WHY BOTHER TO BE A STUDENT LEADER?

AN EXPLORATION OF THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

AND SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF YEAR 12 STUDENTS

IN THREE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

Submitted by

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Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees.

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Abstract

The focus of this research was Year 12 student leadership in three Catholic schools. Pivotal to the thesis were the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of the schools' Year 12 students. Two theoretical propositions underscored the study: all Year 12 students are called to some form of leadership within their school; and schools should strive to build a leadership culture inclusive of all Year 12 students.

The review of the literature drew attention to three themes which formed the conceptual framework underpinning the research, namely organisational leadership, Christian leadership and its meaning for the Catholic School, and student leadership. In the light of the review it seemed appropriate that the conduct of the study should be predominantly qualitative, interpretive, and planned around collective case study.

For each of the three case study schools, data collection took the form of a document search, an interview with a key informant staff member, a Year 12 student survey questionnaire utilising both qualitative and quantitative questions, and two Year 12 student focus group interviews. The "general analytic strategy" (Yin, 1994, p. 30) employed in this research was to follow the theoretical propositions underlying this study which, in turn, reflected a set of seven research questions.

Findings from the study indicated that there was a strong belief among senior students from the three schools that every Year 12 student should have the opportunity to participate in leadership. Furthermore, students saw leadership as entailing duty, a sense of service, as well as involvement with younger students. Students also highlighted a range of benefits associated with leadership participation, as well as

certain pressures, notably the need to balance study commitments with leadership responsibilities, and the demands of having to be a role model "all the time".

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH DEFINED

1.1 Introduction to the Research

Schools need leadership, particularly the sort of leadership provided by students, for you have the capacity to influence student values, attitudes and behaviour with an effectiveness that School Principals can only dream about. (Hawkes, Headmaster of The King's School, 1999, p. 21)

The (student) leadership that the College asks for is one that requires integrity and good values. It has its cost in time, energy and emotion. Essentially it is for the service of others. (Wilding, Headmaster of St Kevin's College, 2001, p. 1)

Student leadership matters in a school. When leadership is strong and positive in a year group, success seems to follow automatically. It is well worth helping our student leaders to think about their roles and to recognise the power they have to really make a difference. (Moore, Principal of Pymble Ladies' College, 1999, p. 19)

The capacity to influence student values and behaviour, the requirements of integrity and a focus on service for others, and the power to really make a difference are all powerful ideals and challenges for students to embrace. Student leadership, as denoted by Hawkes, Wilding, and Moore, has a special role in developing such virtues in students. Yet what is student leadership? What form should it take in schools? Is it for all students or only for some? In what ways might students need to be prepared for and nurtured in leadership? And how do we ensure that what students do is, in fact, authentic leadership as opposed to something tokenistic or decorative?

The aim of this research is to explore the understandings of senior student leadership as expressed by male and female Year 12 students in three Australian Catholic schools: a single sex boys' school, a single sex girls' school, and a coeducational school. Central to the project is a belief that all Year 12 students are

called to leadership. The notion of being "called" to leadership has two meanings within this research. Firstly, when referring to elected senior students, this "call" to leadership embodies the idea that their peers and members of their school staff have chosen these students to exercise leadership. Secondly, when applied to Year 12 students as a whole, it embraces a belief that all senior students are invited to leadership by virtue of their age, maturity and standing within the school community as the most senior class.

The motivation for this research dates from 1997 when I organised a two-day leadership program for a school's newly elected senior student leaders. The program, predominantly out-door activity based, was a most satisfying experience. A variety of staff worked with the students to explore various theoretical and practical aspects of leadership; the students demonstrated energy and enthusiasm during team-building and problem-solving initiatives, and both staff and students appeared to enjoy the experience. Feedback confirmed the program's value and usefulness. An unexpected development, however, occurred the following week when a senior student, who had not been involved in the leadership program, approached me and commented: "That was great what you did for the leaders, but what about us?" It is the "what about us" which motivates this research.

1.2 Research Site

The three Australian Catholic schools which formed the research site for this study into Year 12 student understandings of senior student leadership were: Catholic Ladies' College, Eltham, Victoria; St Kevin's College, Toorak, Victoria, and Guilford Young College, Hobart, Tasmania. Catholic Ladies' College is a Year 7 to 12 girls'

school of approximately 800 students. St Kevin's College is a Kindergarten to Year 12 school of around 1400 boys. Guilford Young College is a Year 11 and 12 coeducational school of about 900 students. A background discussion of these three schools occurs in Chapter Two, "Context of the Research".

