the big picture view of growth in performance results. Their understandings are informed by the DeCourcy analysis.	Does not act upon the external comparisons of results .... Well, our results were already indicating it. Our HSC results have picked up from the last three or four years. I mean, on the scales on the yard sticks that are there, we're improving in all areas and on the cross, we've gone from lower left to upper left to being right on the just about the bar into upper right. So on that yardstick, we're - which is what the CSO ask us to look at, we know we've shifted a lot, so at this school, we're always quite high in learning gain between year 10 and year 12... But now we're actually moving whole cohorts into far higher and greater levels P 13	Principals are aware of how the school's HSC results are improving from a big picture view and also over a period of time. However if students are engaged – enjoy learning then their results will improve on a whole lot of levels	sort of an idea that we needed to do something about numeracy - not necessarily for NAPLAN but we needed to do something about numeracy because the results are telling us that our kids might know the formula but they don't seem to be able to apply it in any other form other than a very literal equation in a book. P8	Getting to understand how we teach, why we teach it, just understand learning is going to give us the results that they're saying you will get. I mean the studies around it clearly indicate it, you know? ..... A lot of the studies that we get back are indicating that if we engage our kids, we look at using pedagogies that clearly allow kids to know and understand what it is that they are to respond back in terms of what they can - what they learn, have learnt, and their knowledge around it, in an environment that's at a school that gives them the freedom to want to be the best they can, that they have that sense of hope, through engaged learning and through other opportunities in the school for them to express themselves, the whole person and there's a sense of joy in what we do, that our results will improve on a whole lot of levels P 13	Principals talk about data and growth in performance results however many come back to a confidence that if learning is happening – with students engaged – ‘in an environment that's at a school that gives them the freedom to want to be the best they can, that they have that sense of hope, through engaged learning and through other opportunities in the school for them to express themselves, the whole person and there's a sense of joy in what we do' then the performance results will improve (P 13)
Uses NAPLAN data to help with exit HSC results ..for example deficits in writing P 13	in pedagogy, one of the areas that was clearly showing itself as a need in this school, with regards to NAPLAN, which then led on to our HSC results, were that students were just basically running out of words in terms of writing in depth responses. So their written responses were under what they needed to be. Instead of it being	However principal not totally fixated on improving the results because of the school population – special needs and ESL. P 13	Given this school's context, and that's why I'm saying it's - I'm not really all that deeply interested in the results of the schools in the diocese for example. Given the context of this school, where we've got looking on around about 40 students with special needs. I've got 120 students out of 650 that have a language	The data from the performance results are important to improve learning and meet the needs of the students better however the performance results themselves are not of high importance. The principal explains due to the student population – special needs and ESL P 13...and also	

	<p>something we would focus on in, say, year 11 and 12, we thought no, we've got to pull this right back to year seven. So we now ensure that our assessment tasks, whilst they at one end look wordy and they could be rather overwhelming for a year seven child to maybe look at, we break down what's required in the assessments. So students clearly know what they are to answer, how they are to answer it ... So we've clearly looked at our assessments from year sevens. Not just the senior things. By the way, this is the way we do it now, so it's building their strengths up bit by bit. Then, the outcome will be higher HSC results. If that's what that student is looking for. So it's - again, it's looking at the whole person, but we're still giving them the confidence to get there P 13</p>		<p>background other than English and a language that is spoken at home is often still - in just about all those 120 cases, is the other , not the second language. There's cultural aspects around that at homes that impacts on how they're able to, I guess, reinforce their daily learning at school. How they interpret their learning. So I look at those outside results and I do see them as important for us internally here at the school. Hence, we dissect them with regards to what we're doing here and how we could do it betterP13</p>	<p>because of family expectations from the family for the students to feel happy and belong (P8*). Axial: high ESL</p>
<p>Feedback to students linked to accountability in gaining better performance results P 8</p>	<p>I think we try and make sure that our assessments are - that the kids are getting some good feedback in assessment tasks P 8</p>	<p>Principals aware of the pedagogical importance of assessment, and see it as an area that can always be improved P 8</p>	<p>I think it's an area that we still could improve, I think there's always area for improvement there P 8</p>	<p>Principals show specificity about broad learning and teaching deficit areas - for example assessment and feedback. In a small primary school we might expect that a principal would know this however these schools are all above 500 with many layers of leadership and not always have principal enjoyed a history of knowing the deficit area about the students' learning P 10, P 11, P 7, P 8</p>
<p>Uses data to persuade staff that their thinking needs to change with regard to learning</p>	<p>They hadn't seen it, and that's where Kildare Catholic College was, and they thought that they were up here. That's created - it sounds so bad like, do you want data or not? Here it is, and whoa. Even some of my strongest supporters say, everything we do is not good enough. I said, no, no, I'm just telling you</p>	<p>Sees the HSC is out of control in terms of the context area- however will use the DeCourcy data views writing in NAPLAN is as important P 11</p>	<p>I think the whole content thing for the HSC just got out of control. I understand you need to know your content, but the understanding of literacy and construction of a piece of written text in most of our HSC subjects is as important P 11 as the content, the understanding of broader studies' verbs. The number of experts, content experts who don't teach</p>	<p>The data from the performance results are important to improve learning and meet the needs of the students better however the performance results themselves are not of high importance</p>

what the data says- and if you haven't seen it before...

their kids that common language of his to broader studies' verbs is just - I just don't know how those - I just don't know how they draw a pay packet ...

That's why DeCourcy data is much more valuable than how many Band 6s have you got. You can't deny the learning gain. You can justify it or provide reasons for it, as they tried to do. But you can't deny it, and you can't say, okay, if you look at our five very similar schools, here's one, and it's one very close to us, that six years ago said, let's plan to move and it just goes bang, bang, bang, bang P 11

Teachers take on a literacy focus across years 7,8 and 9- noticeable changes in writing

Introduced the PEEL structure [point, elaboration, example link]

In terms of learning and I suppose NAPLAN is part of the learning process, what we've tried to do is in each of our - in the classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 that roll together - now what I mean by roll together like the [unclear] RE, PE and science they are the same class so in terms of a timetable they're considered to be rolled in together, it's the same class. What we have identified in each of those classes, in each of the seven classes, we've identified a subject, and it could be different in each class, where the teacher will take on a literacy focus..... .. What do we do in Year 7? Last year we had a parent day on writing and it was interesting for parents then to ask the leaders of pedagogy do all the kids know about this? We'd be hoping it's happening across all classes, but what is noticeable that when assignments are coming up or someone's saying we need to write a paragraph, kids in all subjects are starting to say can we use the [redacted] structure and that's interesting. P 8.

Poor results in writing

Holds steady with writing structure with adverse criticism

...it's around making sure that we're going plenty of writing, even over and above what you would normally do.

We've even had them do writing tasks and have them hand in and be marked. Very much for the long term, yes up to NAPLAN but our hope and dream is that it continues all the year because then it's part of true learning. To have deliberately done that because we want to make sure that the writing structures that we're trying to put in place in the school, we know the kids are continually hearing it..... But it'll get most students out of trouble for most of their whole life actually P 8

There's been some dialogue or even argument, the kids won't get the results in the HSC is they're only using [redacted] and our response was okay well that's good, go and teach them the other one but [redacted] is a very, very good structure

Implement across school writing (intense - across all KLAs) due to poor results in writing (P 8\*)

Axial: [redacted] school

	It's caused an interesting dialogue for us because the [redacted] structure, like the point, the elaboration, the example and the link, that's the basic style of it.... Are we trying to make it long term? Yes we are. Are we looking at NAPLAN? Yeah we are. P 8		to get you out of trouble at any point in time. P 8	
Writing strategies across the school – other schools implementing (P 8) – parallels with TIL program ( P 4)	‘There's been a real focus on trying to get some of the assessment tasks to take on some of the literacy strategies we've got in the school. We have a thing called [redacted] which is a writing strategy and it's how to write a [redacted] [redacted] is the idea that does it have capital letters and can you understand it, is there some punctuation and is the spelling okay?... So it's all that accountability that we're trying to - do we try and measure it?... No, but I think it's a sense that it's starting to appear in classrooms all the time’ P 8	[redacted] funded the writing program – and it is simple to implement and it has addressed a deficit area [redacted] P 8	So it's a really simple and because it's come out of this partnership money that we've used to develop it it's actually starting to appear in other schools P 8	Principals identify deficit learning area through NAPLAN data then initiate school wide pedagogical practice – i.e. [redacted] program) – it is funded and it is simple for staff to teach (P 8*). Axial*: knows about what other school are doing with regard to implementation [networks]
Makes accessible support to particular cohorts; keen that certain cohorts i.e. project based learning group has favourable results P 7	‘Trying to provide the support for the girls that they need to help their learning now and so making accessible for them a bit of extra support that's there. That we do have a couple of people who are working with them. The teaching staff are very aware of the group. It's also been the naughty year group, you know how that happens. They're very aware of the group because the subjects they've picked are quite different from the previous year. So about three kids doing physics, not a proper class. They've gone more for the hands on subjects. Which is good in itself’ P 7	Predicts results will not be as high as previous group and people will draw conclusions re; project based learning...concern around this P 7	‘I think there will be questions when this year's Year 11 get to the HSC and their results, they won't be as good as - current Year 12s are probably the brightest group they've had here in years. So we're going to have the high and then maybe the low and if that happens then people will say well is it because you've done all this wonderful creative stuff in the junior years, have these [students] missed out on the basics’ P 7	Principals have some concerns over the results of particular cohorts who have engaged with less traditional pedagogies and that their results will be used as evidence to question these pedagogical approaches. The principal in response makes accessible support to these cohorts P 7* Axial*: describes self as ‘hands on with learning’
As part of improving HSC results needs to improve some aspects	‘Probably some things we need to do better around learning’ P 7	Principal views that staff ‘love them [students] too much’	‘I suppose what's dawned on me over the last six months or so because when you come in new to a school you peel back	Equates learning with improving HSC results P 7

about learning – learning relationship P 7	and whilst the students do well they could do better P 7	layers of what you're seeing, is that although our [students] do well in the HSC, they could probably be doing better and that we love them all' P 7	Axial: also sees themselves as a 'principal who is pretty hand son in terms of learning' P 7	
Requests staff (KLA Coordinators) develop a report to address the weaknesses that are found in the data from HSC	Deficits in learning - for e.g. increasing explicit feedback to students; examples of past papers	'They do have to put strategies in place to address the weaknesses that they find in their data analysis and so a lot of staff this year, some have done - feedback's been a really important one about making sure that kids get past papers'	Principals expect staff to address changes in response to data from NAPLAN and HSC. These changes are documented in a report. There did not appear to be staff resistance around the principal's request Axial: Low enrolments ; staff redundancies	
Analyses data in Maths to find out underlying problems	'So we've got some data to show that our kids, if you can rote learn a particular question that's great but the thinking that goes with problem solving is not so great and our kids tend to give up really	Uses analysis to develop programs to deal with the underlying problems	'So for us we're hoping that developing this new program where we're taking basic skills out of the curriculum into video classroom type stuff where they can teach themselves things that we know they can and we can provide opportunities for kids to think more.... So we're trying to run classes next year where it's more inquiry-based so that the kids are from a Year 7 age being introduced into some fairly deep thinking around maths'	Principals use their empirical understanding about learning – e.g. and their mathematics understandings about girls learning, to address certain deficits in the school. They also use the opportunity to engage in action research Axial*: describes self as a pedagogical leader and sees that they were employed as that – [leadership identity] also SS expected that they would fix the maths results given their expertise [ SS expectations]
Implements action research in maths	'With maths with Year 7, we're going to focus on Carol Dweck's work and Mindset so we're going to interview Year 7s next year at the beginning of the year and try to survey them and get a sense of whether they have fixed or variable mindsets, fixed or growth mindsets'	Sees a need and follows indicators through PISA tests Aligns philosophically with maths research with learning	'Why have I done it in mathematics? Her research is mainly around girls and mathematics so that's where it is and also I guess I have an interest in mathematics and I know that maths and girls in every school I've been at, there's a real connection between lack of confidence, lack of resilience and the PISA tests, the international tests.... The last time they showed that attitudinally - they did an attitudinal survey as well as the maths survey and they found that irrespective	Principals use their empirical understanding about learning – e.g. P 1 and their mathematics understandings about girls learning, to address certain deficits in the school. They also use the opportunity to engage in action research Axial*: describes self as a pedagogical leader and sees that they were employed as that – [leadership identity] also SS expected that they

<p>Making meaning in areas that are being tested and the ones that the students are performing poorly Principals do this by using pedagogical models that meets external pressure [redacted]</p>	<p>'So what we're trying to do in all aspects of our work is to try and make meaning out of maths and make meaning out of English and make meaning - so that's - I'd like to think - and my expertise is in maths so that's where I've started with but it's the one subject in the school that's highlighted as being very weak in terms of performance' [redacted]</p>	<p>Desires to perform better with the unfavourable results areas- and yet provide students with authentic learning because believes that ' the external pressures and the internal pressures are able to co-exist in a way that maybe hopefully we can be creative so that one is actually supporting the other' P 1</p>	<p>of how well - even when girls outperform boys in maths tests internationally the confidence levels of girls was always much lower than the [students]' [redacted]</p> <p>'the external pressures and the internal pressures are able to co-exist in a way that maybe hopefully we can be creative so that one is actually supporting the other as opposed to having to teach this way and teach this way. We would hope that what we're coming up with is a pedagogical model that supports what's happening to external pressures but at the same time is providing kids with authentic learning and that's what I'm trying to do' [redacted]</p>	<p>would fix the maths results given their expertise [ SS expectations]</p> <p>Principals endeavour to make meaning of the external expectations by creating learning programs that address the deficit areas yet are still creative and innovative [redacted]*</p> <p>Axial:* describes self a s a [redacted] leader; [redacted]</p>
<p>Works at building understandings about learning within the context of accountability for example the goodness that come from data P 10</p>	<p>'But there is a lot of good that can come from that if the data through that accountability is properly used.....'</p> <p>'There is a place for accountability in the overall broader greater objective of learning' P 10.</p>	<p>Believes that if the conditions of learning and where accountability resides in the learning – then the results will take care of themselves P 10</p>	<p>'.....if you get the conditions right the results will look after themselves' P 10</p>	<p>Principal believes that there is a place for accountability in the learning process. For example there is goodness that comes from data. If the accountability is seen with this lenses then the results will take care of themselves P 10*</p> <p>Axial*: sees themselves accountable not to SS [SS] but to the students and the ways they uses data. Also sees that they needed to learn more about learning [understanding the learning] to actually be able to lead learning [lead learning]. Principal also believes that if you have the learning right – and the conditions surrounding that</p>

				learning – the results will take care of themselves P 10
Uses NAPLAN data to see how certain learning programs are faring with particular year groups P 7	‘So I suppose we’ll have another set of results when we get the next round of the NAPLAN at the end of whenever that is, end 7 of the month. That will give us another look at another Year 9 group. The nine’s are the interesting one’ P 7	Assessing the impact of project based learning P 7	‘So we’re only doing it in Year 7 and then she gave us some very specific strategies to consider, using with the staff to help them to work better together as teams. That has involved giving them time and regular meetings and those sorts of things. So to say to parents well, it’s not just we say this is a good idea but we say we think this is a good idea but let’s see how it’s going and let’s monitor’ P 7	Principals use the NAPLAN data as an opportunity to evaluate certain learning programs in the school – even though they have not arisen because of the external tests P 7* Axial*: describes self as a hands on learning
Strategic planning and reflective by saying what worked well WITH learning P 7	‘I think you’re strategic and you’re reflective, so you’re saying okay, what worked well. Even, I know the co-ordinator we talk about the girls and their tasks so we meet fairly regularly. She’ll talk to me about the task, the project that they’ve been working on with the Year 7s and what worked, what didn’t work. What they’re going to have to modify next time they do it, those sorts of things. So I think you’ve got the two sides. You’re planning strategically and then reflecting and taking that into the next part of your strategy as well’ P 7	Not just the numbers, sees that NAPLAN data only give certain information – yet need to make sure that you are also not losing in that area – because this is what is in the public domain P 7	‘They’re [data from NAPLAN]only going to show you basic skills things on the whole. The writing might be - you might see some in the writing if they’ve got the persuasive task again. Who knows what next year’s will be because they’ve said it could be either persuasive or - it might show in that. It’s a little bit of a challenge because what we’ll really see is whether they’ve developed their skills because that’s what - are we managing both? ....It’s not just on about the numbers but the hard thing is, the numbers are what’s in the public domain and it’s making sure that you’re not losing in those areas while you’re doing your authentic learning’ P 7	Principals strategically plan and reflect on learning – what worked well however at the same time they are monitor their performance results because these are what are in the public domain – public image – enrolments P 7* Axial * : sees that results will take care of themselves ... still need to monitor and not live in ‘fairyland’- [school context – high competition ]
Principals hold certain views which influence the ways that they enact their leadership with regard to test preparation				
Teaches students certain parts of NAPLAN test, the different types of	‘NAPLAN and - we have had to focus this year on some NAPLAN stuff so we’ve had to teach kids certain parts of the test prior to it...So prior to the test we would’ve given them some opportunities to have a go at	To familiarise students with the test to gain better results, enrolment numbers and staffing is dependent on these – priority is to get the	‘...so the kids in Year 7 were familiar with the NAPLAN paper, the kids in Year 9 were familiar with the NAPLAN Year 9 paper...[explains would not normally do this as the crm is not ‘geared to NAPLAN’. However,]...at	Decisions are made to prepare for the NAPLAN tests even though this is not what the principals thinks is pedagogically appropriate – that is this preparation is not their normal practice because one principal views

<p>questions from past tests ■</p>	<p>some of the different kinds of questions of past ■          'But balancing that up you still need to prepare these kids properly for it' P 8</p>	<p>school back on the map ■ Others see that if the measurement is a test then practising for the measurement is appropriate – uses an analogy of the sprinter preparing for the short race and the long distance needs to longer run to prepare P 6</p>	<p>the moment for me because I know I've walked into a school where numbers are dropping and staffing is dependent on bums on seats and the perception of the school was not particularly great then in the community, my priority at the moment is getting our school back on the map' ■          '...if testing, written tests, like are going to be a measurement...we've got to get them doing some formal tests'- note: find the sprinter analogy P 6          'I would hate to see it take over - become the whole of Year 7 programme and the whole of Year 8 programme, the whole of Year 9 programme is just getting ready for NAPLAN. ....I did say to the staff the other day, and it is a credential that they're going to have with them, that people are asking for - now whether they ask for it at employment - but at the moment if you're enrolling at the local Catholic school you're being asked to give copies of your NAPLAN results. You're being asked to give copies of your last two reports. So in that end it is accountable and we do need to do the best we can for the kids, but you'd hope that the learning throughout the year was contributing to it' P 8</p>	<p>that the curriculum is not tailored for NAPLAN ■ The other reason provided is that if the written tests are the measurement then practising written tests is what is needed (P 6*).          Axial*: compares the preparation for tests like a running race. Sprinters prepare one way and long distance runners prepare another way          Leadership aspirations: sees that others will judge them and the staff because of the performance results – enrolments have increased steadily in their principalship – motivation for driving results? Career trajectory – to SS</p>
<p>Preparation for particular type of exams – a writing exam P 1</p>	<p>'We've got to be careful that we don't lose sight that at Year 12 it's a three-hour exam, pen and paper, and that we've got to provide them opportunities to do some sustained periods of writing and that not every assessment task should be a hand in task on a</p>	<p>To ensure that they can write on paper not rely on technology skills P 1</p>	<p>'...and that we've got to provide them opportunities to do some sustained periods of writing and that not every assessment task should be a hand in task on a computer but we've still got to allow them to do some writing' P 1</p>	<p>School staffs prepare for NAPLAN through hand writing – as most tasks in the school are word processed P 1</p>

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	computer but we've still got to allow them to do some writing P 1			
Ditched the practice test day for NAPLAN on first days of their appointment as principal at the school P 7	'Here I came in and the first thing I saw on my calendar was the day before NAPLAN it was NAPLAN practice day. So I said to the new AP, do you know what is meant by that? She said, oh, that's the day they do a practice test. I said, the day before. In May, the day before the test. Why are we doing a practice test then? Oh well, they felt we needed to do something to prepare the girls for NAPLAN, so are doing that. ....So we ditched that' P 7	Test preparation the day before not seen as valid because there was not feedback to students P 7	I said, well, I don't think it's [test preparation for NAPLAN] terribly valid the day before. How are they going to get any feedback? P 7	In the first 6 months principals do change practices that are not aligned with their pedagogical understandings - for example the practice day for NAPLAN which did not give any feedback to students P 7* Axial: describes their leadership as hands on learning
Teachers give NAPLAN lip service P 1	Everybody knows we've got to give NAPLAN lip service P 1	Judged on NAPLAN however HSC is what [staff] really think that matters, because the individuals results determine the ATARS and university placement - these results determine students' futures P 1	'Because it's where we're kind of judged on... but at the end of the day it's the HSC that matters because we're talking about individual results and ATARS and university placements and kids' futures' P 1	Views that staff give NAPLAN lip service because it does not reflect on individual students and it is not a direct antecedent for a university pathway - whereas HSC is P 1* However holds differing views themselves where the principal sees that the skills on NAPLAN are foundation blocks for the senior years P 1 ( see page 80 last row)
Tries to give meaning to NAPLAN data for its use to improve HSC - P 1	'I guess I try not to let them conflict too much. I try not to be too paradoxical about it. I try to make it all fit together' P 1	Tries not to be too paradoxical about HSC and NAPLAN. However holds differing views themselves where the principal sees that the skills on NAPLAN are foundation blocks for the senior years	'My preference would be you go back to Year 7 and you think let's build the foundation blocks so that by the time they get to Year 11 they may have more skills than they have now. So if you just focus on - and that's the problem with teachers. They focus all their energy on 11 and 12 and they don't realise that if they worked backwards and started building skills in our kids as they go through, maybe we're not necessarily having to build as many skills in 11 and 12 and we can actually build more inquiry work' P 1	The principal sees that the skills on NAPLAN are foundation blocks for the senior years P 1

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Engages NAPLAN test preparation similar to HSC trials – P 3	‘...take away from teaching time so that we could practice the tests. We have a practice NAPLAN test, we practice... In seven and nine.... Well they do it like a trial, where you do a trial HSC, do a trial NAPLAN.... So, yeah, it makes a diff- it's changed the way we do things.... To say that we teach to the NAPLAN test all year the way some primary schools have claimed....would be untrue’ P 3	Once did not see that they were responsible for Year 7 results because secondary schools have only been teaching students from Feb – May. Sees SS forced them to practise for the NAPLAN test in year and sees that it takes away from teaching time P 3	‘We're absolutely responsible for what happens between seven and nine, but not seven. So I didn't pay too much attention. Well the results weren't good and the CEO went into apoplexy because oh, the results are terrible. Now it forced, there's no question, it forced me the next year to make more, a big song and dance and to take away from teaching time so that we could practice the tests’ P 3	Principal did not see that they were responsible for what happens in year 7 with results – however following one year of bad results the SS held them to account and since then the principal has taken the Year NAPLAN test seriously – yet acknowledges it take away from teaching time P 3 Axial : SS
Tough with discipline and some students were asked to leave in response to ‘tightening’ P 1	‘I've been really tough with discipline with the kids, putting things in place and letting parents know we're in charge and I've had to get rid of a few kids, let them go because they were just tarnishing - I suppose there's this - some people's philosophy might be you're needing numbers, you'll take anybody. I'm like I don't care’ P 1	Sees that in their assessment-focussed accountability they need to build an element of school success. Students need to meet the school standards; builds an element of success within the community P 1	‘...a horrible thing and I'm talking about kids, but you've got to actually build an element of success about the school so you've got to say that we have a standard and that this is our philosophy and if you want to be here you've got to be part of that philosophy’ P 1	Principal builds public image not just through gaining better performance results but through setting standards P *Axial: ECP
Enrolments depend on performance results				
Works towards increasing enrolments P 1 Maintain good academic results.. tell the good story P 6	‘...but at the moment for me, bums on seats, it keeps me awake at night because I know if I don't I have to be redeploying [redacted]	To avoid redeploying staff [redacted] Maintain enrolments...can't just build enrolments on folklore – needs to have sound results P 6	‘At the end of the day we're a learning institution and the success of our learning institution is in how well our kids do....[eve though student happiness is important ] But we still need to know that we do have academic kids here and that those academic kids are well served by what we provide P1. “Along with that [increasing enrolments], then you have to maintain good academic results. But you've got to tell the good story. You can't just build enrolments on folklore’ P 6	Enrolments and results are seen as dependent on each other by some principals. First enrolments are needed to maintain current staffing numbers (P 1) and second the enrolments are dependent on ‘good academic results’ (P 6)*. Axial: Schools in high competitive region