1.3 Identification of the Research Question

The research question is threefold: What are the school experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students in each of the three schools about the role, and purpose, of senior student leadership? How do these experiences and self-perceptions compare with the understanding of senior student leadership as expressed by the respective schools? And what are the implications for developing an appreciation of Year 12 student leadership, which encourages every senior student to be a leader?

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the study is to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from three targeted schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body. Underpinning this purpose is a belief that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in their school setting, not only for the benefits and learnings students can gain from such leadership, but also for that which the students can contribute to their school communities.

1.5 Evolution of Research Question

In the light of the review of the literature the research question was divided into a series of sub questions. These are:

1. What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?

2. What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership and how is this understanding articulated?

3. How are Year 12 students prepared, supported, and encouraged to exercise leadership?

4. What are Year 12 students called to in their role as leaders?

5. What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?

6. What are the concerns of Year 12 students, and of their schools, about the involvement of Year 12 students in leadership?

7. How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to exercise leadership?

In reading these sub questions one needs to keep in mind that Year 12 students can provide leadership to a school community without consciously being aware that their actions are, in fact, leadership actions. Leadership does not have to be either deliberate or intentional to be effective. What is important in this instance, however, is that schools build a leadership culture among their senior students, whereby senior students are challenged and made aware of their innate potential as leaders, where they are given opportunities to exercise and improve leadership skills, and where they are supported in their leadership initiatives and activities. Not every senior student may want to be a school leader. But every senior student can be given the opportunity to choose whether they wish to develop their innate ability to lead.

1.6 Design of the Research

The methodological structure underlying this research is collective case study. The "snapshot" (Rose, 1991, p. 194) case studies of the aforementioned Catholic secondary colleges, Catholic Ladies' College, Eltham, St Kevin's College, Toorak, and Guilford Young College, Hobart, were undertaken in order to better understand the phenomenon of senior student leadership.

Data collection methods used in each of the three case study schools included:

a) a document search focusing on senior student leadership.

b) an interview with a key informant staff member.

c) a survey questionnaire to all Year 12 students about student leadership issues.

d) two focus group interviews with up to nine Year 12 students in each group.

Document collection within each case study took the form of (1) memoranda and correspondence concerning student leadership, (2) official publications such as the College Prospectus, Handbook, Year Book, along with periodicals to the school community, and (3) student leadership programs. The key informant staff interview took place with a teacher from each school who was purposely selected because of the person's work and connection with Year 12 students in leadership. Student experiences and self-perceptions of leadership were generated by a student survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews. The student survey questionnaire was "group administered" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 229) to Year 12 students at the three schools both for convenience and to maximise response rate. The Year 12 student focus group interviews were based on "homogeneous samples" (Patton, 1990, p. 173). That is, one focus group comprised elected student leaders, while the other contained students not

elected to formal office. All students who participated in the focus groups were volunteers.

1.7 Significance of the Research

The significance of the study lies in a belief that student leadership matters in a school. Developing and affirming the intrinsic leadership potential of all Year 12 students is a fundamental means by which schools can prepare senior students for the challenges of the future. This stance, while in no way decrying the role of elected senior student leaders, argues the importance of schools providing leadership experiences for all Year 12 students. In this respect Chapman and Aspin (2001) observed that schools are becoming more important in the socialisation of young people and the nurturing of young people towards an awareness and acceptance of moral understanding, civic responsibility, community involvement and service. Moreover, Chapman and Aspin argued that developing student leadership through specific programs is crucial to promoting social responsibility, community leadership, active citizenship and service leadership.

Linked to the notion of leadership development for all Year 12 students is the contribution a senior class can make to the overall climate of a school. It is acknowledged that student leadership within a school consists of more than the activities of senior students. Participation in under age sporting teams, debating, music, outdoor activities, peer support, academic excellence and cross-age tutoring are but a few areas in which students at other levels within a school are called upon to be leaders. Yet, it is a school's senior class, both elected leaders and those not elected to formal office, which sets the tone of student leadership and conduct within a school.

However, a review of the literature indicates a scarcity of Australian research about leadership formation, which focuses on senior students as a whole. It is anticipated that this study will help to address this gap in the literature and add to our understanding of ways to promote, develop, nurture and encourage all Year 12 students as leaders.

1.8 Limitations of the Research

Two concerns were identified and explored within this research. The first related to the researcher. This study into student understanding of senior student leadership is predominantly qualitative in nature and within qualitative research the researcher is also the instrument of measurement (Patton, 1990). In this regard, Burns (1994) has outlined five skills needed by the case study investigator. The person needs to be able to formulate relevant and precise questions, to be a good listener, to be adaptive and flexible, to be able to grasp the issues being studied, and to be open-minded in interpreting evidence. As researcher I am conscious of, and have attempted to exercise, these skills. Furthermore, this research employs a formal case study protocol, which contains procedures and general rules to be followed in data collection. This protocol not only delineates the case study questions, it also clarifies how these questions are to be reframed in the field (Appendix A). The case study protocol was strictly adhered to in this research project.

The second concern had to do with the sample size of students to be surveyed in the three case study schools: 118 students at Catholic Ladies' College (CLC), 161 students at St Kevin's College (SKC), and 267 students at Guilford Young College (GYC). As previously stated, to maximise response rate, the student survey

questionnaire was "group administered" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 229) to all Year 12 students at the three schools who indicated a preparedness to be involved. The principals and staff in the three schools were very supportive in this matter and the "achieved sample" (Fogelman, 2002, p. 105) for each school was: 92 students at CLC (78%), 139 students at SKC (86%) and 137 students, 77 female and 60 male, at GYC (51%). No attempt was made to investigate the reasons behind these response rates. As involvement was invitational, it was assumed that students who did not participate either did not wish to, which was their right, or they were absent during the time the questionnaire was administered.

1.9 Definitions

1.9.1   Year 12 Student

Otherwise referred to as "a senior student", this person is in the final year of secondary schooling and is generally aged between 16 and 18 years. This research involved three groupings of Year 12 students. Firstly, during 2001, fifty-one senior students from Avila College, Catholic Ladies' College, Star of the Sea College, Christian Brothers' College, St Kevin's College, Xavier College, Whitefriars College (all situated in Melbourne) and St Patrick's College, Launceston, participated in a process of "field-testing" draft copies of a student survey questionnaire to be used in the research. Secondly, thirty-five Year 12 students from Christian Brothers' College, Melbourne, "trialled" the final version of the student survey questionnaire in early 2002. Finally, there are the senior students from Catholic Ladies' College, Melbourne, St Kevin's College, Melbourne, and Guilford College, Hobart, who, during 2002, participated in the actual research project.

1.9.2 Key Informant Staff Member

The key informant staff member is a teacher who, because of that person's teaching allocation or interest, has responsibility for working with Year 12 students in leadership. One such staff member from each of three case study schools involved in the research was invited to participate in the research.

1.9.3 Leadership

As the literature review suggests, leadership is an elusive concept, one that can and does mean different things to a variety of people. Moreover, Gronn (1998) cautioned that any definition will reflect the personal presuppositions of the commentator about the parameters of leadership. The following three definitions provide signposts for the understanding of leadership within this study.

Nahavandi (1997) identified three elements inherent in leadership. Firstly, leadership is a group activity; there are no leaders without followers. Secondly, leaders influence and guide groups through a course of action or towards the achievement of goals. And thirdly, the presence of leaders usually assumes a form of hierarchy within a group. Based on these three elements Nahavandi defined a leader as "any person who influences individuals and groups within an organization, helps them in the establishment of goals, and guides them towards achievement of those goals, thereby allowing them to be effective" (p. 6).

Alternatively, Stokes and James (1996) described leadership as "the art of consistently influencing or directing people towards the achievement of a clear common goal, in such a way as to engender loyalty, respect and willing co-operation" (p. 1).