Sets targets for results that are externally ranked – top 100 schools P 2	'Whilst I think that the previous principal's dream was to get this school into the top 100 schools - it certainly is ours' P 2	? Competition?	'We were the top performing all-girls' school in the Archdiocese as well' ..P 2	Principals set performance targets with HSC results with other 'benchmarks' i.e. as the newspaper : top 100 schools
NAPLAN used as a diagnostic tool not a ranking instrument P 4	I counter that [the ranking] in my language to the staff and in my analysis in speaking about it [NAPLAN] to basically say, what does it tell us about our school and where we're at and what we need to do P 4	No angst about NAPLAN data – the school is making significant gain from Year 7 to year 9- even though they acknowledge that there the public accountability has made It more than this P 4	NAPLAN is a diagnostic tool is really how I see it to be honest. Nothing in my experience has swayed me for that. Yes there's public accountability, which has made it more than a diagnostic tool.... I personally don't carry the angst of NAPLAN results around with me I guess because the school is successful and in [unclear] showing significant learning gains in literacy and numeracy between 7 and 9 - it's measurable there P 4	Principals do not hold a concern about NAPLAN – even the public account – because they are happy with the gains in performance results between Year 7 to Year 9 (P 4*). Axial: describes their leadership as building a culture of sense making
Has not sat back in first year as principal	'People tell me first year, Viv, honeymoon period, sit back, let it all happen'	Poor results, losing enrolments and losing staff, lack of community confidence in the school	'I'm thinking that's fine if you've walked into a successful school and it's a well-oiled machine but when you come in and you're told your maths results suck, we're losing numbers and you're going to be losing staff and there's lack of confidence in this school in this community you kind of go well, I can't let that school be like that for another 12	Principals do not sit back and reflect on the school landscape on entering a school where results are poor and enrolments slipping along with staff deployments
Leads all conversations with a lens of learning P	But again, the thing is to lead the conversation about learning	Sees that the language of learning lens resolves most issues – for example poor performance results	It's a fair bet that if there were results that were in decline, then the conversation hasn't been about learning, or it hasn't been a productive one'	Principal couches most conversations with staff, students and parents about learning. Firm belief – resolute- that results take care of themselves once productive conversations about learning are happening *Axial: very specific empirical understandings of learning – contemporary – and empirical- views of how KLA cos should lead learning;

<p>Changes staffing and other foci when some courses are below state average and asks questions of themselves and other leaders P 4</p> <p>Yet uses the language of improvement P 4</p>	<p>So you know, with those couple of courses in the school that are below the state average there, we tweaked things last year in our planning in terms of staffing and things like that and they'd be the focus of, you know, the HSC analysis meetings and my work with the Director of Studies here to say okay, well what are we doing there and how can we improve that course there' P 4</p>	<p>Courses below state average P 4</p> <p>Measure is about improvement not how to get results above state average P 4</p>	<p>...Mine [measure] is about improvement, you know, how could we, say, have that course that was there, improve for the next year and build that P 4</p>	<p>ECP; long time in AP role as teaching and learning ■■■</p>
<p>Sharpens their target setting for individual students P 3</p>	<p>'...but we have certainly developed some ideas further since I last spoke with you. I don't know if we spoke about it last time, but one of the things that we've done a lot on is target setting here' ...' so in Cooper's case he was a C. So how did you go in your half yearlies, Cooper? He said, I got a B. I said, that's very good, Cooper. So he's gone from being a D last year to being a B this year. So a student going from a D to a B in 12 months, that's a pretty significant learning gain...' all those targets went into a database at the start of the year. So those targets appear on teachers' class lists. When teachers do reports the targets appear on the reports. The teachers can target or can identify students who are falling behind targets and are currently undergoing as we speak intervention interviews with boys who aren't on track..P 3</p>	<p>Sees the student population as a residual who cannot gain the top performance results. The target setting helps relieve the pressure they feel from SS P 3</p> <p>Does not believe results improve because of pedagogy P 3</p>	<p>'.. So to give that some context first, the term residualism which you raised there, it's not my term, it's the term that was used by Barbara Preston in her submission to the Gonski Review. She was particularly talking about government schools in Victoria that with the emergence of the popularity of non-government schools and then the movement towards selective schools by the State, served to do no more than further strip the talent that did exist in government schools from those schools entirely. That's the kind of phenomenon which we experienced here, so it seemed to me the term residualism fitted very well, particularly when so much pressure was coming on from the system around performance in external tests like NAPLAN, School Certificate, High School Certificate P 3</p> <p>'It's my eighth school experience and most schools improve results, not by</p>	<p>Changes to staffing are made when results are below state average however the principals emphasises that their language around the results and the changes are couched in terms of improvement P 4*</p> <p>*Axial: Describes self as a builder of sensemaking culture; NP program</p>
<p>Principal sees the student population as a diverse group – and in the region they see the student population as a residual; the left over students. This idea resonates with this principals given the pressure they feel form the SS with performance results from tests. As a result of these views the principal creates a culture of aspirational grade target setting P 3*</p> <p>*Axial: buffer filter; high completion for enrolments in the region. Believes that results improve because of the students schools attract not because of pedagogy</p>				

			improving pedagogy, I think they improve results by a variety of means, creating a sense of popularity... When you have got the numbers you can then set a cut off quota and then you cherry pick the best students. ... That's how schools improve and every school that you could quote to me, a Catholic school that you and I know of in this district that has improved its results in recent years, has it because they have got better quality cattle than this school and that's how they have improved, they cherry pick. P 3	
Sophisticated target setting through grade aspiration P 3	This target setting, I can now say with hand on heart how many band 6s, and I use only band 6s because people seem to be more interested in band 6s than anything else, I can say how many band 6s we aspire to in year 11 and year 12, the exact number. More than that, I can tell you with each teacher in each classroom, how many of those band 6s that teacher is responsible for. More than that every boy in the class knows who they are and more than that their parents know as well. I don't know any school that's ever had that level of sophistication. It's not complicated, but it is sophisticated in as much as it's sharing the information more widely than it has been shared before. P 3	Clarity on student targets creates efficacy – diminishes others' expectations about results P 3	if we can be really, really clear about what every boy's aspirational target is, then we don't have to give a toss about what anybody else says about what we should be getting or about what our results are supposed to be like .... We can with hand on heart say that this is what our boys' capabilities are. If Cooper gets a B when he set an aspirational target for a C and he was operating as a D last year, I challenge anybody to tell me that's not bloody brilliant. In fact he deserves to be more rewarded and celebrated in his learning achievement than the bloke who's an A grade student and just keeps getting As and keeps getting first prize because he just happens to have more God given gifts than Cooper. P 3	The creation of sophisticated grade target setting – seen as an aspirational culture- aims to diminish others' expectations of the principals and staff for more favourable performance results (P 3).
Identifies the students needs from NAPLAN data to persuade staff to take NAPLAN seriously; presents	getting the staff to take things like NAPLAN seriously...So what I did was I had somebody come out and present to them from outside the school on the NAPLAN data. A very simple presentation and the girls	Students do well in the public domain with NAPLAN however there are still areas for	because the girls do well so why should we? They're fine. So I suppose there's a little bit of tension there but I certainly don't feel it from the outside in because the girls do well. ....If they're doing	External agents are brought into the school to persuade staff of the utility of NAPAN data. Principal believes in the power of the data to improve the

[external person] specific data to highlight certain problems areas P 7	who are currently in Year 11 were the guinea pigs for the project based learning .. They're also probably the weakest academic group in the school and there was a moment where we were looking at the Year 9 maths results in NAPLAN and numeracy results going the wrong way. The presenter said to them, those ■ in that graph are your current Year 11s. You might like to think about what you're going to do between now which was April and the time those girls are sitting their Higher School Certificate or what their results might look like, which was sort of the message I wanted to give. It's fine to say they're doing well in the HSC. Can you be sure, be really confident that NAPLAN is not going to have any impact down the track' P 7	growth and NAPLAN data can help	poorly in Year 9, that they're not still going to be doing poorly in Year 12. So that was how to try and get people to think about it as something other than a necessary evil which is I suppose most teachers attitude to NAPLAN. We have to do it P 7	learning outcomes for students, and also in relation to HSC results (P 7*). *Axial: Hands on learning; understandings about learning expansive
Sophisticated target setting through Band There's no band 1 targets because band 1 is not aspirational, but there's a few boys, for them band 2 is very aspirational P 3	how many band 6s we aspire to, but that's no more relevant than how many band 5s we aspire to, or indeed how many band 2s we aspire to' P 3	Game changer from external accountabilities to personal responsibility; right focus on learning P 3	So it become a bit of a game changer for us ... So when you move to, or in moving to a culture where we get away from external accountabilities and we move towards personal responsibility for learning, that changes the whole culture. It changes teachers' perceptions of their students. It changes teachers' responsibility to every student and we're not - the external accountability stuff can look after itself. We've got the focus right which is on every individual student and his responsibility for learning. P 3	The creation of sophisticated grade target setting – seen as an aspirational culture- aims to diminish others' expectations of the principals and staff for more favourable performance results (P 3).
Prepares parents for initiative in learning (project based learning) that may have kickback P 7	'The flip in the class room [year 12 Business Studies] will be I suspect that will be probably have a bit of a pushback from some of our parents. I think it's really important that they do the groundwork there and explain to the girls first of all what they're doing and why they're doing it. Then be	Staff produce ideas and in direction of school- not just ad hoc; confident enough in staff exploring opportunities P 7	So I think I'm happiest [as a leader of learning] when people are coming to me saying, I have this idea, could we do? I don't want it all to come from me. As long as that idea fits in the direction with where the school's going in terms of pedagogy and things so if they came and	When leading learning – in their response to assessment-focussed accountability and because 'you can do the holistic and still get the numbers'- principals are pleased when staff bring ideas forward – however they insist that these opportunities are

Insists staff are not ad hoc introducing learning initiatives P 7	ready to explain it to the parents as well. Have a parent night' P 7  That it's not just ad hoc' P 7	Believes in holistic learning and also achieving favourable performance results P 7	said I've got this idea. So if flipping the classroom, engaging the girls in a different form of learning is very much in keeping with the girls taking ownership for their learning and the teachers exploring different ways to do things ..... In terms of doing something different yes, this is risky business but I think I'm confident enough in the people who are exploring these opportunities with the girls. That it's not just ad hoc. So I'm confident that - I think and I suppose there's the thing isn't it with what you're saying, that tension. The numbers versus the this is good for their learning P 7  Yeah and I suppose part of me believes that you can do the holistic and still get the numbers'	aligned with the school direction and also that parents are educated P 7
Examines the number of bands once released – thrilled with few band ones and twos P 12	'...but you sit there, I know I sit there the morning the results come out, I'm analysing the number of band sixes, band fives, fours, threes, twos, ones and always thrilled to see each year less ones and less twos. So that's an acknowledgement of student growth P 12	Wants to look at the DeCourcy only but media and SS pressure them otherwise P 12	You've got to look at that [DeCourcy] rather than just look at the number of band fives, sixes, which is what the media focuses on. To some extent, I think the [SS] does too. I think I feel that you are always on show. A little bit of comparison [pf the performance results]happening across the [region] these days .... The number of bands you get. The number of students you get in the nineties. The ATARs, because we don't get that other data till school's back, till late January, early February. Then it takes you a little while to unpack all of that and when you do unpack that you think, hey - or last year in particular, our results were - oh, they were down a little bit, but they were still really good. P12	Principals would rather just look at the DeCorcy results however they still go back to how many bands there are in the higher – and 'thrilled' when there are less Band ones and Twos. They attribute the 'regression' due to the pressure from the media SS – across the SS region (P 12*). Challenge to keep the focus on the DeCourcy – swayed to look at outright performance results because of SS and media pressure [public image]  *Axial: Low competition, SS gives all the schools other schools DeCourcy data; local paper small community; lived in the region most of teaching career

Works towards the measure even though does not agree with the measure P 6	If I am going to be measured using HSC and NAPLAN and so forth, that's what I am going to gear us to do. But is that ultimately what's best for our kids? The answer is no P 6	Because they themselves as pragmatic and that these 'good results' are what kids need P 6	I'm very pragmatic....because I know that's what the kids need....[for eg RE test] ...tell the Bishops that we are Catholic schools and we are doing a good job. P 6	Principals recognise that the test is not the full measure of quality learning ( P6) however they will work towards this because this is what the student needs in terms of an ATAR, trade or other post school pathway P 6* *Axial: describes self as pragmatic with regard to working towards improving performance results ; sees that they are judged on the results; career trajectory –SS; increasing enrolments – possibly waiting lists
Tells the community the story of how articular students went well – not just in high performance results P 3	I think that's where sometimes - when you do your annual reports to the community, which is another level of accountability, I think you can tell those stories' P 2	Important to have the whole picture of the student P 2	So we're very, very good at bringing our kids from the bottom to the middle.... But going back to what you were saying, I think that accountability is good, but you've got to have the whole picture P2	Principals celebrate and report the overall growth of student learning as oppose do just performance results; they do this through their routine reporting mechanisms i.e. the NSW Annual Report P 2
Director of Studies organises the Celebration of HSC performance results with a ritual morning tea P 4	The Director of Studies reads them [HSC results] out and affirms people and did it very, very well. There was no berating. It's not a public execution or flogging at all and there was something in each of the courses to celebrate there. P4	Trusts the leaders in middle management to conduct these – even the staffing of courses P 4	'that I have trusted my Director of Studies and KLA coordinators on matter of staffing of courses' P 4	Trust those charged with leading learning at middle management level to enact accountability – with regard to staffing the senior courses and also with the celebration ritual for performance results in HSC P 4* *Axial: ensures that there is a balance with staff between learning and aiming for high results .
Talks about growth in results to staff as a cause for celebration P 2	'We talked a lot about growth to our staff... We talked about – with our – when their results came out, we actually – I wrote a statement, and I wrote it congratulating people on the great results. We talked about the fact that we certainly had a long way to go in some areas. But the growth was something that we – was a cause for celebration' P 2	Staff had worked hard with 'the other end of kids' and they are not the ones standing on the stage getting the Awards P 2	'Because again, they're not the kids that are going to be standing on stage at your Annual Awards Night, getting awards. They're the other end of the kids. Some of the kids are naughty kids; some of the kids are your sporty kids. ....But the growth was something that we - was a cause for celebration' P 2	Principal publicly awards students who attained growth in performance results because that is just as much as a course for celebration than the actual straight out performance (P 2)

Keeps a focus on improving performance results P 6	At the same time, maintaining and improve - not maintaining, actually - improving current results has become more and more of a focus and probably much sharper now than ever before P 6	Sees that they are judged on the performance results P 6 Raising the bar and closing the gap – duty to the students	We are going to be judged on these results and therefore need to perform	If principals believe that they are judged on their performance results they keep a foci on these (P 6*) *Axial: see that it is a moral imperative to get the best results for the students; sees that staff cannot argue against this moral imperative
Recruits the best staff possible P 13	' As a leader of the school, it's important for me to find - to seek to find a balance in our staffing, as well. By that, I mean a little bit of new blood, certainly some younger teachers and to try to attract the experienced teachers that get what we're about and to nurture and challenge those that are here that they continually see that what we're about is really important' P 13	Sees the recruitment of staff as being accountable P 13	I'm accountable also to get the best staff that I can get, you know?' P 13	As part of their accountability to the students the principal sees that they need to recruit the best staff possible— according to their needs P 13 *Axial: HSS
Celebrates growth in NAPLAN performance results P 2	So I wanted to recognise those kids, and so we had Principal's Awards for those kids, which I presented at assemblies. Now these are the sorts of kids who don't normally get awards. I rewarded the growth. I did. So they had Principal's Awards, and then I sent a letter home to the parents as well. Saying guess what? Today Mary Jane got an award for - were you aware that this how many points she improved in her NAPLAN results?' P 2	Poor NAPLAN results yet there was growth P 2	'Last year, our NAPLAN results were okay, not flash. Our numeracy ones were pretty awful. But one of the big things, as I said to you a few minutes ago, was the growth, and the growth came from the bottom to the middle' P 2	Principal publicly awards students who attained growth in performance results because that is just as much as a course for celebration than the actual straight out performance –the results were not as favourable as expected (P 2)
Places improvements in NAPLAN in newsletters- tells the 'good news story' P 3	'They hear parents talking about their sons achieving at school. They see improvement in NAPLAN results in newsletters' P 3	Believes that accountabilities fall into place when responsible to parent and child (as opposed to the emphasis on results) P 3	'Who I am I most responsible to? The parents and their child, yeah. I think if I do that, then all the accountabilities will fall into place. ....It's a whole host of good news stories together which speak positive culture and its people talking' P 3	Broadcasts (tells the good news story) growth in NAPLAN results in the newsletter, because they view that they are accountable to parents and students. Perceiving the students and parents as the accountable authority the principal believes 'all the accountabilities will fall into place' (P 3*)

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Celebrates growth in HSC performance results	<p>Everyone wants a Band 6. But at the same token, we've also tried to applaud the efforts of teachers, who have moved kids along in terms of their learning. P2</p> <p>When the results come out we'll talk about - we have a morning tea, we go through each course publicly and we say okay, music at 70 per cent above state - or X above state average and these are some of the things to celebrate. So we go through each of the courses there at a big morning tea with all the staff, that's pretty full-on. ... a really, really, very positive experience ' P 4</p>	Needs Band 6 – Is measured about the accountabilities	<p>I think that we've always talked about the fact that yes, we do need - we'd love Band 6s P 2</p> <p>But I guess I am measured in the sense that I understand my school community and my touchstone is the kids, the parents and the staff, you know P 4</p>	<p>*Axial: Has an achievement newsletter at the end of the year with the Bands included; sees that results improve due to cherry picking particular students; sees the school suffers from residualism</p> <p>Principals applaud and celebrate Band 6s in HSC and at the same time they applaud the efforts of teachers who have moved the students along – that show growth in performance results (P 2, P 4).</p>
Celebrates growth in grade aspirations from student target setting – gain. At the half yearly awards ceremony calls this learning gain P 3	<p>'So a student going from a D to a B in 12 months, that's a pretty significant learning which we invited parents to, there were the usual first place and second place and third place getters, every school has that, there is no big deal there, but every student who exceeded his target received an award as a target setting award' P 3</p>	Not interested in accountability – sees accountability as responsibility, influenced by the thinking of Sahlberg where he recalls that in Finnish there is no such word as accountability P 3	<p>'...your interest is around accountability and we're not really interested in accountability. We're interested in responsibility. It's interesting Pasi Sahlberg talking about The Finnish Way, the book out now about his work there in Finland, he says, in Finland there's not even a word for accountability. The closest you come is responsibility. I love that' P 3</p>	<p>Principal set up an aspirational target setting based on internal school grades. Public recognition occurs. Principal aligns this action with the thinking of the Finnish who describe our understanding of accountability as responsibility. Principal draws upon scholarly work of Sahlberg to explain their view point of responsibility (P 3*).</p> <p>*Axial: leadership of learning – seen as a buffer, filter; performance results seen as unfavourable – highly competitive region</p>
Markets results				

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Sells results to the public P 10	<p>, yeah the band sixes are great for HSC and they sell to the local community P10</p> <p>'we advertise – XXX, our [school role] does a fantastic job in promoting the school, particularly with the HSC results. P 2</p> <p>Last year, I did a big ad in [local newspaper] highlighting –[performance results] I just did band six subjects with band six and da da da</p>	<p>Because the 'public' want to see the results P 10 P 12</p> <p>Important to acknowledge the students' achievement – for the internal community P 12</p>	<p>'...because you've got to go through that process of promoting the great results' P 10</p> <p>'We've got 145 kids and not enough room to bring them all in next year, which is a nice place to be.....I think it's having a huge effect. I think the relationships with the feeder primary school principals is also a big thing for us too. ... They are talking about us in the community... We have 14 feeder primary schools, which I think I told you last time. We have a school among them which is a tiny little school in Strathfield - you know St Martha's? It's this tiny little school. We haven't had a kid from St Martha's in four years. Before we come out - because my time is fairly limited - before we come out can you tell me whether any of your girls are even thinking about going to Bethlehem....only 16 kids in Year 6 and we've got - is it 10 of those P 2</p> <p>It was done as an ad...because I was annoyed that the The Irrigator wouldn't - I write something for them every year and they wouldn't use it. I thought, well, two can play at this game. I'll do an ad which puts us out there. I got such wonderful feedback from parents. It's really great that you acknowledge, and it wasn't about the teachers, you acknowledge the kids' achievement' P 12.</p>	<p>Principals promote their performance results– their Band 6 in HSC - in the public domain for example paying for their newspaper article They do this because they believe the public want to know and also because they see that the students deserve the recognition (P 12)</p>
Promotes and sells the idea of growth in performance results ;	<p>I spend a fair amount of my rhetoric, that is the things that I write in the parent's newsletters, my annual presentation to the</p>	<p>Sees that the public still see Band sixes seen as the most important P 3</p>	<p>'It's about band sixes, it's about your top ATAR of the year...So like it or not those things continue to be important. I</p>	<p>Principals promote the idea of learning gain – albeit it is growth in performance results- in the public</p>

uses the term interchangeably with learning gain P 3	community at speech night or prize giving night, what I'll say this Friday at the high achievers assembly which is then published, the things that I write, the things that we write which I'm quoted as saying in the local newspapers has a common theme and again it's about learning gain P 3		don't want them to be but they are important' P 3	domain. However they know that the public see that band sixes and the top ATAR as the most important (P 3)
Needs to market the school P 1	I have been out there selling the school, I have been out there and within P1	Because results are not favourable and talking up the school makes the current families feel happier P1	So I need to .... You kind of make those choices knowing that (A) the kids are going to get a better deal but at the same time, if kids get a better deal families who are here will feel happier about being here and will be out in the public talking up their school P 1	Principals see that they need to market their results in response to the disclosure of the performance results (HSC) in the public domain. They do this for several reasons; one to increase their enrolments, either they have had poor results historically or they are in a highly competitive demographic area and two they see the need to market to their internal community to maintain a sense of confidence with the current families that the school is doing well ( P 1, P 2, P 6).
Uses data (post school pathways) to influence parent thinking about the top 100 schools P 2	The data is one - you use your data then to show them that the Sydney Morning Herald's view of the HSC is not the top 100 schools how they choose them. If you were saying that your girl's obviously can't go to university if you're not one of the top 100 schools, well okay here's the stats on this is how many go to university, this is how far we were above average in this P 2	Competitive region, so there is competition for enrolments P 2 Sells results – easier to see as they are good results – pinks and greens on NAPLAN P 6 Parents not telling principal they look at NAPLAN Yet question failing school according to SMH fort 100 schools P 7	Within the Inner West Region - I'm not sure if you're aware - it's incredibly competitive market for schools P 2 They're good, solid results. So they are easier to sell, in some ways, because there is not a big deficiency. Like if the parent opens up MySchool and they see greens. They don't see pinks. So from a perception point of view, it's a good school P 6 I haven't had any parent come to an enrolment interview and tell me that they'd looked at the NAPLAN results. I had in my last school but I haven't here, so it's an interesting position to be in. The only conversation I've had about results was a parent was a current parent who looked at the Sydney Morning Herald's top 100 schools last year and came to see me earlier in the year about why we were a failing school P 7	Principals see it as easier to sell the good results (P 6). Principals sell the HSC results not necessarily the NAPALN results – principals have not heard that parents are choosing their secondary school because of the NAPLAN results but they have been questioned about the pathways to university for example if the school is not in the top 100 schools (P 2)

Does not care about SMH rankings P 7	But really, I don't care what the Sydney Morning Herald thinks of the school. I care about our kids, I care about their parents P 7	Sees accountability as a responsibility to the students – and that they can learn to the best of their ability. However sees their accountability to the SS , consultant directors, parents	That all of the kids in your care are able to learn to the best of their ability. So yes, that they have the opportunity that their needs are catered for, that they're challenged, those sorts of things...I think we're accountable to the girls. I think we're accountable to the students, yeah. ...It's who you are and who you really are, isn't it? .. I feel responsible for the girls. The people I answer to in terms of accountability are definitely your system leaders, your consultant, your directors, those people and, of course, to the parents. Yeah, you're responsible to do your best for them in all ways P 7	Principals views of who and what they are responsible for determines how they view their account in the public domain. Principals who construct their accountability as a responsibility –to students- see that the rankings in SMH is not one that is of a concern (P 7*). *Axial: Hands on learning principal – leads learning – teacher leader ...does not feel the competition for enrolments; expansive project based learning in school -
Broadcasting the positive aspects about performance and weaving a tale of 'good news', at times this may be turning a perceived deficit into a positive 'story' P 3	'So every time we get the slightest bit of good news we talk it up [laughs], we talk it up enormously and like people don't get sick of hearing good news and people don't tire of hearing that what they do makes a difference and people don't tire of being affirmed and we've got, we've said about doing that over the last few years and I feel - I think, I don't think we've got any crocodiles on staff 'P 3	To respond to the public needs of wanting to know the results P 1	I think the priorities change depending on where your energy's going, doesn't it?... I need to... so at the moment for me that's my priority and I know I'm accountable to a whole lot of external agencies to get NAPLAN results up and all that sort of stuff and you're having those conversations P 1  'But you've got to tell the good story. You can't just build enrolments on folklore' P 6	Broadcasts (tells the good news story) seen as an essential part of the principal's role in their responses to accountability. Even for those principals who do place high importance on results they do promote aspects of the school results, whether this is growth or grade achievements (P 1, P 7)
Market to keep enrolments going P 2	'So the big thing here is enrolments. You've got - you've got to keep your enrolments going' P 2	Enrolments determined by performance results so markets those results where they achieved well i.e. maths P 2	'But your enrolments are also determined very much by your results. ... We've - because our HSC results were very strong, particularly in Maths, [Xxxx] out there, trying to get profiles in each of the local newspapers, so that they know something about us. I do editorials. We advertise in [religious newspaper]. It's all about getting those numbers' P 2	Principals market results to bring in enrolments. They choose the high achieving results to promote....they promote these in those places where parents are likely to read (P2*)  Axial: surprised when first in the job of the marketing responsibilities – now sees it as quite creative if a few elements can combine – i.e. marketing the learning programs

<p>Uses learning partnerships betw. Primary and own school for marketing P 2</p>	<p>'We run - so our girls train young leaders from the primary schools... We also have the Scientists in Schools program, where the kids - our girls go to the primary school to do a bit of teaching. Then the kids come and visit here, and the girls set up experiments and all sorts of things... We have - oh, we have a Maths Competition Day, battle of the primary schools and things like that. So we - we really do try to do that. We're about to start a peer-reading program with across your road as well. So we've got 55 Year 10 girls who will be trained through a TAFE course in how to be peer literacy tutors. They'll be working with some Year 7 kids, Year 8 kids and more so, taking some - we're going to look after some little Year 2 kids across the road. P2</p>	<p>Needs enrolments P2 Perceives SS initiates programs in response to competition, ie. Gifted and talented programs – aligns with SS thinking P 2</p>	<p>'you've got to keep your enrolments going.....and just the way that we have to promote ourselves' P 2 'So, the - it's the Newman Research and Development Project. What it is - it's a gifted and talented project commencing with Year 7. I think it really found its heart, I think, in the concerns raised by the Catholic Education Office about the number of students who drop out of primary Catholic schools, and go into selective high schools... we would say the same thing' P 2</p>	<p>Surprised when first in the job of the marketing responsibilities – now sees it as quite creative if a few elements can combine – i.e. marketing the learning programs (P 2) While not direct relationship with assessment-focussed accountability principals initiates learning programs to attract students – notes that SS also does this (P 2*) Axial: SS modelling</p>
<p>Works towards improving results by working towards the criteria in the measure. Uses analogy of running race and the runner as means of example P 6</p>	<p>'Coming back to when I said about teaching to the test. The reality is - and no matter which way you want to skin the cat. If that's your measure - you are not going to fire a 100 metre sprinter at the Olympics doing 800 metre training. They'd be doing 100 metre sprints. The specificity is a key criteria in performance. So if you are going to perform in the HSC in this exam and this is what it looks like, then you've got to then give everything towards that' P 6</p>	<p>Students with lower results, limits their opportunities beyond school P 6 Moral imperative to provide students with best opportunity P 6</p>	<p>Now - and I can hear the cries of people complaining with teaching to the test. But the reality is, if you don't, the kids perform poorly. They get a lower result and you limit their opportunities beyond school P 6 So, I'm sorry. The moral imperative is to provide the kid with the best opportunity and no matter what your philosophical position is, I don't care. Because the kids are going to suffer and not get the opportunities they ought to get because we happen to have a philosophical position. I'm sorry, wrong place. Don't - this is not - because the kids - what happens to the kids is more important than anything else. So I'm pretty strong on these sorts of things, but in a nice way P 6 Now, if you get your internal assessment right, there</p>	<p>Principal unashamedly works staff to gaining the best performance results because getting a lower results 'limit their [students] opportunities beyond school' P 6</p>

Carries out keynote address with staff with persuasion (staff feedback) P 1	'It's working with staff, it's - I don't do it very often but every now and again I do some keynotes with the staff ... staff will say I'm very persuasive, so hopefully for me when I'm at my best it's about energising them to see beyond what they do every day.... 'P 1	Wants to mobilise staff to what they (principal) believes in P 1	should be great correlation between the two. Well, there are 19 kids out of whack. So in other words, for 19 kids in this group their ranking doesn't match what happened at HSC. So - and this is not just this year, last year as well. So, maybe they don't know the standards that's required in HSC. That's a possible issue. Two, their assessment doesn't prepare them for HSC P 6  'Hopefully they're usually inspiring enough and - So I suppose when you see people mobilised because they believe in what you've said to them, that's exciting' P 1	Principal uses persuasive keynotes to mobilise staff to their ways of thinking in response to results (P 1*) *Axial: unfavourable results, decreased enrolments, staff deployment, pedagogical leader, ECP. Believes in learning and performance results will follow. recognises need for short term fixes in order to build community and staff confidence
Affirms and celebrates the 'non' flier as much as those who attain high performance results P 10 Does not advertise the Bands of performance results from the HSC P 11	Will not advertise how many band 6s P 11	Unheralded heroes who did not make it to the auditoriums to receive a prize P 10 Does not take account of the learning – diminishes the work of the student who is on the cusp or the student where the teacher moved the student for example from a Band 3 to Band 4. Leaving out the majority of the population where there is learning gain P 11	But there are a lot of unheralded heroes of past HSC's of students who never made it to auditoriums to receive prizes, who have achieved results that are extremely satisfying from our perspective... It's about treating everyone with respect, it's about learning gain it really is, and I love the DeCourcy data I love it for that reason you know' P 10  'But in terms of just a raw number of performance results, and using them to say that we are the best school in the area or whatever, doesn't take any account of learning going on. It diminishes the work of the kid who's on	Students are treated with the same dignity irrespective of the performance results they receive. Principals treatment is because they see that just celebrating those students who receive high results leaves out many others (P 10, P 11*) Axial: Principal was the AP at P 10's school [Network] Principals make up their own minds about what they will publicise or not. P 11 is resolute in not advertising the number bands of performance from the HSC because they see that this diminishes the learning gain and

Does not act upon public accountability with staff...rather brings learning to foreground and surrounded self with people like themselves and a passion for learning P 10	The public accountability of results didn't worry me at all P 10	Learning was more important than results when they first arrived-even though results not the strongest in the geographical area P 10	<p>the cusp of being Band 4 who we pushed to a Band 5 or a Band 3 to a Band 4 – and that's some of our most significant teacher and student work ... DeCourcy says, here's your learning gain, and you're a H-plus or you're an L-plus, meaning you're helping the top more or you're helping the bottom more, or because you're putting some serious thought into it, you're helping both groups. That's the sort of analysis I'd like to be more involved in rather than how do we P 11</p> <p>get more band 6s ... If you think about how we advertise and what we're saying, we're essentially left out the majority of our population where there's significant learning gain P 11</p>	<p>leaves out the majority of the populations (P 11*)</p> <p>*Axial: P 11 specific about learning; restricts their conversations with others to be around learning as much as possible;</p>
			<p>'I was very fortunate there were a vast majority of teachers who were passionate about learning.... So I had to work with other people at the time, to work out ways to set up conditions to support that ... There were other schools locally in Wagga who were known as being the academic places to go, that got the results .... I needed to surround myself with people who not so much thought similarly around how to do things, but certainly had the overall objective of bringing learning to the forefront. .... involved restructures over a couple of years in a number of different levels, first of all with our college executive, even our office staff, certainly our library, our house system of pastoral care' P 10</p>	<p>Principals realised in their first years that the school was not seen as the academic school in the area. So instead of focussing on results they perceived that they needed to bring learning to the forefront and they surrounded themselves with people who had a similar passion (P 10*)</p> <p>*Axial: describes self as a lead learner ; they hold themselves to account for the ways they use data; competition for enrolments</p>

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 Principals enact their accountability responsibilities through professional learning

Requests staff to commit to a professional learning target P 6	‘Committing ourselves to professional learning. I've said to every staff member what are you going to learn this year, in terms of a skill that is going to help improve your teaching and learning. I don't care what it is. But you decide. But set yourself one thing that you are going to learn, commit to and do it, for this year ‘ P 6	Sets standards for staff at the beginning of the year P 6	‘This is what I set for the staff at the start of the year, that we display our highest professional ethical standards when teaching and relating to each other and students’ P 6	Tries for coherence – for example target setting with students there is also target setting with staff. Uses terms such as ‘highest professional ethical standards’ when asking staff to make annual commitments ( P 6*) *Axial: hold high expectations of staff and students to achieve high performance results as well; describes some actions as bulldozing; metaphor for leadership; salesman. Enrolled in Masters of System Leadership
Staff held publicly accountable in a staff meeting for the meeting literacy and numeracy outcomes in their KLA P 1	‘We had a whole series of workshops. Since that time, every faculty is accountable to get up and share with staff at a staff meeting for 10, 15 minutes on how their faculty is actually making a difference in those two areas’ P 1	Whether they like it or not (and in this principal’s mind they do not) principal knows that they are being judged by their NAPLAN results; these unfavourable results in literacy and numeracy affecting enrolments P 1	So going back to this literacy and numeracy it's not that I said that as being the be all and end all, far from it. But at the moment it's affecting our enrolments and so whether we like it or not we're being judged by our My School website and I have a responsibility to this community to ensure that our kids are also being well served by I guess the rigmarole around NAPLAN P 1	Principal recognises that they might not like that they are being judged by the NAPLAN data on MySchool however this is the measure in which they (believe) are being judged and this judgment in their mind is affecting enrolments. To combat this active measures are taken in the school i.e. holding staff to account for the literacy and numeracy outcomes in their KLA. This internal accountability to the whole staff could be seen as a mirror of the public account on MySchool (P 1)
Needs to accommodate SS Maths program P 1	‘we now have to be a RAMP school next year; so now my maths staff who are already working on this numeracy plan are now having to build another program in P 1	SS expectations that all schools will implement RAMP	So every school apparently has to go through RAMP and every school has to at some point end up with a particular – there’s all these system imposed – we’ll fund this particular project and every school will do X’ P 1	Principals see that they have little choice to implement learning programs initiated by the SS in their system responses to poor results , for e.g. maths in stage 4 P 1
Initiates particular learning strategies P 2	So we had a great day, looking at independent learning strategies P 2.	to improve mediocre results ...improve	[reflecting]...But both of us knew that the only way you could get out of that - these mediocre results - was to actually	Realisation by the principal that they needed to raise the bare – of expectation by staff of students.

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		teachers expectations of students P 2	raise that bar of expectation, .....[said to staff] You work incredibly hard, but you love the girls a bit too much and you don't let them fly. We talked at that point about helicopter teachers P 2	Principals reflected that they were being helicopter teachers P 2 Principals analyse, seek evidence and name the underlying issues with staff in terms of their deficits in teaching and learning. In this case it is the 'over servicing' – helicopter teaching of students ( P 2)
Instigates a Writer in residence P 1	I have a writer in residence who started yesterday targeting a group of girls, 8, 9 and 10, and really lifting their creative writing techniques P 1	Top end student not writing well enough for Band 6 P 1	Literacy, we're not stretching the bright kids, ....But our kids - if you ask us at end of Year 10, band 5 into band 6, we're not - the kids are not sophisticated enough in the use of their language to write well enough to get those band 6 result P 2	Principals respond to deficit area in NAPLAN results – not just in bottom end P 2 but also in the top end. Creative ideas such as a writer in residence ( P 1 )
Work with special needs	so we're doing a lot of work for our special needs' P1	Results need pushing up at bottom end	so we're doing a lot of work to push the kids at the bottom end up so we're doing a lot of work for our special need P 2	Principals respond to deficit area in NAPLAN results – not just in top end but also in the bottom P 2
Implements a continuous program of professional development on the design of lessons	...working with a team of people here, and that we can achieve that by quality teaching and learning which is improved by a continuous programme of professional learning of staff P 3	To improve learning gain	My view of assessment-focussed accountability is that I'm accountable for the learning gain of students ultimately P 3	Principal sees direct correlation between structured professional learning and improvement in learning gain? P 3* Axial: yet does not believe that teachers improve learning rather it is the cherry picking of particular students that improve results– going through the motions with professional learning?
Implements numeracy policy that says maths not too hard P 1	'I've said to my staff part of my numeracy policy for them is you will not say maths is too hard for girls. You will not show your weakness in maths' P 1	Perceives staff are not confident at maths themselves P 1	'Our maths teachers have said our kids can't do maths ... If you're not confident, I don't want you ever sharing that with our kids - that we see maths as a positive thing. P1	Principals analyse, seek evidence and name the underlying issues with staff in terms of their deficits in teaching and learning. In this case is the confidence level of Maths teachers ( P 1)

Limited their focus to only improving numeracy results P 1	'and our maths results are not great' P1	Sees must get 'this' right	'the success of a school is defined by MySchool .....So I think probably it has limited me in a sense that I feel like I've got to get this right first to tick a box P1... But at the moment it's affecting our enrolments and so whether we like it or not we're being judged by our My School website and I have a responsibility to this community to ensure that our kids are also being well served by I guess the rigmarole around NAPLAN P 1	Principals become single focussed on improving results for public MySchool when the stakes are high; decreasing enrolments and staff deployment (P 1)
Staff and students held to account				
Holds teachers to account ensuring students are focussed on learning; sets up a collective understanding about the invitation for learning with students, staff and parents P 11	Another simple thing, the notion that a teacher's great skill is to provide a kid in the classroom with the environment and the space to make a better choice around behaviour... The things that have mostly registered are the things that we decide we will do all together, so they can be quite explicit to kids and parents about this is how it works, which is even more reason why the lone wolf is no use to us' P 11	Frames learning with staff from the perspective of asking the teacher how did you help this student make some wise choices here?	'Teachers now are embarrassed if they back into a kid into the corner, and the rest of them are like, well who's getting paid the money here? Very powerful. P 11	Principal establishes a language and commitment framework to learning that all are aware of and collectively are engaged with. It appears to be compelling and from their view very powerful (P 11*)
Challenges teachers when they will not look at the fundamentals about their learning and teaching P 11	We've challenged quite a few of them. They tend to take long service leave or go off, P 11	Resolved – needs to do the challenge P 11	but again, who would allow that to continue? Personally, that's the challenging bit, but you can't not do it? P 11	Principal sees no choice but to challenge staff when they are not focussed on the learning with students (P 11)
Staff taken off senior classes until evidence of proven competence P 10	They left me with no other alternative to make - whether that's a - well I suppose it is a judgement, the judgment is you're not up to 10 senior teaching P 10	Growth in performance results did not occur P 10	the growth didn't come P 10	Teachers who are not attaining the results in HSC are taken off senior classes. Principal views that if the teacher takes themselves off the class before they (the principal ) does it is a better outcome (P 10).

Collective understandings developed across the whole school about the invitation to learning P 11	The thing we use a lot is the Christine Richmond notion of in every classroom we have got a learning conversation, and a managing conversation... Kids know that that's how teachers do it here. Then they roll up and you ask what happened, and they say, they invited me to come into the learning twice and I knocked them back. They know what I mean .....we've got to respond to the measurement that is going to be out there... but it's the daily teacher classroom practice that is our biggest leverage point. It's all of our teachers saying, we will adopt a common approach so that kids can be explicitly taught that's how we do things here. P 11	Believes the best learning leverage is the daily teacher classroom practice P 11	I just think that when you do respond to a learning need revealed by data like NAPLAN or HSC, we're typically encouraged to say, put your best teacher on this class because last year, this - I would say, go back to year seven, look at your whole school strategies, and lifting the profile of learning .... So that notion of the end result is out there, but it's the daily teacher classroom practice that is our biggest leverage point. P11	Some principals not lured into thinking that their best teachers should be on senior classes – rather these should be in Year 7. The 'daily teacher classroom practice' is seen as the leverage point ( P 11).
Teachers have begun to backward map for better literacy outcomes along the way and also in HSC P 12	We've got to adapt. So they've backward mapped everything from year 12 right back and they now, in year seven, with their essay writing, all they'll do is an introductory sentence. Two or three sentences in their body and write a very short conclusion. In year eight, they build on that skill, so they're taking them - they've changed their whole direction and they're finding this year's year 10 are streets ahead. They've done that now for two years P 12	Sees that good staff will be able to respond to results through authentic learning P 12	So if you have good staff, good teachers, that meets both of those contradictions. They'll teach well, kids will be having - engaged in authentic learning and you'll also probably get the results .. P 12  Whilst performance results are important, I think having happy classrooms with happy kids who want to come to school, who want to engage with what learning they want to engage in and be part of what they want to be part of in the school community is just as important. If you get that, as they get older, that relationship is so solid that a lot of kids do engage more, I think. That's when you get the performance P 12	Good staff, that is staff who analyse what is happening with the learning students are engaged in authentic learning then principal sees the results will be there P 12
Questions KLA coordinators on overall growth in	When our KLA coordinators do their analysis, not just using DeCourcy but also the Board of Studies results, we also ask	Raising the bar of expectation with staff and students, too much	But every kid is capable of achieving to their particular potential, and that's what it was about... Girls with poverty,	Principals engage in conversations – accountability conversations- about the growth in performance results –

performance results P 2 P 4 P 7	<p>them to tell - well if you did well. If you have - if you've noticed that there's been growth, or if you've noticed that things are doing really, really - you've done very well this year in your subject. What did you do differently this year? What made that difference? What might you then do next year? P 2. 'it's part of the conversation we have with our KLA coordinators and identification of areas for improvement' P 4. 'because I came from the 7 to 10 school, school certificate and NAPLAN and I definitely gently but was able to use NAPLAN to have some fairly serious conversations with a particular maths coordinator P 7</p>	<p>helicopter teaching – students are wanting more P 2 SS expectation P 2</p>	<p>learning support. But both of us knew that the only way you could get out of that - these mediocre results - was to actually raise that bar of expectation, both with your staff and with your kids.... One of the things I said to the staff was you're fantastic people.... You work incredibly hard, but you love the girls a bit too much and you don't let them fly P 2</p> <p>The office is involved in that discussion there but because the school is going well it's a light touch in my experience over the last 12 months P 4</p>	<p>from the BoS and DeCourcy data. This growth data is popular with principals because it aligns with their thinking that every individual can improve and that teachers can be part of this improvement (P 2, P 4, P 7)</p>
KLA coordinators expected to lead learning P 8	<p>I think they'd also feel that they're also given the right to be the leaders of the department. ....Yeah, we try and make them true leaders of learning and I think they know there's high expectations but they also know that they will get supported but they've got to be doing the job.....P 8</p> <p>Where I've sort of taken the view is we talk about the KLA co-ordinators not being administrators but being leaders of learning, well I'm just trying to work out how do we get them to lead this learning as opposed to myself or the leaders of pedagogy getting up and running a day because there is an impression for me that I am saying I want you to lead learning but as soon as I think there's anything important on the agenda, sorry you must step back and come to class P 8</p>	<p>Avoids telling KLA coordinators how to lead the content area P 8</p>	<p>I don't go to the English department and tell them how to teach English or I don't go and run their meetings P 8</p>	<p>Principals hold expectations that KLA coordinators can lead learning in their KLA – to challenge their teachers when need be (P 8,P 10, P 11)</p>
Principal holds staff accountable for SS	<p>I think people have got to see that you're on board with that all the time, that you're - but</p>	<p>Principal still held accountable to the SS</p>	<p>Also as being a principal of a school in that program is there's accountabilities</p>	<p>Principals hold a sense of nervousness when SS learning programs are</p>

<p>learnings program and at the same time principal is part of the program so that staff are engaged P 2</p>	<p>at the same time you're part of the evaluation of that program too. A good example of something that I did through that program, I interviewed all of the girls who were involved in that program. I had a little survey tool. I brought them in in groups of four kids at a time. I've been quite instrumental in that program P 2</p>	<p>programs – make sure staff report to you P 2 Ensuring that the staff are doing what the SS expects P 2</p>	<p>for me as well. One of the things we also have to do is to do a 3, 2, 1 reporting back, what's going well for us, what are we trying differently, what are some of our challenges. 1. We talk about how the program is going. 2. We've got to present our findings at a symposium at the end of the year. you make 2. sure that people are on board, you make 3. sure that they have the resources to be successful in that program, you make 4. sure that you have the personnel involved in that program who you can trust and who will see the program through to fruition, and who will be constantly coming back to you and reporting back to you P 2 It's juggling all of these things [SS projects] and making sure that we're doing exactly what we're supposed to be doing P 2</p>	<p>initiated in the school – monitor these closely because of the external funding of the project and at the same time need to be involved to help engagement by staff (P 2) *Axial: Appraisal year – sees that there is a lot going on</p>
<p>Insists KLA coord must be part of a team – and not just their KLA – says 'this is not good enough' P 11</p>	<p>That's hard work, because that means redirecting those who believe they soar on their own. .... I just tell them that's not good enough P 11</p>	<p>Sees that KLA leaders must have a concern for the students learning and well-being across their whole 'life' not limited to the one subject area P 11</p>	<p>It can never be good enough in a community that professes to have a concern of students' learning and well-being across their whole life, not just my subject .... You've got to part of a team of KLA coordinators who will work together to improve learning across the college. That notion that our best work is done in teams, and being a lone hero is no good. That's probably ineffectual. Save your energy... Some subject-based people are like that. My subject is the most important thing; nothing else matters P 11</p>	<p>Principal sees that it is important that individuals do not soar on their own – with performance results- rather than they work with others – with other KLA leaders. Principal sees this solo approach as ineffectual for the whole school, because the view limits to viewing students as a subject not as a person in holistic sense- their well-being included (P 11)</p>
<p>Requests clear commitment – with</p>	<p>But I wanted a clear commitment [KLA Coord.] that we are aiming for something</p>	<p>Middle management are the people who deliver</p>	<p>a lot of this is the hard yakka of this is in our middle managers and I strongly</p>	<p>Principals are determined to hold those in middle management to</p>

strategies - from staff (higher for these kids and more importantly, KLA Coordinators) aiming for better results for students P 6	that we've got really clear strategies about how we are going to get there P 6	learning (and results and yet they need resourcing) P 6	feel that that's an area of - that is hugely under resourced and an area where there has got to be some serious concentration of thinking, strategising around,..... The difference between one place and another is how do you deliver that and how you deliver that [learning and results] is through your middle management, your leadership team and your middle management structure P 6	account for strategies in delivering improved performance results for students however they see this group to be the most under resourced in the SS. Principals impress on the importance of these roles – KLA coord. roles (P 6; P 11; P 10)
Asks staff – ‘bulldozes’ to set targets with groups that are performing poorly P 6	I never bulldozed. Or maybe I do sometimes. But the times are tough when you have to - another faculty, for example, gave me their HSC analysis data and I will locate it. ... Set the standard - the target, work out what you've got to do to get them there and get on with it. Rather than telling me that oh well, it's not as good a group, so we dumb it down. Well, what's all that going to mean, I guarantee you, is lower results.... Yeah. I said to them I want to know what are the targets we are aiming for and this was the whole diatribe about how [unclear] for business is as good as the previous group and therefore the targets. I said well, wrong answer. Well, okay, I accept that the group may not be as good. I said well, wrong answer. Well, okay, I accept that the group may not be as good P 6	Poor results for several years in one faculty P 6	It was poor, because they weren't reflecting about what they can - basically, they said to me - because I've asked them for setting of targets. So how many Band 6s and... Yeah. I said to them I want to know what are the targets we are aiming for and this was the whole diatribe about how [unclear] for business is as good as the previous group and therefore the targets P 6	Principals target certain KLA because of poor performance in results for a number of years and number of interventions (P 6); Describes the action as bulldozing (P 6)
Uses empirical evidence to challenge inappropriate structural practices in learning – i.e. streaming P 11	I'm quite prepared to lose someone by pushing too hard. So I'll say we will not give staff meeting time to you unless you are informed. If I come with something and say, here's what an expert says works in different settings, and you're going to counter that, I want someone else to say, here's someone who said it didn't work ... So when they say we're going to continue to grade maths	Streaming is unfair and ineffectual for the majority of students in their learning P 11	So we shouldn't do that. [because of the negative experience for students through empirical research on streaming ] P 11	Principals expend their energies in places that count – for eg challenging teachers on streaming practices and educating teachers empirically of the inappropriate practice (P 11)

	<p>classes because we believe that it works to improve learning outcomes, I'll say just collect the pieces of evidence. I've given them a file that high of stuff that says it does not work, they would never do it in the United States because all the black and Hispanic kids in the bottom classes, and we continue to do it in some isolated pockets of Australia, this being one of them , and makes them stop P 11</p>			
<p>Set standard and work out how to get students there P 6</p>	<p>So what do we have to do to lift them? That's what I wanted to know..... Set the standard - the target, work out what you've got to do to get them there and get on with it. P 6</p>	<p>Lowering the bar does not lift the results</p>	<p>Rather than telling me that oh well, it's not as good a group, so we dumb it down. Well, what's all that going to mean, I guarantee you, is lower results. .. We can't lift them if we lower the bar and going back to that statement, lower the bar, close the gap. Well, what's all that going to mean, I guarantee you, is lower results P 6</p>	<p>Principals who are resolute in improving performance results are resolute with teacher sin how to get there (P 6)</p>
<p>Pinpoints deficit of those people in middle management positions P 6</p> <p>Works on the deficits in middle management from two levels; lower layer groups of teachers saying this is our moral purpose P 6</p>	<p>The next level down, which is our middle managers, I have an average tenure here of 15 to 20 years. They've been in those roles for 15 to 20 years. Now, that's not a problem in itself, but it does lead to complacency. It does need to well, 'why change? We are doing alright'. But we've - like, there is a whole language there around some people in that area where they are very reluctant to do anything different P 6</p> <p>'....and so I'm working at two levels. One I'm supporting and developing that layer, [those in middle management [ but I'm really talking to the mass, the lower, to say let's push it up.... - if you get a group of teachers saying yeah, this is our moral purpose, this is why we are doing it, that assessment is not good, why did we do this three years in a</p>	<p>Difficult to change peoples' thinking, move them on and losing younger staff P 6</p> <p>Some staff need to move on because they will not change; younger staff want to leave P 6</p>	<p>The [unclear] contract process with them is pretty ordinary. It's really hard to move anyone on. I have another problem where I've got - because I've grown, I've got a lot of younger people who come in and they say to me, after two or three years I'm going to go, because no-one else is moving, so I'm not going to get a job here as a middle manager because no-one moves, which is true P 6</p> <p>They've been in those roles for 15 to 20 years. Now, that's not a problem in itself, but it does lead to complacency. ....[they say] 'why change? We are doing alright. The contract process with them is pretty ordinary. It's really hard to move anyone on. .... I have another</p>	<p>Principals in their determination for improving performance results describe one of their strategies as pushing down and pulling up. The senior leadership people are pushing down on those in KLA coordinator positions and the younger members of staff are pushing up. Principals in this case describes those in the KLA coordinating positions as middle managers (P 6*)</p> <p>*Axial: Tosses in the word moral purpose (Masters of Ed leadership from University that holds this philosophy ). Middle management term noted</p>