They felt it important to explain the definition "because of the preconceptions some people have" (p. 2). In particular, they deliberately chose the word "art" since "leadership is not a science; it cannot be graphed, quantified or performed by rote" (p. 2). They stressed that leadership has to be "consistent, in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness" (p. 2) – leadership cannot be allowed to weaken over time. They used the term "influence" because leadership should not involve coercion. Furthermore, they believed that leadership entailed "directing", which does not mean ordering but rather, "showing people the way" (p. 2). Finally, Stokes and James noted the importance of "achieving a clear common goal" because "everyone must know where they are being influenced or directed to go and must be enrolled in that goal by the leader" (p. 2)

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) present a third interpretation. They defined leadership as providing direction and exercising influence where "leaders mobilize and work with others to achieve shared goals" (p. 2). Inherent in this definition are several implications. Firstly, Leithwood and Riehl believed that leaders "do not merely impose goals on followers, but work with others to create a shared sense of purpose and direction" (p. 2). Secondly they noted that leaders '"primarily work through and with other people" (p. 2). Thirdly, they argued that leadership is a function more than a role. That is, leadership comprises a set of functions which may be performed by various people in different roles.

These three descriptions afford a basis for the understanding of leadership within this research. Firstly, leadership necessitates that a leader have an influence on others (Nahavandi, 1997; Stokes & James, 1996; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Secondly, leadership entails the leader helping others establish goals (Nahavani), a "clear common

goal" (Stokes & James), or "shared goals" (Leithwood & Riehl). Thirdly, leadership involves the guidance of others in achieving goals (Nahavandi, Stokes & James), or in creating "a shared sense of purpose and direction" (Leithwood & Riehl, p.2). Furthermore, Stokes and James, and Leithwood and Riehl, broached the issue of process in leadership, that is, those ways in which a leader influences others. These topics are aspects in the Review of the Literature.

1.10 Outline of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis consists of six chapters. Table 1.1 provides an overview of this structure.

Table 1.1

Overview of the Thesis Structure

Chapter 1	Research Defined
Chapter 2	The Context of the Research
Chapter 3	Review of the Literature
Chapter 4	Design of the Research
Chapter 5	Presentation and Analysis of Research Findings
Chapter 6	Review and Conclusions

1.10.1 Chapter Outlines

Chapter 2, "Context of the Research", presents four dimensions of the context that contribute to understanding within this research into Year 12 student leadership. These are: Vatican II and its impact on Catholic education; the particular backgrounds

of the three Catholic schools selected for this research; young people in the twenty first century; and Edmund Rice Spirituality.

Chapter 3, "Review of the Literature", is comprised of four main sections. Firstly, there is literature on organisational leadership, which generates a framework for the research by providing an overview of past and present developments within the field. Secondly, there is literature on Christian leadership and its impact on the Catholic school. This literature furnishes a rationale on which to base the notion of senior student leadership within Catholic schools that is inclusive of all Year 12 students. Thirdly, material specifically on student leadership offers some guidelines for developing and nurturing senior students as they lead. The final section indicates how the review of the literature illuminates this research.

Chapter 4, "Design of the Research", maps out a blueprint for the collection and analysis of the research data. A theoretical framework is initially outlined where epistemology and theoretical perspectives are discussed. Case study is presented as the research design. Data collection methods are explained along with a description of the research participants. Issues associated with trustworthiness are summarised. Data analysis strategies are then proposed. Finally ethical considerations are reviewed.

Chapter 5, "Presentation and Analysis of Research Findings", is comprised of four main sections. The initial three sections of the chapter each incorporate the findings from one of the case study schools. These findings are introduced, firstly, by outlining school understandings of senior student leadership (document search, key informant staff interview); secondly, by summarising student perceptions of senior

student leadership (survey questionnaire, focus group interviews), and thirdly, through comparison of the two perspectives. The fourth section of the chapter incorporates cross-case analysis.

Chapter 6, "Review and Conclusions", reviews the results of the research project in the light of the stated purpose of the enquiry. Following a restatement of the research design each of the research questions is answered. A conclusion to the research is then presented, outlining possible contributions the research makes to scholarly debate. Lastly, implications for the profession are addressed along with suggestions for further research.

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CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study, stated in Chapter 1, is to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from three targeted schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body. Underpinning this purpose is a belief that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in their school setting, not only for the benefits and learnings students can gain from such leadership, but also for that which the students can contribute to their school communities.

In this chapter four dimensions of context contributing to an understanding of the study are reviewed. Context forms an important means of situating action within research, and of grasping its wider social and historical import (Dey, 1993). Moreover, context can be seen as a key to meaning, since "meaning can be conveyed 'correctly' only if context is also understood" (Dey, p. 32). Table 2.1 outlines these four dimensions. In particular these dimensions situate the research in the wider historical

Table 2.1

Four Dimensions of the Context

Dimension One	Vatican II, and its impact on Catholic Education
Dimension Two	Backgrounds of the Case Study Schools selected for the Research
Dimension Three	Young people in the twenty first century
Dimension Four	Edmund Rice Spirituality

setting (Vatican II, and its impact on Catholic Education); describe the environments of the three Catholic schools involved in the study (Backgrounds of the Case Study Schools selected for the Research); present a broader social milieu of the Year 12 cohort participating in the study (Young people in the twenty first century); and characterise an important part of the background of the researcher (Edmund Rice Spirituality).

2.2 Vatican II and its impact on Catholic Education

The Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) was a watershed in the Catholic Church. Prior to the Council, the Catholic Church could be described predominantly as inward looking, anti-world, defensive, highly stratified and rule oriented (Garvin, Godfrey & McDonnell, 1994). Vatican II set an almost entirely new course for Catholicism. It put in motion two great calls: "one was to *aggiornamento*, getting the Church up to date; the second was to *ressourcement*, a return to the sources of Christianity in the teachings of Jesus" (Noone, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, Vatican II heralded a period of unparalleled and irrevocable change in the Catholic Church which hitherto "had been unchanging for centuries, with its monolithic stability as proof of its truth" (Crawford & Rossiter, 1988, p. 25). People in the pews experienced the effect of Vatican II most noticeably at Sunday Mass "where the abolition of centuries-old practices such as the use of Latin symbolised the extent of the changes" (Noone, p. 2).

Rather than viewing itself as a self-contained spiritual empire, the Catholic Church now "re-defined itself as something relatively small in the midst of the world's joys and griefs: a leaven, a lantern, a mustard seed, a pilgrim people, a servant" (Honner, 2000, p. 3). Moreover, the teachings of Vatican II emphasised ecumenism, an openness to learn, reform and renewal, an historical consciousness, pluralism,

collegiality and a ministry of service (Ludwig, 1995). Vatican II brought about a renewed commitment to a "communal ecclesiology" (Groome, 1998, p. 189), which emphasised the Church as community. *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, signified a "shift away from an emphasis on the hierarchical nature of the church to a new emphasis on the church as made up in a primary sense of all of its members" (Doyle, 1995, p. 23). *Lumen Gentium* (Flannery, 1996) proposed "the new People of God" (par 9) as the fundamental model of church. Following Vatican II the Church attempted to re-discover a sense of community and develop more horizontal, collegial structures of authority (Garvin, Godfrey & McDonnell, 1994).

The Council's teaching on Catholic schools (Flannery, 1996) reflected this re-discovery of community: "It is … the special function of the catholic school to develop in the school community an atmosphere animated by a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel" (Declaration on Christian Education, par 8). This perspective was reinforced and expanded by the Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) which declared that "the educating community" is "constituted by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, directors and non-teaching staff" (par 18). Lombaerts (1998), in reviewing the development of the Christian school after Vatican II, argued: "fidelity to the original idea of the Christian schools lies precisely in promoting interaction among people who know they are invited to form a community with the God of life" (p. 47).

The notion of the Catholic school as community, with its emphasis on interaction, collaboration, and inclusiveness, provides a backdrop to the appreciation of Year 12 student leadership within Catholic schools.

2.3 Backgrounds of the Case Study Schools Selected for the Research

2.3.1 Catholic Ladies' College, Eltham, Victoria (CLC)

Founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1902 at East Melbourne, CLC moved to its present eight-hectare site in Eltham during 1971. In 1999 the former convent building, Currajeen, was converted to provide "a unique learning environment" (*To Learn, to grow,* n.d., p. 2) for the Year 12 students. CLC boasts "a century-long tradition of providing a quality education for young women" (*To Learn, to grow*, p. 2).

The College endeavours to provide a setting "where students can discover and develop their talents in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, where the values of the Gospel are lived and taught" (*To learn, to grow,* n.d., p. 2). The stated aim of the school is to "educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth as women, and wholly involved in the transformation of society" (*Mission Statement,* n.d. p. 1). Moreover, since this undertaking "is possible only within a Christ-centred community" (*Mission Statement,* p. 1), CLC strives to be a community based on learning, spirituality, celebration and a prophetic stance.