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	row, chuck that one away. If they are driving it day to day then they are going to push it up from underneath, which makes it a lot more - a lot stronger P 6		problem where I've got - because I've grown, I've got a lot of younger people who come in and they say to me, after two or three years I'm going to go, because no-one else is moving, so I'm not going to get a job here as a middle manager because no-one moves, which is true P 6	
Finds out what is happening with teachers before acting P 7	You've got to find what's really happening. ... See, I think too when you come into a school it's really hard not to be taken by the smoke and mirrors P 7	Teacher who lecture as a strategy get top results – confusing P 7	Absolute [lectures], that's what she did. You just think, how is that teaching them [lecturing] and yet she still nailed those every year P 7	Principals sees that it is important to know what is happening in the classroom – however they recognise that it is hard to know this and to fully understand why some teachers are successful and others are not – can be easily fooled by 'smoke and mirrors'. Principals do not have the answer about what brings about authentic learning and results (P 7)
Asks the DeCourcy questions of the teacher – about teaching P 12	So it's always - and I can remember from the first time I ever heard John DeCourcy speak, he said, ask the questions. ... Two years ago, chemistry results were appalling. Absolutely appalling and the top kids in chemistry had band sixes in every other subject. So I asked the question what has happened in chemistry that these kids could get a band six in every other subject, but not here. Now, that particularly teacher came to see me personally and he said, he was mortified. My best friend in the [...] department. I said, well, what happened? Why? What happened? He said, I think I gave them an overinflated opinion of themselves P 12  It has knocked his confidence and he chooses just to teach junior school. Now, he and I had	The answers to the questions help balance out the contradictions; not accepting mediocrity, hope that the light comes on P 12	I was disgusted with the chemistry results and I believe that it affected two people from getting 95s and 96s to 99s in ATARs and yeah, they were disappointed. Because they came and asked me, what happened with our [subject]. So they're querying. They said but we had those marks... If you start - you ask the right questions of your teachers, the light comes on and they change their proactive... It's even like [experienced teacher] with two unit studies of [subject] saying, we've got the wrong kids doing it. I said, it's not just about your results. It's what do these kids get from that subject. So we've always go to keep that in the back of our own mind. Now, that's not	Principal uses the DeCourcy questions to hold conversations with staff and these help answer some of the contradictions or puzzles that may be present, sees this as not accepting mediocrity. Sometimes the light comes on for the teacher – the principal sees that sometimes they need to go around an issue for the acceptance even though others may criticise this approach. However they believe any other way does not honour people. (P 12)

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	<p>quite an amenable, amiable conversation P 12</p> <p>Now, that's not accepting mediocrity either. .... Ask the questions around the teacher. What has happened through the year, what's happening in the classroom. ....</p> <p>I don't even know if it's challenge and sometimes I find you've got to go around people to come back and throw an idea around Have you thought about where you are at? What are you doing to get a bit of change? Then the light comes on... and that's one way I do work P 12</p>		<p>accepting mediocrity either. That's understanding and it goes back to DeCourcy P 12</p> <p>...and some people would say I don't challenge people. They say, I don't tell people - I don't go and say to somebody, I've had a conversation with so-and-so and I've told them this isn't good enough and that's not good enough... That doesn't honour the person. It doesn't honour a human being in any way shape or form P 12</p>	
<p>Acts in a measured way with regard to expectations about performance results in the HSC P 4</p>	<p>But I guess I am measured in the sense that I understand my school community and my touchstone is the kids, the parents and the staff, you know P 4</p>	<p>Teachers want to do well in HSC P 4</p>	<p>Teachers - in my experience here at [school], teachers want to do well and there is a public accountability for HSC courses, definitely, in the school.... P 4</p>	<p>Teachers want to do well with regard to attaining favourable performance results in HSC so the principal needs to act in a a measured way – especially not placing too much importance on performance results (P 4*)</p> <p>*Axial: NP program in the school</p>
<p>Avoids placing pressure on staff in areas where there is low performance P 4</p>	<p>I certainly in my 12 months haven't put any direct pressure on English to perform and so it hasn't been part of my agenda, it hasn't been part of meetings P 4</p>	<p>Staff self-impose their own accountabilities; sees that a certain subject has worked tirelessly for a few years to sort the problem areas in the subject P 4</p> <p>Sees that staff take pride in 'doing things well' P 4</p>	<p>For years the [subject] staff have tried to get their courses above... For years [subject] has been under pressure here for a variety of reasons and a lot of it has got to do with their mix of kids and things like that. For years [subject] has been under pressure here for a variety of reasons and a lot of it has got to do with their mix of kids and things like that. They work very, very hard, the [subject] staff, to try and improve. I think there was a level of frustration there that they weren't getting the results and last year the [Xxxx] course got over that hump and they were above state average. You know it's a great cause of celebration</p>	<p>Teachers want to do well with regard to attaining favourable performance results in HSC so the principal sees that they must act in a measured way – especially not placing too much importance on performance results (P 4*)</p>

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Uses NAPLAN Year 5 data when enrolling in year 7 P 2	I guess an example [enacting their accountability responsibilities] would be all of our Year 7 - so when students enrol in the school, they've got to bring in their NAPLAN results P 2	Sees that they are accounting for Year 7 NAPLAN results P 2	because the pressure.... it's self-imposed and it's around teacher pride and teacher - our staff P 4	Also this is a highly professional school. We take pride in doing things well here and it's not about show, it's about doing things well.... [previous principal] drove that agenda here and Director of Studies has a significant role in working with KLA coordinators around accountability, school improvement and getting things done and doing it well.... The school has got a good reputation for doing well so there is a degree of professional accountability for teachers in that little process there P 4	Principals now insist on seeing the Year 5 NAPLAN results before entering Year 7 because they perceive that the SS holds them accountable for Year 7 NAPLAN (P 2)
Using persuasion strategies for improving performance results					
Improving results in areas that are measured P 6; P 14	I'm trying to get my staff to understand the reasons why we need to do this [improving performance results] P 6	Hard for teachers to argue against getting the best results for students - they deserve it [a 'better output']argument P 6	I'm trying to get my staff to understand the reasons why we need to do this. ...Not because someone else is watching and we are going to be competing, because that's what the kids need to perform, in order to give them life chances....Kids deserve this. Then it's very hard to argue against it P 6.	'I suppose to me to see that if we were in a DeCourcy analysis to be giving out	Principals engage in persuasive strategies with staff to argue that aiming for performance results (mainly) was what students deserve ( P 6*, P 14*). P 6 uses the moral imperative as a leverage for persuading teachers to improve performance results (P 6)

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			our Year 12 kids. I suppose that's really important for me in terms of that the output for the want of a better word. That if we're giving our kids really the best opportunities, when they move out into o the workforce or tertiary studies or wherever P 14	*Axial: P 6 – career trajectory; judged by performance results. P 14 results below state averages
Get messages out to people about a strong learning culture – the language, the marketing P 6 Questions teacher practices that go against the empirical evidence i.e. streaming P 11	...How you act it out is how do you get the message into them? Through your structure, your communication, your marketing, the language, the culture. That's what we are trying to change here, is to build a really strong learning culture, amongst the staff and the students P 6 Then you can say to them, you know this, or you know it now, and you're still proposing that we grade our year seven and eight maths classes? Some of you are even proposing that we grade them as soon as they step in here, before we've had a chance to teach them with a specialist maths teacher? Once you say it in naïve, simple terms like that, they can't not question P 11	Ned to be clear why you are wanting results to improve – increases the likelihood of staff 'buying it' P 6 Not a lazy profession but busy and will not think about the fundamentals about learning unless drawn into it P 11	In a nutshell, I think it's good we are accountable and I think accountability needs to go all the way down, right through to the classroom teacher would need accountability. But accountability to a moral imperative is more important than accountability for the sake of accountability. So, I think it's really important to be very clear about we're doing this for the right reasons and if you do that you are more likely to get staff on board to buy it P 6 We are not a lazy profession, but we are a busy profession that won't question the fundamentals unless drawn to it, so I can understand how they can be ten years {and again, off the record, this is a time warp, an absolute time-warp in terms of fundamental understandings of some of those KLAs, except for the isolated, frustrated person who's been tearing their hair out P 11	Principal pushes for permeating a culture of performance but sees that staff will only 'buy it or come on board' if the push for results is carried out for the right reasons (P 6) Other principals use empirical evidence to challenge teacher practice, because the practice is not 'right' i.e. streaming P 11
Mobilises little pockets of people working together and talking to one another P 11	Whereas you pull it back down, you say, we'll make this work, what do we need? Once you get them going in little pockets, those people start talking to one other. That's certainly what happened at [previous school] , and certainly what's happening here P 11	Has a confidence in self – language to convince and an understanding (about learning) P 11	You waste no energy. I don't waste one jot of time worrying about naysayers. I just work with those people with the capability and the inclination to have ago I just don't listen to the others. You have to be a little bit thick skinned. You've never seen people drop away quicker than the person who, when your	Principal has confidence in their language to convince others and enough understanding *(about learning) that the direction they are going in will work i.e. working in teams. Principal will not waste time with naysayers. * will find out what

				<p>bright young things realise that person blocking things hasn't actually got an idea. They just want things to stay the same. [fac; how do you do this? .. I've got confidence. I haven't got an overconfidence that I have got the language to convince. So that helps, and I've got enough understanding - I'll say to people that I've never had an innovative idea in my life, and I don't plan to start having one now P 11</p> <p>Fac: So you have a reasonable level of confidence in your persuasive?</p> <p>Only because I will use, I will do the work to find out what the experts are saying, and I will take the time to find a setting where it has worked. That whole notion of let's just sit around and plan something here based on looking at this site for the least ten years? No P 11</p>	works – empirically and from other schools P 11
	<p>I'll say, what we do is we look outside. We find someone with a similar problem. There's so much educational research now. Those of you who go through university saying, this is all a waste of time, and learn nothing at uni, you can keep saying that - but it's now incorrect. If you get back to research centres and universities and the leading educationalists, they're telling us things that are undeniably true, and.... I make it clear that I've got little regard for anyone that relies on common sense or their acquired wisdom if there hasn't been a major research contribution to that P 11</p>				
Set targets, need to use data work collaboratively ; design and deliver programs P 6	So we need to be self-reflective. We need to set targets. We need to use data. We need to work collaboratively. We need to design and deliver programs, lessons, assessments of highest quality P 6	The belief that students deserve it (equates this belief with their moral purpose) P 6	They deserve it. Call it a moral imperative, whatever you want to call it. Literature is full of that stuff. But I think that's the power and that's what I'm trying to do with my staff, is to say we've got to give these kids the best possible chance and that's the reasons why we are doing it, full stop P 6	Principals engage in persuasive strategies with staff to argue that aiming for performance results (mainly) is what students deserve, calling this a moral imperative (P 6).	
Sells the Gifted and Talented program P 2	Fac: Them seeing how you're engaged in the Gifted and Talented program, they would see that you're not just out for getting performance results?	Focus on learning is more persuasive with teachers than getting results P 2	With that one, we've always sold it as making a difference to the pedagogy of the school P 2	Principals are aware that programs and directions are more persuasive with staff if they are focused on improving learning for students (P 2)	

<p>Gets critical mass on their side to change middle management thinking and practices – uses moral purpose as a convincer P 6</p>	<p>No, no, no. No, they don't. P 2</p> <p>So if you create a critical mass within those people and you get them on your side and they understand the moral purpose of what you are doing P 6</p>	<p>Utilises the critical mass to change thinking with middle management – in order to bring about improved results</p> <p>Own experiences as a young teacher with their departmental head influences ideas that the staff in the lower layer being empowered to ask hard questions. Viewed the head as 'lazy and a bludger' P 6</p>	<p>Fac: Then you will be thinking they would be younger in age. That they will be then putting pressure on the middle management?</p> <p>P 6: 'Yeah. They are keen. There is a lot of very keen - and they are on mass, because that's the most of your staff P 6</p> <p>'...and that - and I think back to when I was a teacher. I worked in a department with a very dysfunctional head. Well, I didn't sit back and just go well I've got a dysfunctional head, so I'm just going to be average. So I said right, I don't like why we are doing this, so I'll rewrite the whole program. He said - because he was lazy and a bludger - oh great, you go and do it. Well, within a couple of years I'd rewritten the program. I changed - things were moving. Not because of the leader, because I happen to be one of the people - so I was sort of using that as my thinking. That if you empower good young people in the school, not just young, but good people, to ask the hard questions P 6</p>	<p>Uses pressure techniques of critical mass to change those leaders holding KLA coordinator positions; hustler, persuader, the convincer is the moral purpose.[leadership strategy] (P 6) – Memo: is there a theory on sales, persuasion, convincer, the hustler ?</p> <p>Axial: is influenced by their own negative career experiences as a teacher in the ways they view the KLA coordinator</p>
<p>Expects that teachers improve every year – declare three goals and provide the evidence that they have improved P 11</p>	<p>That's probably the thing I keep saying to people, mostly kids; because learning and maturity are developmental, we expect to get better every year. Once you start saying the same thing to teachers and leaders, and most start to get a little bit jittery about that, we expect to get better at this job that we're doing over the course of the year through our professional learning, through an explicit identifying of areas we'd like to improve in,</p>	<p>Leadership must have the language of learning and teaching first – final purpose must be improving student learning P 11</p>	<p>That means a leadership that has the language of learning and teaching first, and authoritative by saying okay, we're charged with this leadership position; we have to have high personal standards and high expectations of others, high expectations of our professional community, with the final purpose being to improve student learning</p>	<p>Principal believes that they must have a leadership that has the language of learning and teaching first with the final purpose to improve learning. As such the principal expects that teachers can improve each year; set goals, declare these and then provide evidence that they have improved (P 11)</p>

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	and saying here are our three key goals and you've heard that thing about, identify them, publicise them as loudly and widely as you can, and collect some data to say that you're doing it. That makes it clear to everyone. If you're failing them, then you've got to identify and name, and you're going to assess whether we achieved what it is that we set out to achieve P 11		outcomes and that notion of an explicit improvement agenda P 11
Does not accept students from being prevented in choosing their subjects – intervenes when teachers counsel students away from certain subjects; affirms those teachers who take a stand and allow students to choose subjects which may be difficult for them P 12	I'm maybe a little bit uneasy that this year our year tens into elevens with their subject choices, we're having interviews next week to decide whether they've chosen the right subjects. But ultimately, you do it. If you want to do that subject, you do it. I know one member of staff last year and actually rang a parent and said I don't want your child. Your child has chosen the wrong subject. They can't do this subject. I suggest they find another subject. Now, that was a low performing child. This teacher didn't want the marks to go down. I spoke to that person. Got a totally different answer, of course. But it was my way of challenging saying; I know you rang that parent. I wasn't privy to the conversation, but it's not a really good thing to do. So that happens a little bit. [Unclear] looking for - teachers wanting, some teachers now, only wanting the right kids in their class. Not on. That's not on. That's not who we are P 12	Sees that when teachers select who and who cannot enter particular courses as feathering their own nest P 12	[Teacher] said to [SS advisor], you will not tell me that a child cannot do a subject. If that child wants to be in my class, because he's got a passion for that subject, I will welcome them with open arms. Powerful, powerful stuff. And I actually went to him after we had finished that meeting and said, well [Xxxx]. That was absolutely fantastic, because that's what learning's about. If you have a kid who loves ancient history, they mightn't do well at it, but they love the subject you don't rule them out of doing the course' P 12 'Feathering their own nest P 12
			Principals affirm and counsel those teachers on the issue of subject selection. Principal believes students should be able to choose their subject irrespective if the student will not perform well; affirms those who take any student and counsel those who will not (P 12)

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## **Appendix 16: Axial Coding Paradigm: Expectations of Principals**

### **Axial coding paradigms**

The purpose of this research was to investigate how principals' views of their accountability responsibilities – for learning. The investigation aimed to reach to how their views influenced the ways in which they enacted their accountability responsibilities.

The Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach to axial coding creates a clear scaffold for identifying the central phenomenon- and at times key phenomena. By using Strauss and Corbin's matrix – or coding paradigm (Gibbs, 2010) - step by step, the process identifies the central phenomenon or several key phenomena. The matrix has the capacity to position the causal conditions, intervening strategies and the contextual factors in relationship with the central phenomenon. From here the strategies and consequences which the participating principals identified can be logically explained. Gibbs (2010) posits that researchers appreciate the Strauss and Corbin approach because it appears more orderly and the reader can see the emergence of the categories in a systemic way. The following approach aims to follow such an orderly approach through a systematic application of their coding paradigm. As central phenomena are identified, the beginnings of a story line is constructed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). After such identification, and continuing with Strauss and Corbin's approach, the aim is identify a core category as the central phenomenon. A more sophisticated and detailed story line is consequently constructed. The firm identification of the core category allows selective coding to occur; systematically relating the core category to other categories.

However this paper only investigates the axial codes or the relationships between codes using the axial coding paradigm. Each coding paradigm begins with the naming the open codes and naming the codes they relate to in a box. From there Strauss and Corbin's matrix is applied. A narrative accompanied the first few coding paradigms. As the coding paradigms are constructed the identification of the central phenomena occur and a storyline

begins to be constructed- in the accompanying document called Core category (ies) – Central phenomena – which I call the repetitive pattern in the theory.

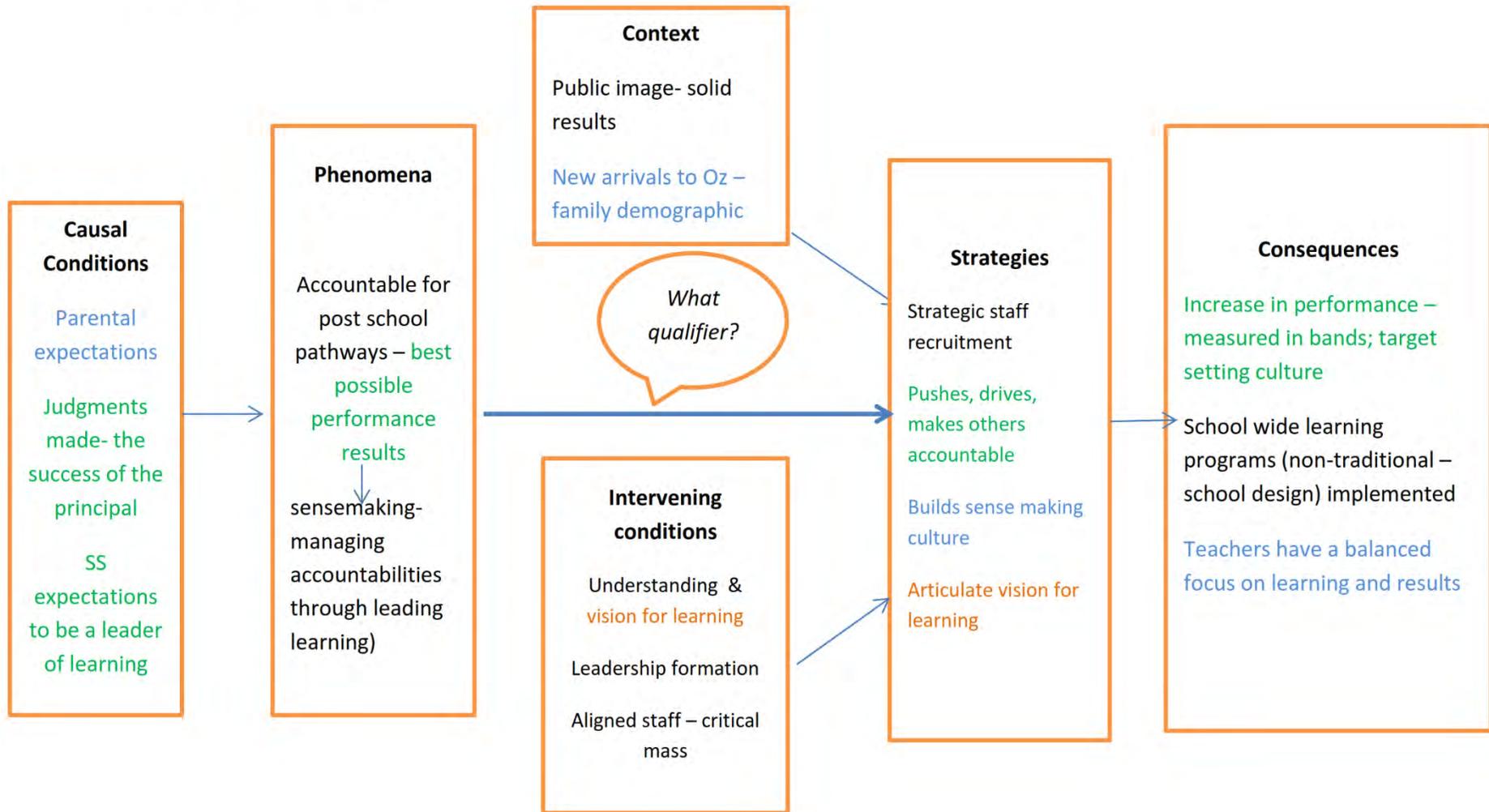
### **Coding paradigm 1.1**

*Naming of open codes and naming of the related open codes. Open codes: Ensures multiple opportunities and pathways for students; university, trade P 4; P 10; Giving best possible chance for post school options P 6. Accountable to students and families for post school pathways. Related open codes: Principal's philosophical view of education -educating for the future; No enrolment pressure, high parental expectations, parents are new arrivals, Follows the rules, sees others judge them on results (P 6) Builds sense making culture – ensures teachers hold a balance between results and holistic learning (P 4). Critical mass of committed staff to learning ( P 10)*

#### *Causal Conditions of Phenomena Related to Accountability Responsibilities*

There were three casual conditions giving rise to the phenomenon of the principals' accountability priorities. These causal conditions were parental expectations, judgments made by others and the school system expectations in the leadership of learning. The first causal condition consisted of the high parental expectations to do the best for their children. Principals explained that the families of these students gave a high priority to ensuring opportunities for their children in their post school pathways. In particular parents would ask principals 'what can you do for my daughter?' (Participant 7) or 'Tell me about what percentage of your kids .... go into universities' (Participant 2). These questions were explained to mean the university opportunities that the principal could guarantee for their child. The parental expectations were experienced as a form of an accountability as Participant 2 explains: '...accountabilities in the eyes of the parents are very, very, tricky. Very important.'

Figure 1 Coding paradigm 1.1.



The judgment of principals based on the students' performance results was the second causal condition. This causal factor gave rise to the phenomenological views of principals' accountability responsibilities. Participant 6 experienced some these judgments acutely; 'So how many Band 6s- .... I am going to be measured using HSC and NAPLAN'. The experience of being judged was less acute by others yet was an experienced reality: 'But the reality is that we're measured by them [results]' (Participant 7).

The third causal condition to the phenomena was one of the key functions of the principal's role, determined by school systems, consisted of the principal being a leader of learning.

Two exemptions p 3 (contextual condition- intense competition) and p 6 (career trajectory?)

*Phenomenon Resulting from Parental Expectations and Judgments about Principals' Successes*

These causal conditions of high parental expectations, judgments and school system expectations of principal's role led to the key central phenomenon - the particular ways that principals made sense of their accountabilities and/or manages accountabilities through leading learning. Part of the sensemaking was holding themselves to account to students –and their families for post school options and pathways to students. Favourable HSC results provide students with choice, a university or technical course, a trade or a job. The post school pathways, included for one principal, the best possible performance results in the HSC exam. They expressed commitment to giving students 'the best chance' in life (Participant 6). Yet the opposite experience was held for another where they state 'public accountability of results didn't worry me at all' (Participant 10), even when their contextual factors would suggest another response (see next paragraph). Principals who emphasised that they were accountable for these multiple opportunities and post school pathways for students aligned their emphasis with their philosophical views of education. They viewed that the purpose of schooling as

being a preparation for a student's future – as distinct from schooling being a learning experience for the present moment. Participants' views of schooling being future focussed also held that the purpose of schooling was developing the young person's skills for future success: 'Whether it be straight into a trade, whether it be in a volunteer situation overseas, around being - having the skills to be set up for success' (Participant 10).

Another part of the sensemaking was managing accountabilities by leading learning...  
add

### *Context in which Management and Leadership Strategies Developed*

Management and leadership strategies were developed in response to the phenomenon of making sense of the accountabilities – in this case being accountable to students and families for post school pathways. These strategies were influenced by contextual factors. The factors included the public image of the school and the demographic of the current families. Public image was healthy when 'their results were solid' (Participant 4). Public image depended on two factors. One, the performance results from HSC and NAPLAN and two, the public promotion of such. Public image was healthy when 'their results were solid' (Participant 4). Promotion depended on favourable performance results (which invariably were compared to state averages). Participant 6 explains: 'You've got to tell the good story [*favourable performance results*]. You can't just build enrolments on folklore'. Even though accountability responsibilities are not to a set of league tables, Participant 3 is also pragmatic when they explain their beliefs about whom they are accountable to and the public expectations: 'I don't believe that my accountability is to a set of league tables but nonetheless I work within the real world where I know that those league tables are constantly put before the public'.

The second contextual factor was parental expectations. Parents expected more for their children - voicing these expectations to principals - than what had been on offer for them as new arrivals to Australia. However the expectations were not focussed on a particular score

or rank with their HSC results. Rather, parents were interested in what the performance results could offer the student in terms of a post school pathway.

### *Intervening Conditions Influencing Management and Leadership Strategies*

In addition to the contextual factors, there were also intervening conditions, which influenced the management and leadership strategies. The intervening conditions were the importance of understanding and holding a vision for learning, leadership formation and critical mass of staff committed to principals' views. Understanding and holding a vision for learning was influential in being able to manage being both accountable for and also leading learning. Participant 10 explains the importance of understanding learning in the context of leading learning and also managing the learning accountabilities: 'I probably didn't have ... a really broad understanding - the breadth of understanding around learning that I do now. That was something that I needed to do, the director was very upfront with me at the time of appointment that that was the one concern that he held, and that he named that before I started and I'm very thankful that he did.' Holding a vision for learning was another important influence in being able to carry out leadership strategies in managing accountabilities. 'So I'd say that having a vision for learning. Having a - as a leader you've got to continually be finding out. Whether that's by reading or by - I went to a conference in - the XXXX conference last week in Melbourne which was all about the brain and learning. So bringing that information then back to staff ... But our sharing that so we, having a school wide pedagogy, having a school wide vision for learning and being able to say to parents and I suppose the community as a whole - this is the way that we see learning here and what we consider to be important' (Participant 7).

The second intervening condition that influenced the ways in which the leadership and management strategies were carried out was leadership formation. Notably, the leadership formation which was pastoral influenced the principals' beliefs in carrying out their leadership of learning. 'I'd come from a strong pastoral wellbeing sort of career path to that

point in time, and whilst I saw myself as a competent and capable teacher that had taught to stage six, I probably didn't have the depth of understanding around curriculum and .... the breadth of understanding around learning' (Participant 10). Principals recognised that by not holding a Key Learning Area Coordinator role as part of their formation influenced the ways they managed leading learning and its accountabilities. Participant 14 recognises that their leadership formation influences their capacities to lead by emphasising their formation in pastoral care and well-being: 'As a deputy I was stronger in pastoral care and well-being and that's where most of my leadership formation [came from].

At the same time participating principals made comparisons with other principals and the possible tensions that they may experience – especially those principals in schools where principals are competing for enrolments. Surrounds elf with those who had passion for learning ( p 10) Career

#### *Critical Mass*

If you want to change the staff, you have to change the leadership before you can change the staff. P 14

#### *Strategies for Managing and Leading with Accountability Responsibilities*

Part of maintaining a healthy public image was about active promotion of results healthy it was important to monitor results and to see how they were perceived by the public. Recognition that the public 'want to see the results' and pragmatically 'you've got to go through that process of promoting great results' (Participant 10).

Leadership strategies (*strategies*): 'Drove' home represents some characteristics of the x theory of leadership; strategic in recruitment of staff – employing ex-students; building a sense making culture – keeping holistic learning and the achievement of performance results in balance (needs a full narrative here).

**and using the tricks I learnt from [mentor] you find every little bit of good news that you can and you twist it and weave it and embellish it so that the very best academic news gets out there in the league table narrative' P 3**

### *Consequences of Managing and Leading Strategies*

One participant 'drove' home the importance of attaining high performance results in HSC Bands, for the sake of providing the best possible chance for students— even though they knew tailoring learning to high % of Bands was not 'quality learning' (P 6). Whereas others sought ways for current staff to model career pathways for students, for example by employing ex-students (P 8). One other participant ensured that teachers held a balance in their perspective of learning and attaining favourable performance results. The principal perceived that their role was to build a sense-making culture with regard to holistic learning and performance results (P 4). As a result of their (P 4, P 8) strategies school wide learning programs were introduced i.e. a literacy program and a creative tailored intervention program.

### **Coding paradigm 1.2**

**1.2. Naming of open codes and naming of related open codes.** **Open codes:** More concerned those students individually do as well as they can – performance results P 7 / more interested equity and equality for the learner P 10 / Does not pay attention to performance results. **Related open codes:** Principals view holistic learning more important than 'endpoint' performance results. Empirical understandings of learning and teaching – influences the content around the leadership strategies ( P 10) Specificity about learning: engagement, real life, integrated, teams, collaboration. Sees that there needs to be a vision for learning (P 7) Philosophical views of learning and education – equity and equality of the learner more important than performance (P 10). Make decisions holistic learning more important (P 7, 10, 11)// Leadership strategies focus on learning – engages in professional learning with staff (P 7); Enacts a language of leadership is the language of learning P 11. Uses data for information to implement P 10. Esteems the utility of the SMART and DeCourcy data (all P); uses the tools for data analysis and aligns strategic planning

### *Causal Conditions of Phenomena Related to Accountability*

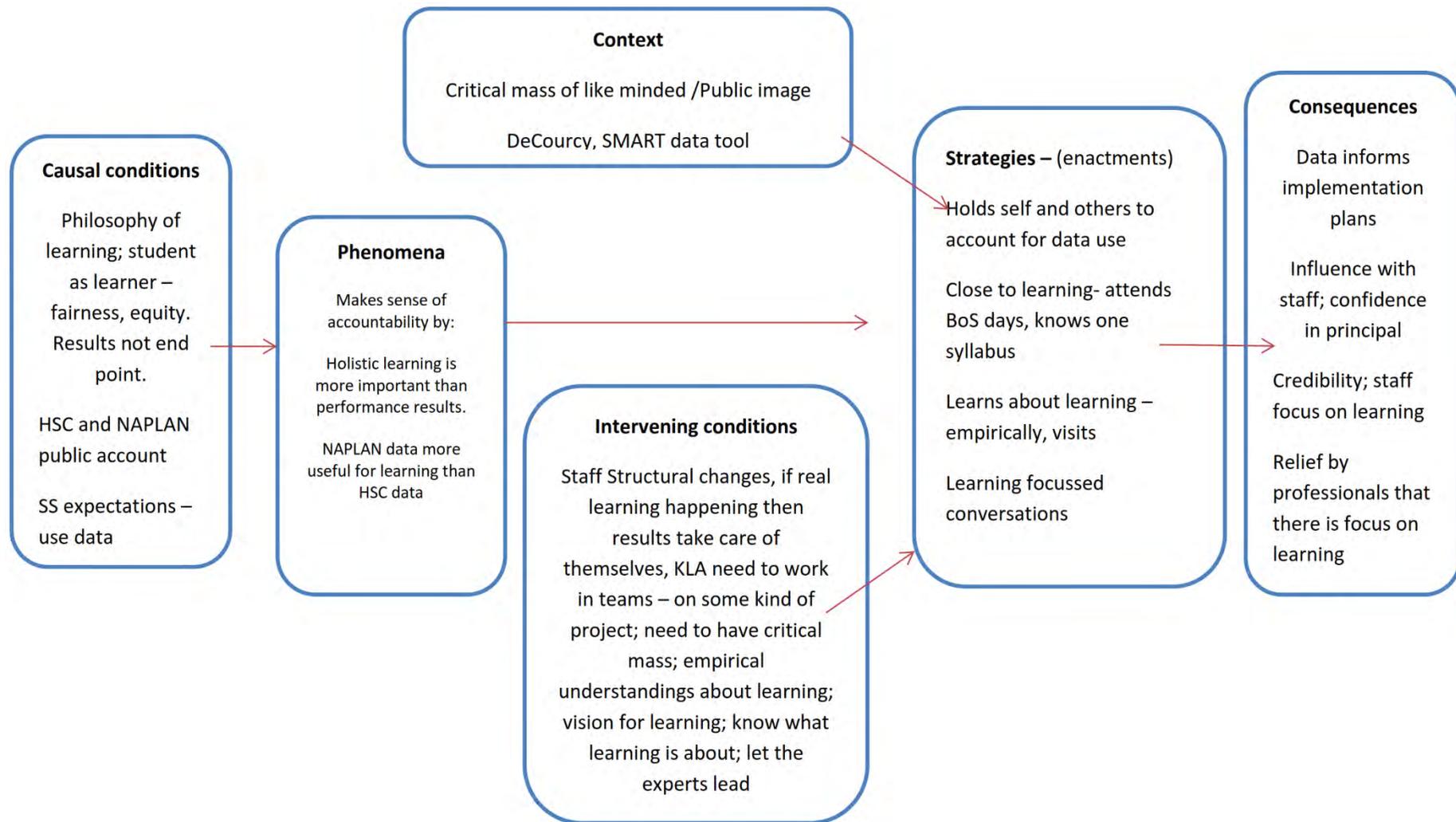
Several types of causal conditions emerged which led to the phenomenological views related to accountability. These causal conditions were a. the participants' philosophies of education b. the public disclosure of HSC and NAPLAN performance results and c. school system expectations to use data from the external tests; HSC and NAPLAN.

Philosophies of education, the first causal condition, included views about learning and the nature of the learner. These were part of the foundation with regard to the ways the participating principals made sense of their accountability responsibilities. Views about

learning included the characteristics reflected in the theories of constructivism ( ) and social constructivism ( ). Direct quotes. The nature of the learner where their opportunities are equitable and fair (P 10 – quote).

The second causal condition consisted of the public disclosure of the HSC and NAPLAN performance results. The disclosure forced principals to take a preferred position with regard to their priorities they placed on performance results and holistic learning. However, the decision for their preferred position seemed settled and considered. P 10 mentioned that while performance results were not their ‘driver’ they needed to keep an eye on them because this is what the public – community took notice of ‘P 10’. Yet another was dogmatically determined not to be influenced by performance results .../P 11 quotes

Expectation by the school system was the third causal condition. These expectations were improving performance results and using the data from the external tests. They ranged from the use of data to monitor performance results both growth and status results, the use of data to inform annual school plans and the use of data to evaluate the success of implementation plans i.e. learning programs.



‘... how we respond to that data, what implementation of programs have been done... They [SS] expect us to first of all analyse the data thoroughly, they then expect us, a synopsis or a summary of that data, and then from that data they ask the school to make plans about where to next (P10).

*Phenomena Resulting from Philosophies of Learning, the Public Disclosure of Performance Results and School system Expectations*

The reason participants explained that they esteemed the NAPLAN performance data more highly than the HSC data because the NAPLAN data was deemed more useful for improving learning P 10 P 4 quote

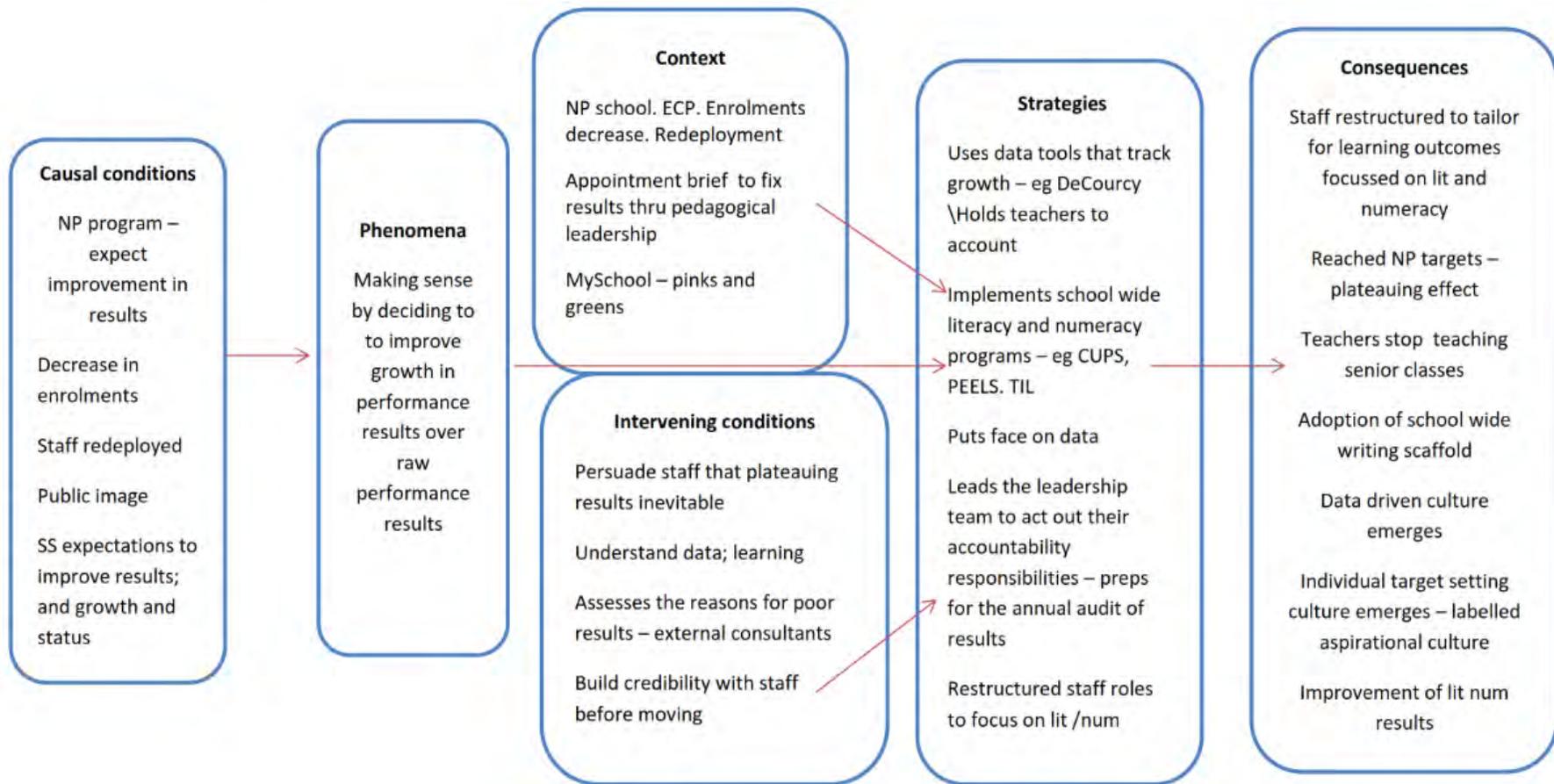
*Intervening Conditions*

Let learning experts lead: Knowing others can lead learning I suppose my focus is around leading that learning and that requires of me to be competent enough to be able to help facilitate that. I don't know whether it needs me to be the expert, but be able to assist others with expertise to be able to help lead our staff. P 14

Memo 28062014: At this point I could see that I would be coding for the next ten years - if I continued to create a written narrative with each paradigm. That being said, the narrative in the beginning of the open coding phase (expectations, tensions and management and enactments) helped me to clarify my thoughts with the relationships between codes and to actually begin a story line regarding emerging central phenomena. It was at this time I decided to start constructing a large coding paradigm as I progressed with the axial coding paradigm so that it was being captured in a holistic sense. The whiteboard was a helpful device in which to capture my growing thoughts. The camera captured the evolution of thought. The second device was continual memoing, which was helpful in my construction.

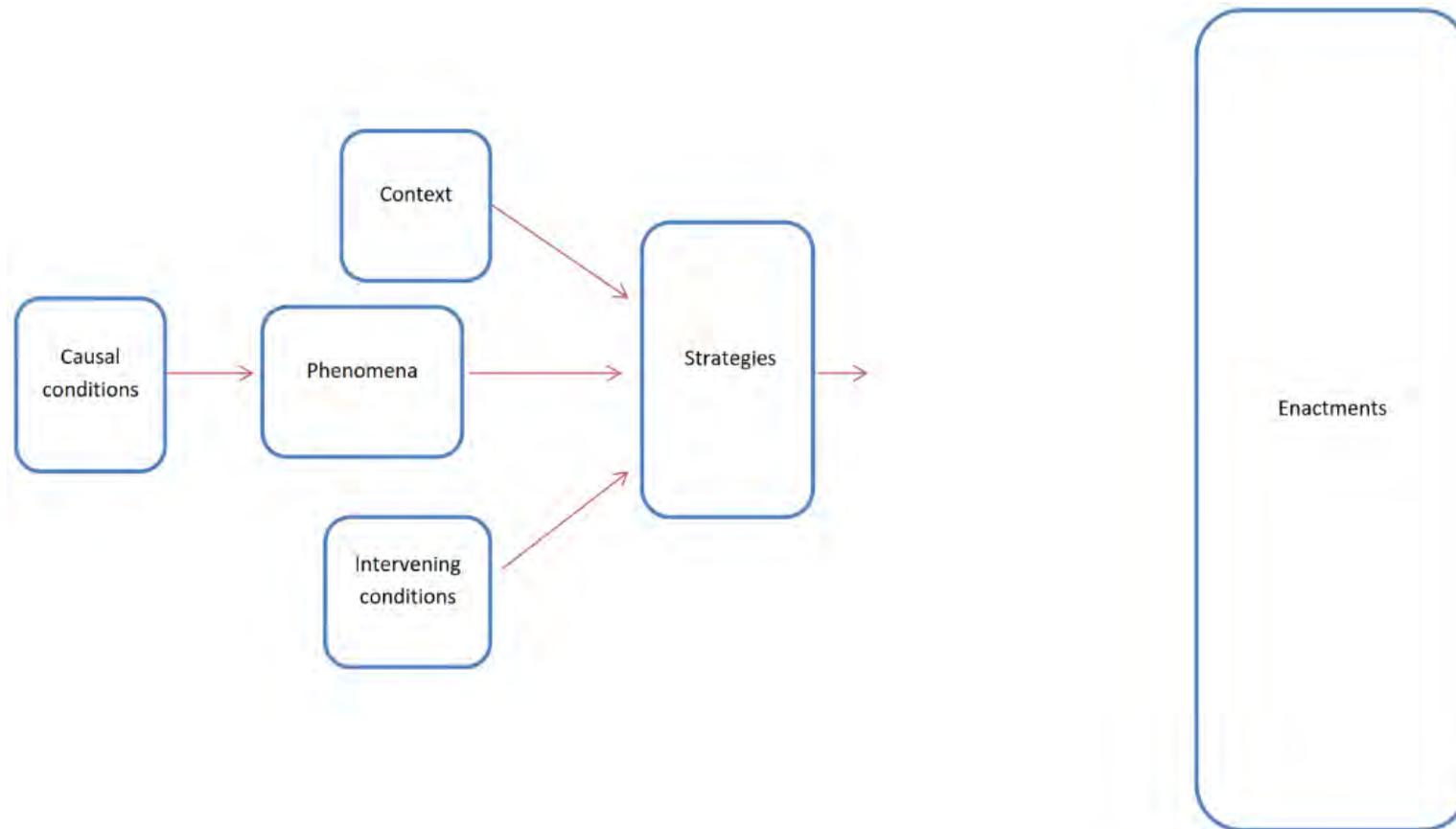
## Coding paradigm 1.4.

**Open codes (expectations):** 1.4. To improve growth in performance results P 11; P 8 **Related open codes:** SS expectations. Expectations National Partnership program-Management challenge w setting targets associated with improvements. Esteems data tools i.e. DeCourcy and SMART Employs own consultant to track data in longitudinal sense. SS says one thing does another. Sets targets that are focussed on individual student improvement. SS satisfied with principals' outcomes . ECP. Appointment brief was to fix results seen as a pedagogical leader by SS. School wide literacy program, restructuring of staff roles – unified to focus on literacy and numeracy; Faces on data; gives recognition to performance growth for students and staff



## Coding paradigm 1.5

**Open codes:** Achieving favourable performance results. seen as being measured by results in NAPLAN and HSC P 6 To improve performance results P 11; P 8; P 1; P 3. Related open codes: Achieving favourable performance results. seen as being measured by results in NAPLAN and HSC P 6 To improve performance results P 11; P 8; P 1; P 3. Career aspirations ( P 6); High competition in area; public image;



## Coding paradigm 1.5.

**Open codes:** Achieving favourable performance results. seen as being measured by results in NAPLAN and HSC P 6 To improve performance results P 11; P 8; P 1; P 3  
**Related codes:** Improve enrolments stop staff deployment; appraisal linked to performance results; Professionally measured and judged by performance results; enrolments linked to performance results; image of the school with the public- small town

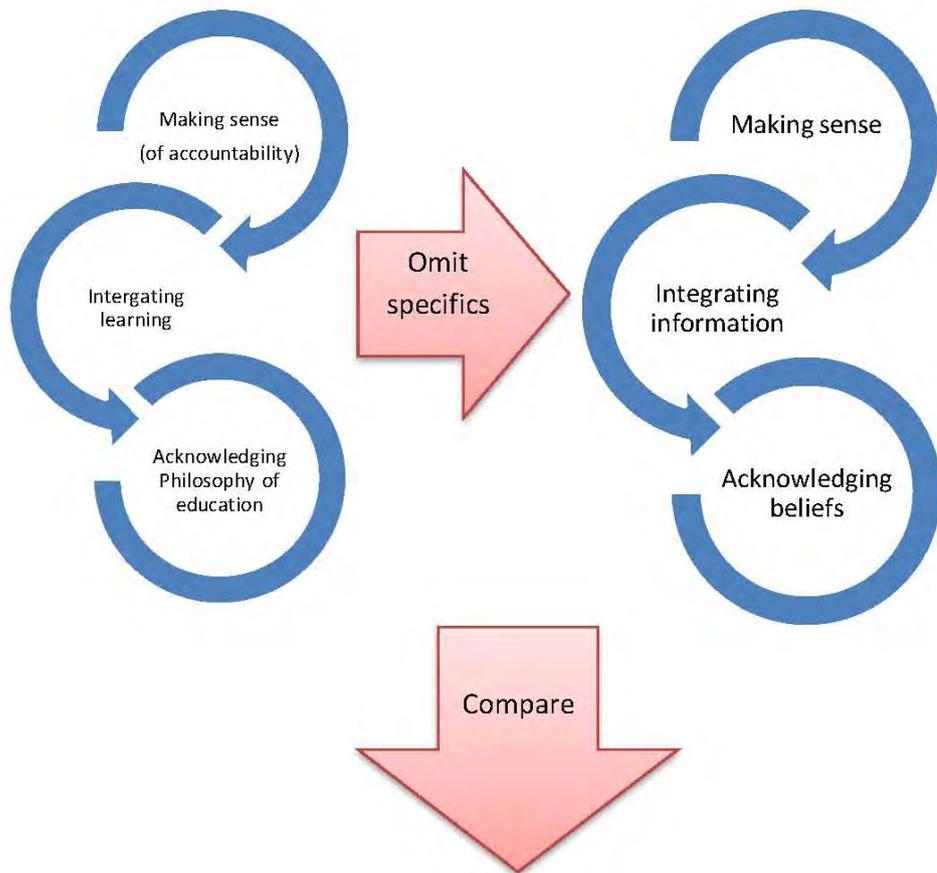
## References

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research. Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park: CA: Sage Publications.

## Appendix 17: Engaging with Other Theories



Memo: [REDACTED] Engaging with other theories



LEADERS' SENSEMAKING MODEL (Thiel, Bagasarov, Harkrider, Johnson and Mumford, 2012. p. 50)

## Appendix 18: Finding Meaning in the Anomalies

Strauss and Corbin suggest that the exemptions need to be noted through the axial and selective coding processes are the exemptions or as I would term anomalies arose and that was where two views of accountability were in some ways poles apart in their thinking. The diversity in their views has caused me to think more about this and helps in some ways to draw up a scale. One participant viewed that learning was their only focus – and they were not too concerned about results unless they could them something about improving learning. Whereas the other view was that learning - along with any other aspect of managing or leading that would bring about better results - was important **for the sake of** the performance results. One might begin to think that the reason for the difference was school content or school systems. True they were both in different school systems and of course in different school settings. However the principals ways of explaining their contexts, i.e. competing for enrolments or parental expectations was not a factor that was voiced. Performance results in the school where the principals was focussed on learning were an issue however their fundamental belief was that focusing on learning the results ‘would take care of themselves’. So if school context was not a contributing factor what else was going on? It was at this competing juncture of views that I began to examine how they viewed learning from the angle of the ways they made sense of their accountability. Originally I asked this question of participants in the second interview because I wanted to see if there was any relationship with the ways they were leading and managing their accountabilities – in an enactment sense. So by default the investigation about how they viewed learning led to their philosophical views about education and the purpose of schooling. It was here that differences were found. P 11 described the experience of learning as important in itself- not necessarily for the sale of a performance result s- and p 6 learning was about setting the student up for life – contributing to the world as citizen – even though doing so was not ‘quality learning’. Another possible contributing factor was the principals’ career aspirations.

## Appendix 19: Literature Comparison



Memo: [REDACTED] Literature comparisons: sense making - leaders'

### decision making

Sensemaking strategy (Thiel et al., 2012)	Strategy tactics
<i>Emotion regulation</i> – Behaviourally or cognitively systematically downgrading emotional reactions	Cognitive reappraisal or relaxation strategies mitigated influence of anger on EDM (Klignyte et al. 2009) Reappraisal of secondary appraisals of anger versus primary appraisals enhanced sensemaking (Thiel et al. 2011)
<i>Self – reflection</i> – accessing experiential knowledge, acquired personally or vicariously (case- based learning)	Process-focus while reflecting on positive past experiences increased application of experiential knowledge to future ethical decision making situations (Antes et al. 2012). Parallels with second order, generative and double loop learning (Sieler, 2005). Future – focused temporal orientation facilitated self-reflection and subsequent EDM (Martin et al. 2011)
<i>Forecasting</i> – making predictions about potential future outcomes through current observations	Parallels with the thinking of Tuana 2007 with regard to moral imagination and the thinking of Ajzen with regard to the evaluation of outcomes. However the emphasis of this model is: Identifying critical causes in ethical dilemmas prior to forecasting facilitates accuracy in forecasting and EDM (Stenmark et al. 2010) Distinguishing between critical and on-critical consequences facilitated accuracy in forecasting and EDM (Stenmark et al. 2011)
<i>Information integration</i> – combining related elements holistically via recognition of underlying conceptual relationships between issues and potential issues	Framing an ethical issue from an organisation perspective enhanced information integration and subsequent EDM (Caughron et al. 2011). Out-group competition with selfish undertones threatened information integration and EDM (Caughron, 2012) eg. Professional competition

## **Appendix 20: Memo No Tensions from Assessment-Focussed**

### **Accountability**

**Memo: No Tensions from Assessment-Focussed Accountability.** One striking point for this interview with P 11 is that they did not experience any tensions with regard to their performance results in the HSC and SS expectations or with their public image. One might predict that there was no competition for enrolments or that their performance results were ‘solid’ as P 4 explained. However this was not the case. The HSC results in this school had not improved over the last ten years (according to the DeCourcy expectational tool): ‘I showed them the results [HSC] over the last ten years and they [teachers] were horrified’. Added to this the school did have a reasonable level of competition for enrolments and hence one might reasonable expect that the results in the public domain might hinder enrolments. A third possible factor as to why the results could cause tensions was that this principal was an ECP. So this participant is a puzzle. The only clue in my mind here is the way that P 11 has explained where the tensions do exist – and that is with learning. XXXX has an incredible relentless focus on learning – and believes all conversations and all aspects of school life need to ‘come together’ for the sake of learning. As I listened at the interview and reflected on the transcript from this principals I began wondering if the level of challenge in being held to account (in this case performance results) might be linked to their views about learning and that ‘if authentic learning is happening the performance results will take care of themselves’ It is fine to have a belief however I stretched this thinking to ask myself how was this principals so sure in their thinking about this? Where did their confidence level come into it and where did this confidence come from? As the interview progressed XXX spoke with considerable passion about their professional reading – and placing these empirical readings to staff – ‘read it and then argue...this is what the evidence is sating --- we no longer can say universities o not teach us anything – the research is about teachers and what works..you can ignore it etc.’ So P 11 set up persuasive arguments – to teachers- about the importance of

empirical understandings about learning. The links in my mind here are about a moral potency (Avolio and Hanna, 2010) where the principal not only has a belief about their purpose but also a confidence that they can make it happen.

## **Appendix 21: Theoretical Memo**

### **Theoretical Memo: Developing the Storyline**

One striking thread which knitted the variations of principals' experiences together with their accountability expectations were their adaptive processes. Principals in the study seemed to be active agents in making sense of their accountability expectations and, sometimes simultaneously, were constructing their environments from these expectations. Their adaptive processes reminded me of the big eucalypt tree in both its hardiness and beauty where they adapt to the regularity of the weather and seasons and also at times to the unexpected intrusion of fire, storm and flood. The eucalypt as if recognising and absorbing changes evolves in its structure, bending and twisting, at times seeping and shooting tendrils to ensure its growth. So, too principals like the eucalypt they adapted by making sense of the external stimuli through their personal and situated understandings of these expectations. Importantly, like the eucalypt, they evolved by constructing accountability environments which enabled the staff, students and themselves to evolve and grow out from those expectations.

Principals' ways of leading learning in light of their expectations were influenced by their personal and situated cognition. They contextualised and prioritised what for and to whom they were accountable. These influences also were evident in principals' cognitive schemata of accountability. They made sense of their interpretations of their accountability expectations in light of their school contexts and their personal cognitive schemata of accountability. These schemata were influenced by their understandings in the nature and meaning of learning.

Principals' understanding about the nature and meaning of learning was the key intervening condition from the findings. The principal's understanding about learning was the major determinant in the ways they lead learning within the accountability environment. These 'learning understandings' with regard to their accountability expectations were

influenced by principals' beliefs about the purpose of schooling, their formation as a leader, their adaptability to reform themselves as a leader, school system expectations and peer principal relationships. Principals' knowledge and skill about learning was a consistent reference point for the majority of principals and determined the ways in which they influenced teachers and their stated capacity to build coherence in their accountability environments.

## Appendix 22: Generating Theoretical Propositions

Memo: ██████████ Theoretical propositions in the preliminary data analysis

P 1 –

(1) Principals seek to make sense of their own context and what is being asked of them in relation to their accountability obligations – and make decisions accordingly (P1.8). **1.1. Principals frame their accountability environment**- establishing the facts and their feelings, what counts (P1.2), what is not counted. **1.2.** Principals (P1.17) weigh up the consequences, giving priorities to ensure school viability (P1.8) i.e. staff employment. **1.3.** Within these considerations, principals set aside their professional preferences in their enactments of accounting for learning (P1.40-41;48)

(2) There is a possible relationship between the principals' conceptualisation of learning and meeting their accountability obligations. **There is a possible relationship in the level of clarity the principal holds about learning (P1. 169-170) and the impact of the contradiction (P1. 20; 43-46) [i.e. between the public account for performance results and student (holistic) learning (P1. 102;113)].**

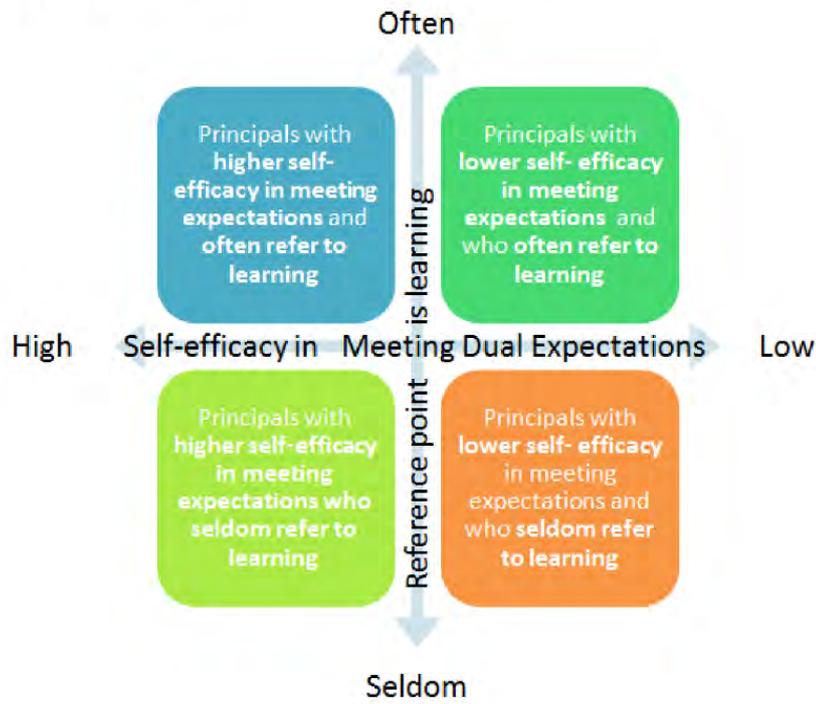
(3) While contradictions exist for principals in their experiences in being a leader of learning and accounting for performance results, **the management of these contradictions - even for the early career principals (P.1) – is not insurmountable.** **3.1.** Principals, including early career principals, draw upon their own pedagogical experience and a repertoire of leadership strategies to manage the contradictions (P1. 106-107; 122). **3.2.** Development in the **repertoire of leadership strategies may be partly determined by their conceptualisation of their pedagogical leadership** (P1. 9;143;9-11; 92-93; 7; 21;277;280;52-53;55;60)

**3.3.** Principals' effectiveness in the management of these contradictions cannot be explained solely through the principal's pedagogical leadership strategies, **other leadership strategies also appear to have a relationship with the principal's effectiveness; such as personal qualities and skill;** determination, tenacity, problem solving, persuasiveness, organised inspiration (P1. 204;21;33-34;21;33;29-32) and importantly the will to mobilise (P1.69); pattern –finding , big picture thinking, aligning forces and tensions (P1.65).

(4) While not all principals articulate confidence in the management of the contradictions between being a leader of learning and accounting for performance results (P1. 134;138), **principals envisage how the internal (holistic learning) and external (performance results) tensions can work together** and be 'supporting each other' (P1. 134;138); 'internal and external pressures coexist' (P1.134)

## Appendix 23: Intersection Self Efficacy Levels and Learning

Figure 1: Matrix: Self-efficacy Levels in Meeting the Dual Expectations - Being a Leader of Learning and Being Held to Account for Performances - (High-Low) and the Frequencies in the Learning Reference Point (Often-Seldom)



Principals who demonstrated *high* levels of self-efficacy levels in meeting dual expectations and *often* mentioned learning as their reference point had:

- Acknowledged the important role learning had to play in their role
- Active in their pursuit of learning about learning
- Identified and embedded the Leader of Learning role in their function as principal
- Worked with teachers closely
- Impressed on the need of a vision and articulating that vision for learning
- Developed metaphors such as lantern, cheerleader and images such as making sense and being balanced
- Reflected on previous their career pathway as enabling or inhibiting in their role as Leaders of Learning
- Used metaphors such as cheerleader, filter with images of sensemaking, balancing

Principals with *low* levels of self-efficacy in meeting dual expectations and who *often* referred to learning had:

- Acknowledged the important role learning had to play in their role
- Active in their pursuit of learning about learning
- Career pathway enabled their development in their understandings about learning
- Acknowledged the importance of building credibility with teachers, which took time
- Explained that they were employed to improve performance results to build enrolments
- Used metaphor such as lantern, juggler

Principals with *high* levels of self –efficacy in meeting dual expectations and *seldom* referred to learning:

- Reference points were results and competition from and with other schools
- Seemed agitated with being held to account for performance results
- Set performance results targets for teachers
- Reported ‘teaching to the test’ rather than ‘learning for the test’ to improve results
- Acknowledged and were resigned that teaching to the test was not quality education
- Used metaphors such as salesman and conjured images of bulldozing in order to influence teacher action

Principals with *low* self-efficacy in meeting dual expectations and *seldom* referred to learning:

- Reference points were results and competing for best students
- Seemed agitated with being held to account for performance results, notably the public and the school system
- Set grade targets for students
- Believed improvement in performance results occurred through attracting students who could perform well; low efficacy in teachers improving results
- Used metaphors such as buffer and human shield

## Appendix 24: Case by Case Principals Tensions Challenges and Contradictions

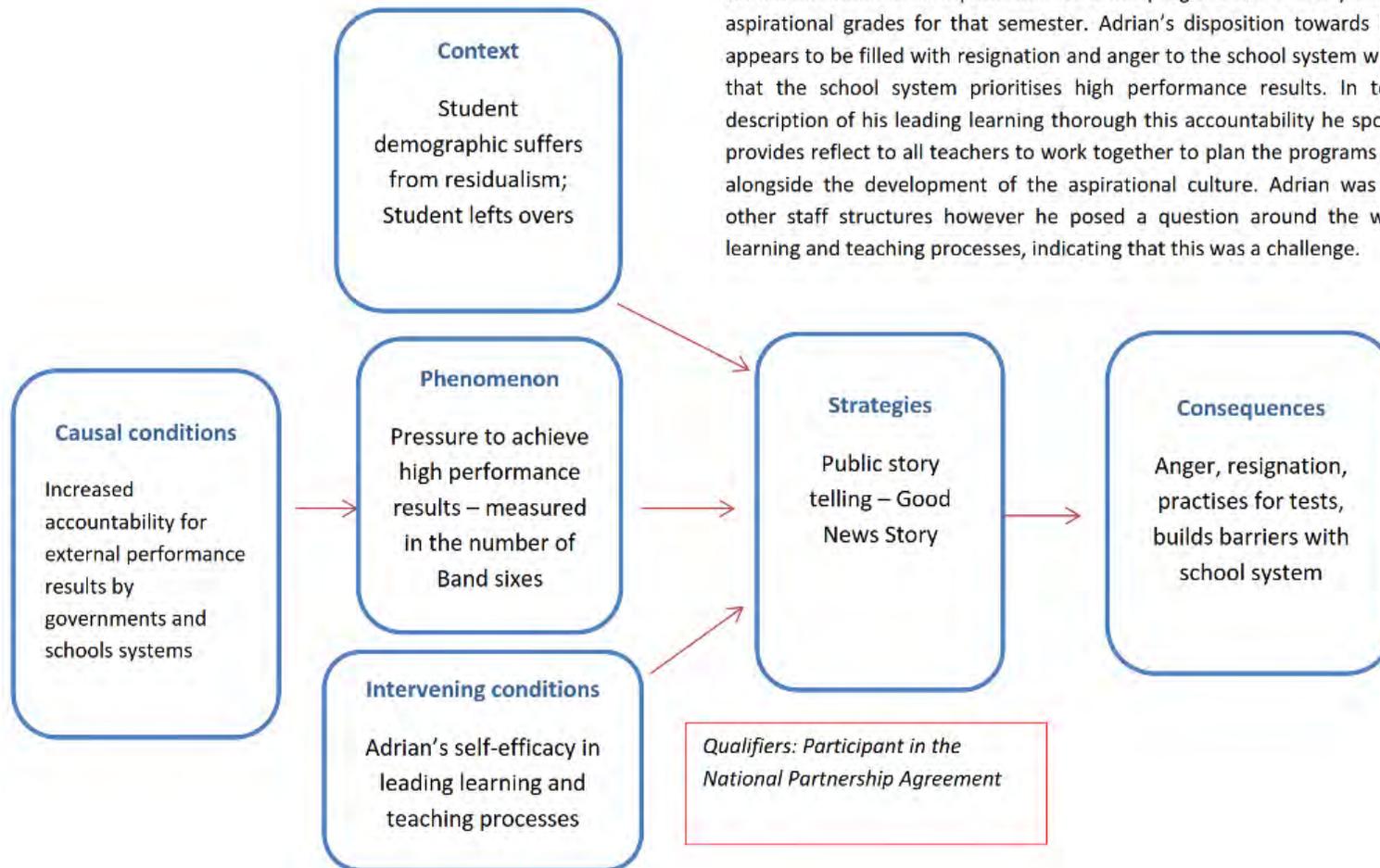
Frame	Framing Accountabilities			Framing Learning	
<i>Dimension: Principal</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations: to whom and for</i>	<i>Contextualising</i>	<i>Constructing Cognitive schemata about accountability</i>	<i>Forming and reforming Identity as a Leader of Learning</i>	<i>Understanding Learning</i>
1	Self, parents Students achieving to their level	Decreasing enrolments, unfavourable performance results		Leader of learning deeply embedded in identity; formation – curriculum; collective leadership; efficacy in leading learning; results; metaphor – light, lantern, pedagogical leader	Theoretical understandings: eg. Mindsets theory. Understands the learner (gender). Teachers' mindsets can limit learning. If authentic learning is happening the results will come.
2	Parents Growth in performance results	High parental expectations, favourable results, enrolment pressure, public ranking of results,		Appraisal-judged; getting the results	Provision of opportunities; provision of skills and resources to achieve their absolute personal best;
3	School system, parents Growth in performance results	Unfavourable results, high competition,		Buffer, filter	Teaching does not bring about the good results; about the quality of the student (enrolments)
4	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance targets	Favourable results, new arrivals, parental expectations for post school pathways, teachers over focus on performance,		Collective leadership of learning Sense maker; filter	Learning needs to be at the forefront of teachers' work; good learning and teaching leads to good results

Frame	Framing Accountabilities			Framing Learning	
<i>Dimension: Principal</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations: to whom and for</i>	<i>Contextualising</i>	<i>Constructing Cognitive schemata about accountability</i>	<i>Forming and reforming Identity as a Leader of Learning</i>	<i>Understanding Learning</i>
5	Students Learning programs	Post school pathways, focus on belonging,		Close to school wide learning programs; confident in their influence on learning program	Learning is now, practical and liberating for futures
6	School system Performance results	Favourable results, increasing enrolments, teacher resistance		Role models teaching styles; expectation in performance results; Salesperson; bulldozer; Career aspirations-judged	Pushing for results is not quality learning however that is what they (principal) are measured by
7	Students, parents Learning engagement, work produced	Favourable results, low expectations of students, high ICSEA,		Works closely with teachers in learning; high level of efficacy in leading learning; expects more from teachers	Need to have a vision for learning Rich authentic learning then results will follow
8	Students, parents Learning goals, own performance	Reasonable results, aspirational teachers, knows other principal pressure, previous leadership relationship		Collective leadership of learning – executive members play a more influential role in leading learning	Hope that good results follow good learning; Acknowledges not a strength area
10	Self, students Ways they use data, holding teachers to account	Results not considered, teachers lack of understanding pedagogy,		Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning Leadership formation - pastoral	Acknowledges deficit in understanding learning – in the past. Learning is for now and the future Learning in early stages important for Stage 6 Results take care of themselves if learning is happening

Frame	Framing Accountabilities			Framing Learning	
<i>Dimension: Principal</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations: to whom and for</i>	<i>Contextualising</i>	<i>Constructing Cognitive schemata about accountability</i>	<i>Forming and reforming Identity as a Leader of Learning</i>	<i>Understanding Learning</i>
11	Self, Holistic learning	Unfavourable results, focus on student behaviour, teachers lack of understanding learning,		Efficacy in their influence in leading learning school wide; collective leadership of learning; leadership formation - pastoral	Learning holistic in the human element dimensions; cannot be separated
12	Students, parents, public Performance results, student happiness	Reasonable results, students not wanting ATAR, local public account - ranking		Influence with school wide programs; close to teacher learning journeys	It happens but we only see the results of authentic learning way down the track
13	Students, Student joy	Results not considered, hard to staff school, low competition		Collective leadership – others greater influence with leading learning. Leadership formation - pastoral	Understanding of self enables student to progress in their own development- nurtures and gives them what they seek at the time; human growth for a belief in life
14	Students, parents, Performance results	Unfavourable results, low competition		Collective leadership – others in the team hold greater influence; mid-level of efficacy in leading learning	Not a strength area; acknowledges needs to gain knowledge

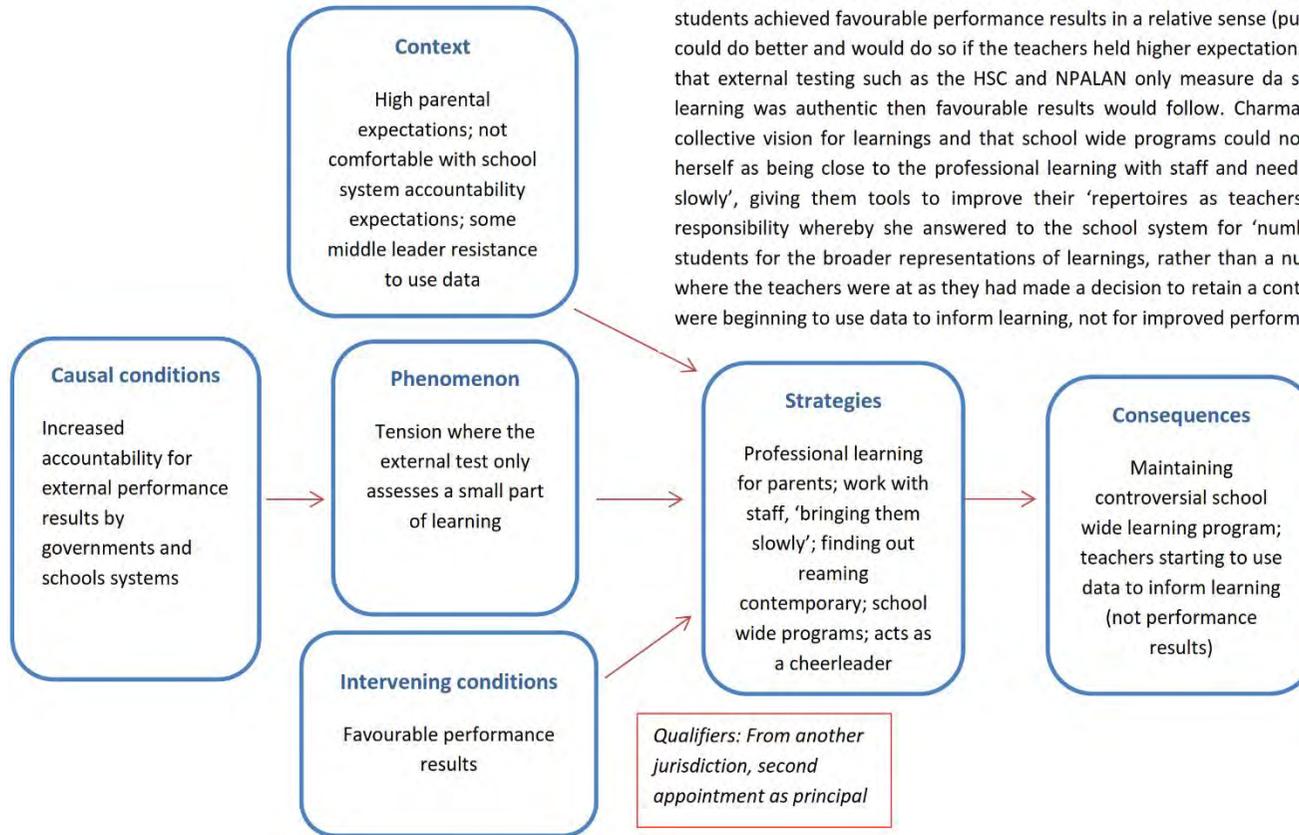
## Appendix 25: Case Example: Adrian's Coding Paradigm

**Adrian's Story:** This is Adrian's story about the way his understandings of accountability for learning impacted on his enactments. Adrian perceives the students' results who enrol at Bologna College are 'below average'. As means for compensation for this state Adrian has initiated an aspirational academic program where every student declares the aspirational grades for that semester. Adrian's disposition towards his accountability appears to be filled with resignation and anger to the school system where he perceives that the school system prioritises high performance results. In terms of Adrian's description of his leading learning through this accountability he spoke about how he provides reflect to all teachers to work together to plan the programs for the next term alongside the development of the aspirational culture. Adrian was silent about any other staff structures however he posed a question around the ways to go about learning and teaching processes, indicating that this was a challenge.



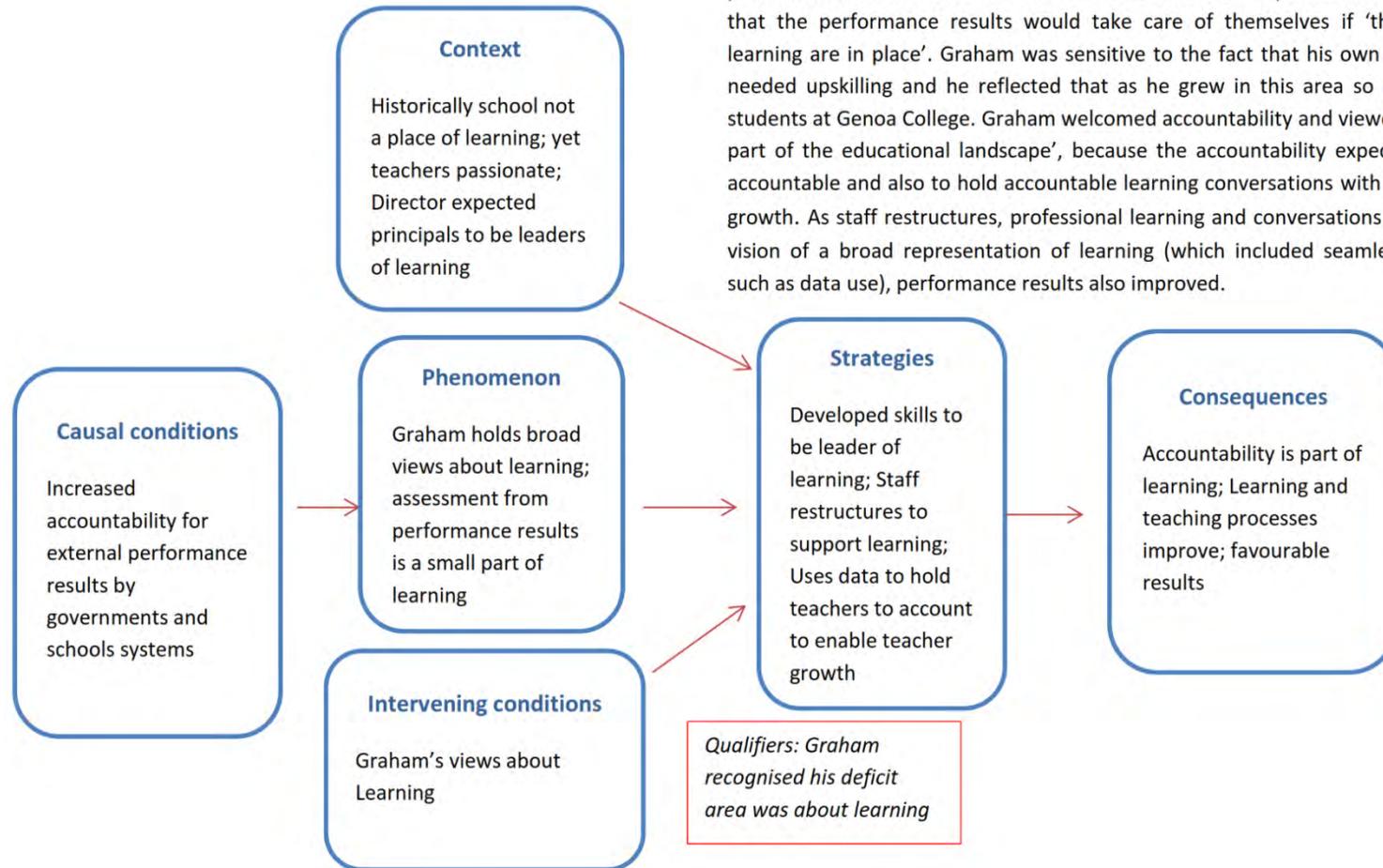
## Appendix 26: Case Example: Charmaine’s Coding Paradigm

**Charmaine’s Story:** This is Charmaine’s story about the way her understandings about accountability for learning impacted on her enactments. Charmaine a mid-career principal and second appointment as principal, after four years was still not ‘used to the accountabilities’ at Genoa College within the MacKillop System. While the Genoan students achieved favourable performance results in a relative sense (public rankings) Charmaine believed that they could do better and would do so if the teachers held higher expectations of what they could do. Charmaine viewed that external testing such as the HSC and NPALAN only measure da small part of the learning. However if that learning was authentic then favourable results would follow. Charmaine believed that schools need to hold a collective vision for learnings and that school wide programs could not be maintained without it. She described herself as being close to the professional learning with staff and needed to pace herself with them, ‘bring them slowly’, giving them tools to improve their ‘repertoires as teachers’. Charmaine viewed accountability as a responsibility whereby she answered to the school system for ‘numbers’ but was responsible to parents and students for the broader representations of learnings, rather than a number from a test. Charmaine was pleased where the teachers were at as they had made a decision to retain a controversial school wide learning program and were beginning to use data to inform learning, not for improved performance results

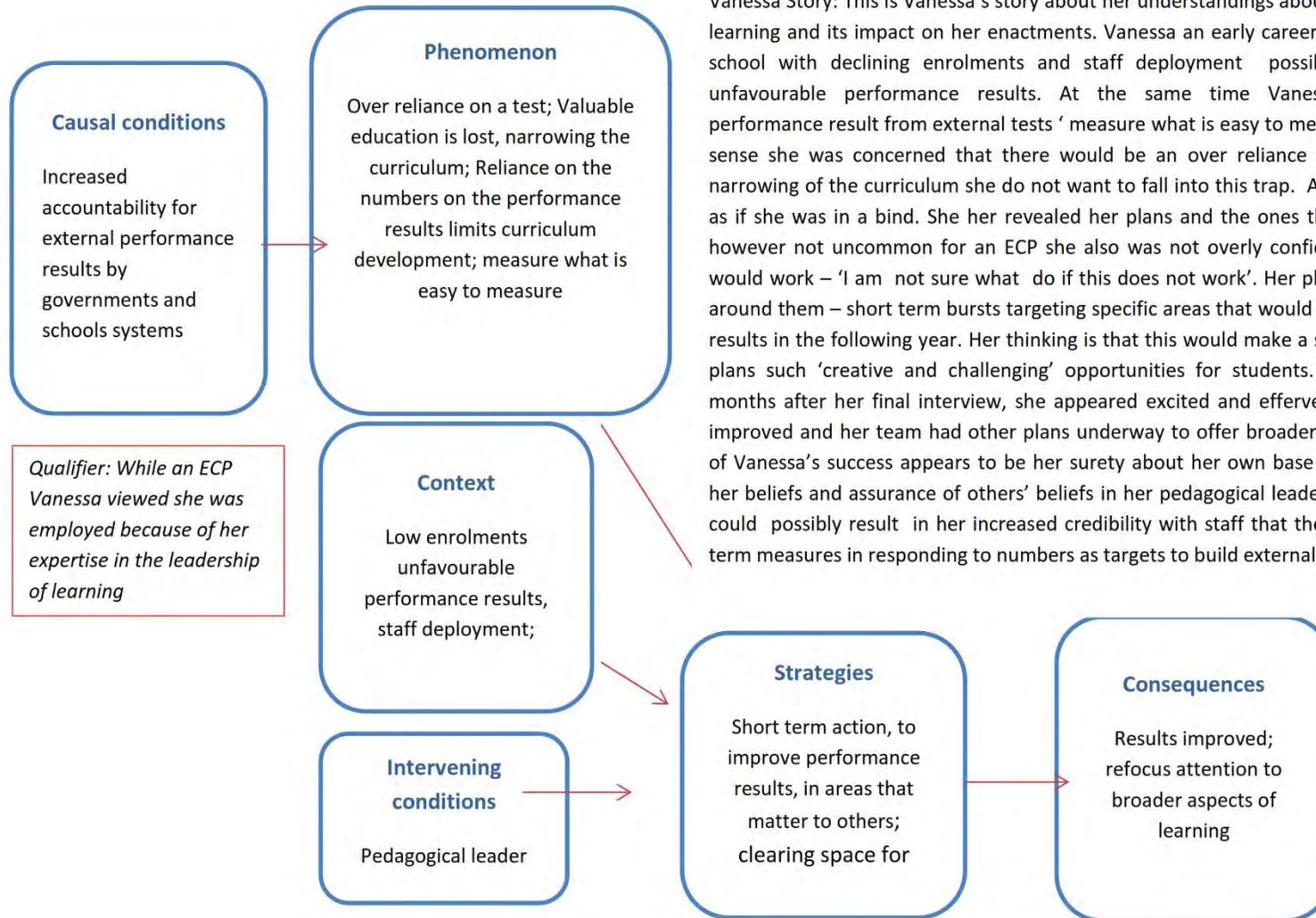


## Appendix 27: Case Example: Graham's Coding Paradigm

Graham's Story: This is Graham's story about the way his understandings about accountability for learning impacted on his enactments. Graham arrived at Veneto perceiving that while the school environment was not a place of learning and performance results were not favourable teachers were passionate. Graham viewed that the performance results would take care of themselves if 'the conditions for learning are in place'. Graham was sensitive to the fact that his own areas of learning needed upskilling and he reflected that as he grew in this area so did the staff and students at Genoa College. Graham welcomed accountability and viewed it as a 'positive part of the educational landscape', because the accountability expectations kept him accountable and also to hold accountable learning conversations with staff – mainly for growth. As staff restructures, professional learning and conversations enabled the new vision of a broad representation of learning (which included seamless accountability such as data use), performance results also improved.



## Appendix 28: Case Example: Vanessa's Coding Paradigm



Vanessa Story: This is Vanessa's story about her understandings about accountability for learning and its impact on her enactments. Vanessa an early career principal faced the school with declining enrolments and staff deployment possibly due to perved unfavourable performance results. At the same time Vanessa's views about performance result from external tests 'measure what is easy to measure', in a national sense she was concerned that there would be an over reliance on testing and the narrowing of the curriculum she do not want to fall into this trap. At one stage she felt as if she was in a bind. She her revealed her plans and the ones that were underway however not uncommon for an ECP she also was not overly confident that the plans would work – 'I am not sure what do if this does not work'. Her plans had constraints around them – short term bursts targeting specific areas that would produce favourable results in the following year. Her thinking is that this would make a space to implement plans such 'creative and challenging' opportunities for students. I saw Vanessa 18 months after her final interview, she appeared excited and effervescent - results had improved and her team had other plans underway to offer broader opportunities. Part of Vanessa's success appears to be her surety about her own base about learning and her beliefs and assurance of others' beliefs in her pedagogical leadership. These beliefs could possibly result in her increased credibility with staff that these were only short term measures in responding to numbers as targets to build external confidence

## Appendix 29: Case Example: Adrian's Matrix

Understandings			Influences	Enactments	
<i>Contextualising expectations</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations</i>	<i>Framing Understandings about Accountability</i>	Meeting competing priorities a challenge;	<i>Building Coherence</i>	<i>Enabling Learning and Teaching</i>
National Partnership school: A comprehensive school, with high competition for enrolments	Meeting competing priorities; Accountable for Learning gain <sup>37</sup> (Increase in performance results):	Silent about notions about accountability other than recalling empirical work	Unjust and unfair judgments made about the school based on performance results; Judged by the number of band sixes	Explaining the performance results through story telling in the market place	Developed a structure for consistent professional learning – teacher driven
Adrian's teaching experiences - delivery model; Acknowledges the change in teacher expectations:	Lack of esteem for the NAPLAN instrument; Accountable to the students, not the SS	Influenced by empirical research about accountability i.e. Sahlberg's research about Finland	SS makes judgments about the school based on performance results; Contradicting narratives by SS		Practises for NAPLAN test
Student demographic suffers from residualism; Student leaves overs	Pressure to achieve high performance results – how many Band sixes		Unjust and unfair judgments made about the school based on performance results; Feelings of anger and indignation with SS, protects /want to shield teachers		Leading learning and teaching processes is a challenge; Aspirational programme
Metaphors/Images: Buffer, shield / protecting					

<sup>37</sup> DeCourcy influence with secondary school principals – learning gain is used to describe the actual gain in performance results between two instruments over a certain period of time

## Appendix 30: Case Example: Charmaine's Matrix

Understandings			Influences	Enactments	
<i>Contextualising expectations</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations</i>	<i>Framing Understandings about Accountability</i>	Challenges with high parental expectations about favourable performance results	<i>Building Coherence</i>	<i>Enabling Learning and Teaching</i>
<b>High parental expectations wealthy parents, articulate</b>	Students are prioritised as the social referent			Professional learning for parents	
<b>Not used to the school system accountability expectations</b>	Accountable for opportunities with a variety of learning experiences; Low priority for favourable performance results	Accountability as responsibility; Being responsible connected with moral imperative; Authentic learning leads to favourable results	Tension with external tests only assessing small section of learning		Principal's role viewed as being a leader of learning; Vision for learning not achieved through performance results
<b>Teachers' expectations of students' performance results lower than Charmaine expects</b>			Resistance from middle managers	Responding to Resistance; Pacing progress with staff- 'Bringing them, walking slowly with them'	Finding out, remaining contemporary about learning; In school learning program will bring about good results
Metaphors/Images: Cheerleader; Bringing them, walking slowly with them - journey					

## Appendix 31: Case Example: Graham's Matrix

Understandings			Influences	Enactments	
<i>Contextualising expectations</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations</i>	<i>Framing Understandings about Accountability</i>		<i>Building Coherence</i>	<i>Enabling Learning and Teaching</i>
<b>Historical: Not a place of learning; Unfavourable performance results yet Teachers were passionate about learning</b>		Accountability as a responsibility		Scoped the internal learning landscape on arrival	Supporting teachers' passion
<b>Previous leadership experiences ill prepared to lead learning; director expected principals to be leaders of learning</b>			Results versus own understandings about learning	Educational leaders need to be learners themselves	
<b>Recognising school needed to be aligned with own leadership development</b>	Self-accountability is prioritised		Public accountability	Aligned own professional learning with the strategic learning goals of the school:	
<b>Progressed to competitively favourable performance results</b>	Accountable to school system not government; Keeping post school pathway options open' prioritises growth in performance results	Accountability is necessary; Resolve and ease with accountability; Accountability is 'a positive part of the educational landscape'			Understanding the nuances of learning
<b>Learning experiences inclusive of all students minimalising external assessments</b>	HSC results not a priority; Skills that will sustain them to lead a happy and satisfying and joy filled life; Results look after themselves if the	Results only one aspect of accountability			Leads accountable learning; Uses data – implements plans from data

<b>Understandings</b>		<b>Influences</b>	<b>Enactments</b>
	conditions for learning are in place		
<b>The content of learning – prescriptive yet broad representation of learning</b>	Prioritise options for post school pathways	Bigger picture is about learning – our mission to students (exclusive of assessments):...	The desired need to handle impacts  Staff restructures to support learning; Uses data to hold teachers to account to enable teacher growth
Metaphors / Images: <b>Lead learners; balancing; don't sweat the small stuff; big picture thinking</b>			

## Appendix 32: Case Example: Vanessa's Matrix

Understandings			Influences	Enactments	
<i>Contextualising expectations</i>	<i>Reconstituting Expectations</i>	<i>Framing Understandings about Accountability</i>	Parents withdraw students if results are perceived as unfavourable; Market accountability for public disclosure of results; Loss of enrolments, [REDACTED]	<i>Building Coherence</i>	<i>Enabling Learning and Teaching</i>
Low enrolments unfavourable performance results [REDACTED],	Accountable for student happiness, teachers value adding	Accountability is self-responsibility		Instils confidence works as a collective with staff; school will achieve; will turnaround	Short term action, to improve performance results, in areas that matter to others; Targets areas and distributes tasks in the leadership of learning:
One subject unfavourable results		Accountability is about being a leader of learning; Over reliance on a test; Valuable education is lost, narrowing the curriculum; Reliance on the numbers on the performance results limits curriculum development; measure what is easy to measure		Aims to find a synergy between internal and external pressures – working harmony; pursues less on data and more on create	
Employed because of their expertise as a leader of learning especially in one of subject areas with poor performance	Accountable to self, system and parents		Clash of expectations system and school agendas; System agenda too restrictive for those who have expertise in pedagogy or curriculum		Combines traditional thinking about well-being and the learning agenda
Metaphors/Images: Lantern / holding up the light check the progress in the realisation of the vision					

## Appendix 33: Managing Tensions Challenges and Contradictions

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
Meeting the dual expectations 'leader of learning': accounting for results	*Accepting the leader of learning expectation	Knowing learning	Knowing the nature of learning		'I probably didn't have the depth of understanding around curriculum and a really broad understanding - the breadth of understanding around learning that I do now' (P 10). 'We can't accept that if we haven't looked outside for ten years, or haven't read a journal for the last ten years - so you've stopped thinking. Get in a car, drive down the road, and have a look how it's [learning] done (P 11).
			Visioning learning		'So I'd say that having a vision for learning. Having a - as a leader you've got to continually be finding out. ...But sharing that so we, having a school wide pedagogy, having a school wide vision for learning and being able to say to parents and I suppose the community as a whole - this is the way that we see learning here and what we consider to be important' (P 7). 'When you've got the ability to clearly articulate a vision for learning - I think there's a principle increasingly you can articulate a vision for learning. .... (P 4). 'We are pushing the mantra here that whilst they're local citizens and part of a global community, and sometimes that learning varies between the need for a teacher to be instructional and very prescriptive about what students need to know' (P 10). I'm at My best – good question - when I've got the ability to clearly articulate a vision for learning- I think there's a principle increasingly you can articulate a vision for learning (Paul)
			Pursuing and committing to learning	Languaging learning	

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	Examples
				Ignoring naysayers	‘You waste no energy. I don’t waste one jot of time worrying about naysayers. I just work with those people with the capability and the inclination to have a go. I just don’t listen to the others. You have to be a little bit thick skinned. You’ve never seen people drop away quicker than the person who, when your bright young things realise the person blocking things hasn’t actually got an idea. They just want things to stay the same. Rowland
				Remaining contemporary	Principals need to be lead learners, and they need to be learners themselves’ (P 10). ‘Yeah and [SS] is sending myself and two other principals and I’m doing a course at the XXXX College there on problem based learning. ...I read in the paper yesterday, again, they had much larger class sizes and that came up as well, if you had more larger classes and had more time to prepare and all that, would that be better?’ (P 6) ‘Whether that’s by reading or by - I went to a conference in - the ACER conference last week in Melbourne which was all about the brain and learning. ....Yes it’s about getting people on board. Bringing them, walking slowly with them at times to get them to understand new things. Helping them to understand, to learn about it and I suppose you try to give them the tools so that they can understand what you’re trying to achieve and so that they can have the capacity to get on board with it and feel that it’s something that has, I suppose, adds value to their own repertoire as a teacher’ (P 7) ‘The thing we use a lot is the Christine Richmond notion of in every classroom we have got a learning conversation, and a managing conversation’ (P 11).
				Diverting	‘I am accountable to the students and then to the staff to ensure they have the resources (P1); I think the other thing is that I’d say in terms of my accountabilities is to ensure that change to learning and changes are managed well and strategically and resourced correctly. As by way of example the implementations of the Australian Curriculum then, I think a key accountability for me is to lead that implementations but to do it in a way that’s strategic, planned and takes into account all the dynamics of the school there (P 5). ‘So maybe you’d take a step back and talk about accountability to those elements of school life that we know lead to more authentic learning’ (Rowland).

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	Examples
				Deflecting when being compared with System schools	'We're not necessarily accountable to the other schools as a measuring stick around that school...but frankly, I don't see it as – it's not as important that the outcome, the results, the HSC results that we get there have to be better than the HSC results at one of the other schools' Alfred
				Performing to the measure	We are going to be judged by and therefore we have to perform. ... So that's - you are playing the game, if you like' (P 6).
		Researching about learning	Theoretical		The thing we use a lot is the Christine Richmond's notion of in every classroom we have got a learning conversation, and a managing conversation.
			Empirical		Need empirical understandings about learning: ' I suppose as part of the growth of the school, so there has been growth in me as a principal that I've grown with the school in its depth around learning ... I took it on myself to engage in study, doctoral study....so that was very powerful for me as a learner...one of the things that has come out of research is that leaders need to be learners themselves..' Graham ' I'm looking forward very much to be working with Helen Timperley...that's where you get your push; the notion that it is hard academic work to advance schools and get the academics. That's who we should be taking notice of ...as I keep telling them, if you were teaching ten years ago when John Hattie first started his research and despite everyone being sick of him, I think his latest book is an outstanding overview of the last ten years and you're still here now...you've just lived through the most exciting decade ...'there's so much research now...those going through university now can't say that this is incorrect. If you get back to research centres and universities and leading educationalists they're telling us things that are undeniably true.....[I make it clear that I've got little regard for anyone that relies on common sense or their acquired wisdom if there hasn't been a major research contribution to that]. Rowland  'and we should be learning from what's happened in the UK, and what's happened in the US about an oversupply of - an over-focus on a particular test,.....and I just think this narrowing of the curriculum so that we can actually test it by multiple choice or whatever, is a concern to me....So I understand accountability is important, but I would hate to think that

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
					<p>accountability drives education'( P 1)' I think that we're losing them in 9 and 10 somewhere, and I know that that's statistically from Andrew Martin's research at Sydney Uni. He said that's where they do lose motivation and all the rest. But we're not picking them back up in the way that we should be. Martin's research would say that girls come back in Year 11, should bounce back. I don't think ours are bouncing back as well as they should because boys tend not to.' P 7</p> <p>Uses research to frame accountability as a responsibility</p> <p>'We're not really interested in accountability. We're interested in responsibility. It's interesting Pasi Sahlberg talking about The Finnish Way, the book out now about his work there in Finland, he says, in Finland there's not even a word for accountability' (P 3) . 'What are the lessons from Singapore? I have them. I've actually linked the document there that that's from and they can see - but, in big red letters' (P 6).Despite the fact that they know that neo-Liberal preoccupation in the Us has not reaped benefits, England nonetheless they steal America's ideas and then we steal the UK's ideas...so we end up now with processes which have been in some cases unwound and other places we've just got professional standards for teachers ...they didn't work the way they'd intended them to and because that were used as a part of a big stick, accountability big stick (Adrian). 'In terms of reading the literature is that I think that's the strongest position that. As a principal, I can remind my staff that this is why we do what we do now (Damien).</p>
	*Managing the dual expectations	Knowing learning	Enacting	<p>Visualising internal and external pressures coexisting</p> <p>Accepting tests are the measure</p>	<p>We would hope that what we're coming up with is a pedagogical model that supports what's happening to external pressures but at the same time is providing kids with authentic learning (Vanessa)</p> <p>'I have some philosophical positions on this. Firstly, NAPLAN, School Certificate, HSC and any other measure you want to - the RE test, whatever. I don't believe measures a quality of a school. I think it's an indicator of what's happening, but not a measure of - because education is significantly more broad than a number of tests. But having said that, that's the measure and we need to perform in that regard. So, in one sense, whilst I have this much broader view of quality learning in a school, I'm very acutely aware that they're the measures that we are going to be</p>

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
					judged by and therefore we have to perform. So, my focus has been, particularly in the last 12 months and continuing to the future, is to really improve those results in those areas that we going to be measured on'(Damien) ' I would rather just say for the next two years we're going to do nothing else but get this right,... and the evidence will be our kids will do much better in their results as they go through these tests' (Vanessa).
				Establishing own ranking	. 'We came out beautifully in that, and we were the top ranked systemic XXXX' school in New South Wales.... We were the top performing all-XXX school in the [SS] as well' (P 2)
			Experiencing confidence with particular learning programs that will be authentic and produce favourable results		'But now I look at the Year 12s this year and I would be very disappointed if they didn't do well because they are collectively an intelligent bunch, they've had a lot of rich experiences of learning in the classroom and outside the classroom. Our [students] do a program called XXXX which is I suppose partly leadership development but it's also encouraging those critical thinking, global awareness sorts of issues. Then when we look at our college leaders it's quite interesting, they've all done it when they've come through. They do it compulsorily in Year 8 and then they elect to do it in 9 and 10. So we've got about 35 [students] in Year 9 currently booked in XXXX. So they've had lots of opportunities then to see learning as something that you just don't do in a classroom, it's something that's broader than that' (P 7). 'There's been some dialogue or even argument, the kids won't get the results in the HSC is they're only using XXXX and our response was okay well that's good, go and teach them the other one but XXXX is a very, very good structure to get you out of trouble at any point in time. So if you get a question that's a bit hard you can take that structure and you're pretty safe and if you're writing reasonably well you're going to be getting good marks anyway. If you want to go into the very high Bands well you probably need to be doing something better. But we've suggested to them [teachers] they go and teach them. I think they got a bit of a shock ( P 8).
				Staying focussed on the leadership of learning	Your role as a leader of learning is to seek improvement in authentic learning. ...so I see my role as to seek improvement in authentic learning. Those principals who have to micromanage every element of their complex organisation can't possibly do their key job, which is to lead the

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples	
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties		
					conversation around learning and teaching. You can't be at your best at it if you're being drawn in all these... Prior to that, it's being smart enough to choose a system of schools or a school where that is structurally already acknowledged and in place because when it's not and you have to try to build it, you've instantly found yourself in a problem that you wanted to avoid, plus you're trying to change it. That's what some experience at hand. So you know you shouldn't be spending time on this, but you know you have to spend time on this if you can let it go a little bit into the future	
		Forming and reforming Identity	Creating metaphors and conjuring images	Balancing	Balancer	'In a perfect world the learning would be more authentic and less driven by those exams. I don't think our balance is too bad here. I think I'm comfortable with that we've got the balance right' (P 7).
				Filtering	Filter	'So you know, I see my role as managing the accountabilities from the system at my level so that what needs to be filtered is filtered through the school. So in a lot of ways I see the role of principal as a filter to what is and what does - what is a priority and what isn't a priority..... The filter part is about basically saying yes and no to certain things. I've found in my 18 months here that because this is a successful school, it's a well-structured school (Joseph) 'Yeah, in terms of bringing those together, I suppose I do see it as a filtering system and a buffering system' ( P 8).
				Protecting	Protector	'...it's a place where there are good things happening people are keen to get a foot in the door and try things out. So it's about saying no to a lot of that to protect what's going on here' Joseph
				Buffering	Buffer	'I am the human shield between the [SS] the buffer. So don't worry about what [SS] says, I'll call him, I'll sort that out' (P 3).
				Cheering	Cheerleader	So I know at times you feel like you're the cheerleader' Charmaine, the cheerleader
				Juggling	Juggler	'...a juggler. .... So here you are one minute - and my day will be one minute at a Newman meeting, I will go from you to a meeting with a parent who has booted his daughter out of home and wants me to boot her out of school at the same time'

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs				
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	Examples	
				Bulldozing	Bulldozer	'I never bulldoze. Or maybe I do sometimes. But the times are tough when you have to - another faculty, for example, gave me their HSC analysis data ....
				Making sense	Sense maker	...improve for the next year and build that...there is a need to make sense of it..' (P 5).
				Shielding	Shield	The boss, every time a system comes up with an initiative Xxx takes it on, it's just bolted on and bolted on. It conjures up this image in my mind of this machine, it's this cobbled together monstrosity which has no alignment to it all and it's this Frankenstein mess of cobbled on bits and pieces. Whereas there was a bloke when I was in XXXX there was a school south of XXXX called XXXX where there was a very experienced boss there and running with a really draconian [accountability regime] overseeing what's happening there at the time. He said, my job is to be the human shield which protects the teachers from the excesses of [accountability regime] . Adrian
				Rescuing	Rescuer	I thought that I was appointing the right people and when I realised that things weren't going so well, that's almost when I had to jump in and rescue' Patricia
				Selling	Salesperson	It's like the old story where the encyclopaedia salesman used to knock on the door and say to mum do you want to give your son and your daughter the best chance possible in life? Who is going to say no? I'm not using it as crassly as that. P6
				Evaluating	Lantern	I am the [lady of the light], whatever, the torch or the little flame or whatever. It's holding what we do up into the light and saying is it good enough?
		Forming and Reforming Identity	Forming self through reforming team	Distributing the	accountability tasks	'So I now have a very large leadership team and they report directly to me and I expect that they lead their own areas. So there is a much stronger process of accountability, if you like and I ask them. We have an issue with someone over the weekend and the head of that area is finding out and talking - so there is a level of accountability that they have to be at the leadership level' (P 6). 'Because it's not just top down. That's part of the approach is to have our middle management clearly understand where

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
				Building leadership performance teams	they sit on the DeCourcy scale in their subject and where students sit on the line within each subject itself' (P 13). 'I've got people in charge of those different pockets, but they are now the data team ( P 1).  'I'm going to go for 98 per cent. He is talking it up. He said well, I'm going to go for 98 per cent. He is talking it up.....He [AP]has got the message that we are all about targets and he is a great deputy, but I mean, I know why he was doing that, because he was - for those who were reluctant to set targets, and I've got a few, he is saying well, we walk the walk (P 6).
				Building a leadership learning team	When I'm at my best at leader of learning. I think I don't like the role -and others would be good at it - but I don't like the role of sort of myself standing up the front telling people how to do their job. I try and make sure I've got a very good team of people around me. The example would be the Leaders of Pedagogy. We have a staff development day this week, they will lead that conversation. I will be part of it because I will probably introduce it, I may even conclude it..... The term people probably use would be a distributive leadership.. I think they see me as being in charge of the learning, but my role in that is to make sure that we've got the right people doing the right jobs. ( P 8); we tweaked things last year in our planning in terms of staffing and things like that and they'd be the focus of, you know, the HSC analysis meetings and my work with the Director of Studies here to say okay, well what are we doing there and how can we improve that course there ( P 4); So we advertised for a leader of learning and curriculum, and it's a really important position (P 7).
				Aligning the teaching team with school system thinking	So it's been my job to bring them into line with the system process and to say to them, yes, there are some things we do really well but there are some things we could be doing better and that constant looking at yourself and saying, great, this is going well, this bit over here is not going so well, we need to constantly be improving that' (P 7).
<b>Achieving quality teaching</b>	*Recruiting teachers in hard to staff schools	Forming and reforming identity	Keeping commitment to leading learning	Seeking help from school system Making staying attractive	' I just would like the school system to help if we are to be accountable for results we need good teachers..' They are professionally developed and we build capacity in our staff here. And if that ultimately leads to them staying a bit longer in our school,

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
			Finding own purpose in learning as leader		because they get it and they love it...There's a deep sense of joy in what they are doing, well, that's going to be of great benefit of them and to the school as a community, so that's - I probably haven't mentioned that enough and that, I believe, very much I'm accountable to keeping that going. To nurture that all the way along(Alfred)
	*Forcing decisions	Forming and reforming identity Knowing learning	Non resolving	Being in a bind	Your role as a leader of learning is to seek improvement in authentic learning. ...so I see my role as to seek improvement in authentic learning. As I see the school at the moment things are going well, there is improvement, there are good results, then the improvement is around the common vision and the implementation of the new directions. (Joseph) But essentially, raising the bar, closing the gap and students can learn central to our work Damien. 'Sometimes it's making that judgement between well what is essential in terms of our pastoral care and our sporting program and where does that crossover and impact significantly on our learning and teaching' (P 14)
			Holding teachers to account	Using measures to hold teachers to account	Because I've picked up - I mean, I've used the data that the government has decided is important. I'm in a bind. I mean I can say to my community, stuff literacy - stuff numeracy - we're doing great things here. But, I know that's going to boost my numbers. I know that I'm hamstrung - that I'm not - I don't ask my staff to teach the test....I think that's different, but I am focussing on literacy and numeracy, aren't I?' (P 1).  'So certainly you know accountability can sometimes be interpreted as a dirty word, but if it's used for the purposes of responding to a learning need it's actually a very good thing to be - I wouldn't say subjected to, but to be a part of....Well I tell you what, in relation to low performing teachers it's been helpful, it really has' (P 10).  gave me their HSC analysis data ... It was poor, because they weren't reflecting about what they can - basically, they said to me - because I've asked them for setting of targets. So how many Band 6s and Yeah. I said to them I want to know what are the targets we are aiming for and this was the whole diatribe about how [unclear] for business is as good as the previous group and therefore the targets (P 6). I f I can keep talking the talk with my leadership team and with the heads of department, but we are doing this for this reason. Kids deserve this. Then it's very hard to argue

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
	Influencing teachers	Knowing learning	Working in teams	Teachers learning together not blaming;	<p>against it. Who is going to say no? I'm not using it as crassly as that. But I mean who is going to argue with you that that's not a very good reason to make sure that we are doing a great a job, like in terms of the day to day things that we have to, if the reason we are doing it is to give the kids the very best chance of learning?... I will hear one million and one reasons why you would defend why you would do it for those reasons. But no-one is going to argue with you over a moral imperative... If we are coming from that, then I think it gives great strength to whatever you want to do ( P 6)</p> <p>We've identified the needs of our kids, We haven't done the blame thing or anything. - it's been this is what our kids need to do, so we need to spend time teaching our staff, learning together, in order that we can decide on what's best for our kids ( P1)</p> <p>' You've got to part of a team of KLA coordinators who will work together to improve learning across the college. That notion that our best work is done in teams, and being a lone hero is no good. That's probably ineffectual. Save your energy.... That's hard work, because that means redirecting those who believe they soar on their own. Look at me, I'll leave you, and I don't care about the rest of you. Some subject-based people are like that. My subject is the most important thing; nothing else matters. I just tell them that's not good enough. It can never be good enough in a community that professes to have a concern of students' learning and well-being across their whole life, not just my subject. ... We've challenged quite a few of them. They tend to take long service leave or go off, but again, who would allow that to continue? Personally, that's the challenging bit, but you can't not do it. P 11. Not focussed on a judgment about performance results and therefore a judgment on a teacher – I'm not here just to look at your performance results (Brianna)</p> <p>My science coordinator will say, sorry, I don't think much of DeCourcy's data; I don't think that's valid. What do you think is valid then? We do have to measure growth and value add, if you like, in terms of the commercial way of looking at it... We haven't done very much of that [DeCourcy] up until now. I've had to do a bit of relationship building in those things - before you do those things. But I think we're now ready to</p>
		Forming and reforming Identity	Building relationships first		

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
		Knowing Learning	Persuading teacher thinking and action		<p>take on some of those, to sit down and look at the things that DeCourcy talks about, asking the hard questions. (P 7)</p> <p>Researcher: so you have a reasonable level of confidence in your capacity to persuade?</p> <p>Rowland: Only because I will use, I will do the work to find out what the experts are saying, and I will take the time to find a setting where it has worked. That whole notion of let's just sit around and plan something here based on looking at this site for the last ten years. No (Rowland)</p>
			Using data	Informing practice	<p>It's about using data to inform. You don't use that - the gut's gone out long ago. You go and look for the data, look for the evidence that says, either this is working or this isn't working. P 12; If it's [ data] used and DeCourcy uses this and I'm trying to use it all the time, if data is used for conversation rather than judgement there will always be growth' (P 10). with regards to NAPLAN, which then led on to our HSC results, were that students were just basically running out of words in terms of writing in depth responses. Instead of it being something we would focus on in, say, year 11 and 12, we thought no, we've got to pull this right back to year seven. P13' But in the end the teachers bring themselves to their own judgments far quicker than what I can do, and it's better that they do it than I do it' (P 10)</p>
				Making decisions	<p>it's important that you use data to guide your decisions' (P 1). Use data to inform educational practice ( p 6</p>
			Asking the right questions; Circling	<p>'If you start – you ask the right questions of your teachers, the light comes on and they change their practice.</p> <p>I don't even know if it's a challenge and sometimes I find you've got to go around people to come back and throw an idea around. Have you thought about where you are at? What are you doing to get a bit of change? Then the light comes on. It's not so hard. I can do that and some people would say I don't challenge people. They say, I don't tell people – I don't tell people – I don't go and say that...this isn't good enough. That doesn't honour the person. It does not honour a human being in any way</p>	

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	Examples
					shape or form. That you've got to value the work that people are doing , no matter who they are (Brianna)
				Having confidence about learning	'I've got the confidence. I have not got overconfidence. Just that I have got the language to convince. So that helps, and I've got enough understanding – I'll say to people that I've never had an innovative idea in my life, and I don't plan to start having one now. You say that when people say there's too much change' Rowland
				Using learning as a lever for persuasion	It's moving thinking, rather than changing things, is where the challenge has been. .... (P 11).  'I'm quite prepared to lose someone by pushing too hard. So I'll say we will not give staff meeting time to you unless you are informed. If I come with something and say, here's what an expert says works in different settings, and you're going to counter that, I want someone else to say, here's someone who said it didn't work. So when they say we're going to continue to grade maths classes because we believe that it works to improve learning outcomes, I'll say just collect the pieces of evidence. I've given them a file that high of stuff that says it does not work, they would never do it in the United States because all the black and Hispanic kids in the bottom classes, and we continue to do it in some isolated pockets of Australia, this being one of them, and makes them stop and pause' ... (P 11)  'It's a shame that the way to get to them [teachers] is really firstly to improve behaviour management. It would be good if it could have been the way to get them if some of their fundamental questions were in teaching, but we will get there eventually' (P 11).
				Using the moral imperative to persuade teachers and influence teaching	Having said that, I would like to think we are doing it and I'm trying to get my staff to understand the reasons why we need to do this. We could do it because the CEO says so or we could do it because we want to improve our enrolments. We could do it because we want to be seen as better than other schools or whatever you want to do. But I don't think they are very good reasons. In fact, I'll give you my article today that I have written to staff. It's really

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	Examples
				Knowing what is really happening with teaching and learning; thinking ahead	<p>about what [unclear] talks about is raising the bar and closing the gap and making sure that every child achieves beyond their capacity and so we have a duty for these kids to ensure that that's what we are doing to do for them, whilst they are here. They only get one crack at their education. We repeat this every year. They deserve it. Call it a moral imperative, whatever you want to call it. ... I think you stand to gain a lot more long term support if that becomes the culture. That's why we're doing this. I've got a lot of good people here who believe that. So it's a matter of working around the ones that need to be convinced that this is the reason why. I'm chipping away at that theory' ( P 6).</p> <p>'Absolute [lectures], that's what she did. You just think, how is that teaching them and yet she still nailed those every year. See, I think too when you come into a school it's really hard not to be taken by the smoke and mirrors. You've got to find what's really happening. So I've got a new teacher this year teaching XXXX and I would have sworn that the [teacher] who was teaching that class was one of the most innovative people and what was really happening in her class was student-centred learning, always presenting their learning of her class to the assembly, look what they've made, they've done visually, all those things. We had a phone call from a parent - one of our parents rang up to complain about his teaching, I won't give his name, and says [students] are concerned that he goes too fast, he makes them write notes' (P 7). I've got to come to terms with how we celebrate that, because that's just as good... I suppose that's part of when we talk about leadership that strategic thinking is probably where I spend a fair bit of my reflection time. You know, working out where are we going. Being part of what is current, but also being part of thinking ahead, because if we don't think ahead, we just come to the road blocks and won't have any answer for them' (P 8).</p>
				Holding teachers to account	<p>' Well I tell you what, in relation to low performing teachers it's been helpful, it really has' (P 10) ' It's oh, that was a bad group. Well, I'd like to say that rather than look at it that way, is why don't we look at the group and say well, if this group isn't as good as previous groups, what do we have to do to lift the bar and close the gap for those kids?( P</p>

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
Experiencing Tensions, Challenges and Contradictions with School System Expectations	*Explaining and justifying	Forming and reforming identity	Building sense making cultures	Valuing improving not benchmarking	<p>'My language is deliberate about how can we improve it, not how can we get them above a state average ... So I'm not setting a - I'm not putting the pressure on of we want that, that is a measure there.... Wisdom would be perhaps I should do that and say that's the measure we want, some [principals] would do that I suppose. Mine is about improvement, you know, how could we, say, have that course that was there, improve for the next year and build that...there is a need to make sense of it..' (P 5).</p> <p>'Yeah so you're trying in some ways to inspire them to want to continue the authentic learning and you want them to see the relevance to some extent of the testing that's happening that's external but to keep it in the right perspective.... To not give in to just - and I know that there are some schools around here that teach to the test in NAPLAN and we don't. But at the same time to encourage them, to make sure that the [students] go into the test knowing, feeling confident enough that they know what's going to happen in it' (P 7).</p>
	*Pressured to lead according to system expectations	Knowing learning	Deciding best for learning	Deferring adopting SS programs until ready	<p>But to say that everyone needs [learning program] or to say that everyone needs this [learning program], that's too restrictive for someone like me (Vanessa).</p> <p>'..it's not so much let's take the next initiative and bolt it on..it is rather saying: what's the intention here? How does that already align with what we are doing? How can we get leverage from this initiative? That's a very different approach: its stress relieving and that's supportive rather than stress inducing because bolting it on is not....That the bad way yet another master to be serving to. ...when XXXX [system personnel] wrote to me at the start of the year and said we've has a look at your HSC results ..it would have been poor leadership of me to say yes, no three bags full XXXX we will go on the direction you need (Adrian)</p>
				Keeping the vision and moral imperative in focus	<p>'The responsibility to be a leader of learning is with I think within your school community, to the girls, to the students. The accountabilities are certainly there with this system. I suppose I would say morally I feel responsibility for the girls to ensure that we're doing the best that we can for the girls. That we're sending them out - I mean we've got our vision and we're sending them out to be who we say they're going to be and to make a difference out there in the world. Then that's not achieved just by</p>

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
			Using data	Distancing system	<p>excellent numbers on the page. That we're talking about the whole person and so I would see that that's my moral imperative if you like. ( P7)</p> <p>But I find that in engaging in the accountability there is a lot of useful data and information and evidence that comes form that (Graham, Veneto College).</p> <p>I think we did two hours on HSC results..... We were grilled. It wasn't a bad day. I quite enjoyed the fact that we could throw it all at them and that we've been doing it for quite some time (P 12).</p>
				Resourcing from the school system	<p>If the numbers were very bad then I would have to say well what are we doing wrong. But I wouldn't need the system to be over my shoulder to be doing that and more inclined to use the system as a tool than anything else. Well a tool in terms of if I - when they came out to do our results, to look at it. They said oh look we're concerned about this area and I said fabulous, now I'm concerned about this area. Could I have somebody from the office come out and work with this co-ordinator to look at - they identified science....They're resources, so they're resource people so they will trot away and have a look at the data themselves. ( P 7). 'Sometimes they are very good at you know, if we're struggling in subject x, they'll have a school that's going really well in subject x and they'll organise conversations between the two organisations which you often get good insights from' ( P 8). That would be us at our best. Whether that's engaged in some things that we've done, looking at data and looking at our data and saying these are our students, how do we improve this&gt;? ( p 7)</p>
		Forming and Reforming Identity	Fostering and maintaining peer relationships	Networking with like-minded leaders	<p>'I suppose because of, I think, working with XXXX and myself, and then myself and XXXX, you know, you find an ally, or a similar-thinking person who probably blocks you from looking to see it. .... next team is XXXX secondary schools in the [SS] that work together, share data - if that happens, I imagine that those views of principals in this little team would become more similar' ( P 11).</p>
			Creating system community	Learning from others	<p>Being part of a system is something</p>

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
	*Clashing Priorities	Knowing learning	Authentic learning the results will follow		that we would like to get better at, and that involves learning from your other diocesan schools and your system leaders, and getting them in to advise and to assist, which is what we're doing, flat out. (P11)  'If rich authentic learning is occurring the results will follow' (P 7); 'Ultimately they [results] look after themselves as the conditions for learning are in place at the school...if you get the conditions right the results will look after themselves (P 10); 'I suppose deep down inside I believe if there's rich authentic learning the results will follow, and I think as long as you're monitoring so that that's not a fairy land, that it is actually happening' (P 7); ' It's a fair bet that if the results were in decline, then the conversation hasn't been about learning, or it hasn't been a productive one' (P 11); 'Getting to understand how we teach, why we teach it, just understand learning is going to give us the results that they're [SS] saying you will get' (P 13)
				Identifying congruence	But more, I mean [SS] is still talking about the same things that I'm talking about in terms of pedagogy and authentic learning and those sorts of things' ( p7)
				Back grounded school system expectations and foregrounded learning	It's not just on about the numbers but the hard thing is, the numbers are what's in the public domain and it's making sure that you're not losing in those areas while you're doing your authentic learning' (P 7). Getting staff to work in teams and together is a bigger issue than any results' (P 11); 'It's a part of - it's an expectation and a requirement of a principal to be accountable and take it on board, you do what you can with it, but don't lose sight of the bigger picture, which is about learning.....But there are a lot of unheralded heroes of past HSC's of students who never made it to auditoriums to receive prizes, who have achieved results that are extremely satisfying from our perspective, and that's because we treated them with the same dignity and respect that the high fliers received, and catholic schools in particular do so well where we look out for those students who struggle the most' (P 10); 'I love pedagogy, and I consider myself a leader of learning, I want to make sure that we're delivering value for money education for our kids....So irrespective of whether there was a system asking me to do that or not...my accountability factor would be high enough anyway, to be asking those [accountability – for student
				Ignoring	

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
					<p>learning] questions of myself anyway' (P 1); 'When you move to, or in moving to a culture where we get away from external accountabilities and we move towards personal responsibility for learning, that changes the whole culture. It changes teachers' perceptions of their students. It changes teachers' responsibility to every student and we're not - the external accountability stuff can look after itself. We've got the focus right which is on every individual student and his responsibility for learning (P 3); 'But really, I don't care what the Sydney Morning Herald thinks of the school. I care about our kids, I care about their parents. Obviously I am accountable also to CEO for the performance of the school (P 7);</p> <p>'I think the whole content thing for the HSC just got out of control. I understand you need to know your content, but the understanding of literacy and construction of a piece of written text in most of our HSC subjects is as important as the content, the understanding of broader studies' verbs. The number of experts, content experts who don't teach their kids that common language to broader studies' verbs is just - I just don't know how those people draw their pay packet.... It's easier for me to say I have a huge accountability to make sure that we have effective teams of professionals here that are making clear to everyone that our first role is to be a part of a team, emphasising the leadership of KLA coordinators and modelling to them a leadership, and setting up those conditions that we know give us a better chance of leading to authentic learning, rather than just to focus on the endpoint of learning itself, because that way lies disaster, particularly when you come in to a place and you measure just on HSC results' (P 11).</p> <p>Given this school's context, and that's why I'm saying it's - I'm not really all that deeply interested in the results of the schools in the diocese for example. Given the context of this school, where we've got looking on around about 40 students with special needs' P 13</p> <p>Coming back to when I said about teaching to the test. If that's your measure - you are not going to fire a 100 metre sprinter at the Olympics doing 800 metre training. They'd be doing 100 metre sprints. The specificity is a key criteria in performance. So if you are going to perform in the HSC in this exam and this is what it looks like, then you've got to</p>
	*Contradicting narratives (school system esteems performance	Knowing learning	Preparing for the measure		

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
	results over holistic learning)				then give everything towards that. Now - and I can hear the cries of people complaining with teaching to the test. But the reality is, if you don't, the kids perform poorly. So, I'm sorry. The moral imperative is to provide the kid with the best opportunity and no matter what your philosophical position is, I don't care' (P 6); 'I think it's [results from external tests] an indicator of what's happening, but not a measure of - because education is significantly more broad than a number of tests. But having said that, that's the measure and we need to perform in that regard. .... So, in one sense, whilst I have this much broader view of quality learning in a school, I'm very acutely aware that they're the measures that we are going to be judged by and therefore we have to perform. ... So that's - you are playing the game, if you like' (P 6).
				Getting it right	They only get one crack at education, we need to get this [HSC] right' ( P 6).
				Responding to the measure	Yeah, we've got to respond to the measurement that is going to be out there. I just think that when you do respond to a learning need revealed by data like NAPLAN or HSC, we're typically encouraged to say, put your best teacher on this class because last year, this - I would say, go back to year seven, look at your whole school strategies, and lifting the profile of learning ( P11)
				Complying to ease pressure	I Use DeCourcy data to get the system off my back Brianna
<b>Being judged</b>	*Silencing the human story	Forming and Reforming Identity	Telling the story	Weaving tales of good news	Last year I did a big ad in the XXXX newspaper because I was annoyed last year when they would not use what I wrote. I thought well tow can play this game. Ill do an ad which puts us out there ...achievement of the kids (Brianna). It's just sheer hard door knocking. Meeting families, promoting the school.. I take glossy kids out with me..it's straight out marketing. We hit the billboards.. Damien. But the growth was something that we - was a cause for celebration ( P 2).  So in the public story telling that we have to share from this place, it's got to be telling that story about hospitable, welcoming. We have very bright students, we have students that struggle. We will only ever be average, but in all our results they are above average again and again and again. I can point to that in the data, in our great NAPLAN learning growth in School

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
					<p>Certificate before it was abolished. In High School Certificate we got the fastest growing number of subjects above state average . . . This is about finding the statistics that tell that story which is real, but this is the - it's not dishonest. It's not in any way dishonest but it's what [previous mentor principal] taught me. You have got to find the good news story and having established that, here is high quality education, but it's open to your son even though your son is not an absolute brain box. Then tell the story, here's how we do it. Here's how we achieve that and targets for us that story. ( P 3).</p> <p>So that's been a big effort in trying to draw - increase the enrolments. Along with that, then you have to maintain good academic results. But you've got to tell the good story. You can't just build enrolments on folklore. You've got to have some data back it up. Our results have been pretty good all the way along, at all levels. NAPLAN, HSC, School Certificate. . . Like if the parent opens up myschool and they see greens. They don't see pinks. So from a perception point of view, it's a good school.' P 6. publicly there's - well, the local paper gets in quick and so we make sure that we push our results in the best light we can and the results for the last few years have shown continual improvement. P13</p> <p>Whilst performance results are important, I think having happy classrooms with happy kids who want to come to school, who want to engage with what learning they want to engage in and be part of what they want to be part of in the school community is just as important. P 12</p> <p>We've got students that are saying there's a need in our community to look after each other in our spirituality and our wellbeing. . . So you've got an environment in a school that unlocks the human potential and awareness about what is important in life for me and for us as a group. (P13).</p> <p>But I suppose seeing engagement in the classroom, seeing some of the work that the girls produce. . . it's not just about the results is it? Charmaine. The biggest growth probably in most recent years is that we can go to other schools and our kids are now no longer frightened is probably the wrong word - when we went to [private independent single gender school] our kids' heads would go down and we are not worthy to</p>
		Esteeming the human story	Esteeming the unmeasurable	Esteeming all the elements of human life	
				Touch stoning student learning	

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
					<p>be in their sort of space... I mean the little things we went to the Archbishop of Sydney Award the other day We had a very good young fellow at award and our reader practised here at school. He practised at home. So when he got to the cathedra; he read really well...once upon a time you'd go, oh well, that's what you'd expect of a [XXXX] kid, he wouldn't go, too big a stage – we're never left behind anymore...they're other aspects of learning that I think has been important without being measurable. Randall.</p> <p>It's a reassuring relief that, it's not just learning, it's the whole learning and well-being, an all those elements of human life that are inseparable. Don't try and separate them in schools (Rowland) But I'm just as happy looking at the girls who are the surprises and go, wow, didn't they do well? ... Well, I think there's a lot being said about add one more mark and they'll have a band six and what are you doing to get more band sixes? Yeah, okay, band sixes are important but it's more important that they're all getting the best that they can get. P 7</p> <p>I think, you know, in terms - I don't feel a huge amount of pressure, to be honest, from any external agency about our results. ....But I guess I am measured in the sense that I understand my school community and my touchstone is the kids, the parents and the staff, you know. Like if we're in agreement about what are the aims there and we're maintaining those and improving them annually and identifying those areas that aren't really going well, then I'm doing my job' P 5.</p> <p>Andrew [Monshell] said to Chris [Smythe], you will not tell me that a child cannot do a subject. If that child wants to be in my class, because he's got a passion for that subject, I will welcome them with open arms. Powerful, powerful stuff. And I actually went to him after we had finished that meeting and said, well said, Andrew. That was absolutely fantastic, because that's what learning's about. If you have a kid who loves ancient history, they mightn't do well at it, but they love the subject, you don't rule them out of doing a course. Maybe a little bit uneasy that this year our year tens into elevens with their subject choices, we're having interviews next week to decide whether they've chosen the right subjects. But ultimately, you do it. If you want to do that subject, you do it. I know one member of staff last year and actually rang a parent and said I don't want</p>

Experiencing TCCs		Managing TCCs			Examples
Categories	Properties	Category	Properties	Sub-Properties	
	*Experiencing tension between performance results and enrolments	Knowing learning	Leveraging	Actioning	<p>your child. Your child has chosen the wrong subject. They can't do this subject. I suggest they find another subject. Now, that was a low performing child. This teacher didn't want the marks to go down. I spoke to that person. Got a totally different answer, of course. But it was my way of challenging saying; I know you rang that parent. P 12</p> <p>They [staff] know that if there's no accountability and they know if there's no action, we could lose staff as a result of declining numbers (P 1); 'So I have been fortunate on one level to walk into a school where we've got declining enrolments. So staff have a natural curiosity about how they can improve what they're doing-because they understand things are slipping, and their results are not great ( P 1)</p>
			Diminishing power of learning and teaching	Rationalising – the cherry pick	<p>'When you have got the numbers you can then set a cut off quota and then you cherry pick the best students. That's how schools improve and every school that you could quote to me, a Catholic school that you and I know of in this district that has improved its results in recent years, has it because they have got better quality cattle than this school and that's how they have improved, they cherry pick .... ' That's the kind of phenomenon which we experienced here, so it seemed to me the term residualism fitted very well, particularly when so much pressure was coming on from the system around performance in external tests like NAPLAN, School Certificate, High School Certificate' Adrian</p>
	*Experiencing moments of injustice when results tied to formal appraisal processes	Forming and reforming identity	Non-resolving Performing to the measure	Maintaining cultures of making sense	<p>Here there are really good processes and systems and a culture that makes sense of it - keeps it on the agenda but keeps it in perspective. Randall add Jospeh's as well</p> <p>Patricia: you must understand this is a huge year for me...appraisal and all the accountabilities associated with that...huge'</p> <p>'If I'm going to measure dby that ...then that is what I will perform to...'Damien</p>