The promotion and encouragement of academic success is important at CLC. Its curriculum is designed "to develop students' knowledge and skills for further study, the world of employment and life" (*Curriculum,* n.d., p. 1). Programme offerings comprise: Religious Education, The Arts, English, Health and Physical Education, Languages, Mathematics, Science, Studies of Society and the Environment, Commerce, and Technology. Moreover CLC provides various activities outside the classroom "to involve the students and assist in their development" (*Curriculum,* p. 4). These include:

community involvement, social service, camps and excursions, pastoral care, careers and work experience, literary and artistic options, sporting and recreational choices, educational extension, and leadership and decision-making opportunities (*Curriculum*). Pastorally, the student body at CLC is arranged in year level home classes.

2.3.2 St Kevin's College, Toorak, Victoria (SKC)

SKC was opened in 1918 by the Christian Brothers and is now situated on four campuses: a primary school campus, a main secondary school campus, a separate campus for Year 9 students, and a shared early learning centre with Loreto Mandeville Hall, the nearby Catholic girls' school. The stated aim of the College is "to provide its students, both present and past, their families, and the staff with an experience of true Christian community based on the living out of Gospel values" (*Mission Statement,* n.d.). SKC has a strong background in the education of boys within the Catholic tradition. As explained in its Prospectus: "Rigorous teaching and personal motivation combine to produce young men committed to excellence and ready to offer leadership in the world" (*St Kevin's College, Toorak*, n.d., p. 16).

A broad curriculum at both primary and secondary levels is promoted at St Kevin's College. Fields of study include: Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Health and Physical Education, Languages other than English, The Arts, Studies of Society and Environment, and Technology (*St Kevin's College, Toorak*, n.d). Moreover, students attempting the Victorian Certificate of Education at SKC "are consistently successful and enter a wide range of tertiary courses" (*St Kevin's College, Toorak,* p. 7).

Central to the school's mission is excellence of learning, recognition of family life and the desire to achieve fullness of life (*Mission Statement*, n.d.). Importance is placed on the development of the whole person, where spiritual development, academic success, cultural awareness and sporting participation are integrated in the context of the Catholic tradition (*St Kevin's College, Toorak,* n.d.). SKC adopted a vertical pastoral system for its Year 10, 11 and 12 students in 1998.

2.3.3 Guilford Young College, Hobart, Tasmania (GYC)

Opened in 1995 as a senior secondary college, GYC was part of a lengthy restructuring process in Hobart that also saw four Catholic secondary colleges lose their Year 11 and 12 classes and the establishment of a new 7 to 10 secondary college on the eastern shore of Hobart. GYC is situated on two campuses, one in central Hobart and the other at Glenorchy, a suburb some ten kilometres distant. This research into senior student leadership focused on the Hobart Campus of approximately 550 students.

GYC endeavours to provide senior secondary education "in the Catholic tradition for a wide variety of students" (*Handbook,* 2002, p. 3). The College Vision Statement draws attention to the fact that GYC is "a Catholic community whose members work in partnership toward the education of young people" (*Handbook,* p. 6). There is an emphasis on catering to the emotional and spiritual needs of students, thus providing them with a sense of purpose and responsibility so that they become independent, caring and effective members of society (*Handbook*).

As a senior school, Guilford Young College provides education to a wide variety of students. Tasmanian Certificate of Education subjects are offered in the

following areas: The Arts, English, Science, Mathematics, Computing, Social and Professional Studies, History and Languages. Furthermore, GYC has a fine reputation as a provider of Vocational Education and Training programs. These include: Office Administration, Automotive, Hospitality Operations, Engineering/Metals, Tourism, Workplace Skills, and Information Technology (*Handbook,* 2002). Moreover, the school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities in which students are strongly encouraged to participate. These include sporting activities, musical and drama productions, debating, public speaking and community service. Furthermore, the College Handbook records that involvement in extra-curricular activities "assists students in their personal and social development and enables them to gain more from College life" (p. 11). Administratively, students are organised into mixed Year 11 and 12 tutor groups at their particular campus.

2.4 Young People in the Twenty First Century

The perceptions of young people in Year 12 attending the three above-mentioned schools constitute the core focus of this research. It needs to be initially stated that in considering any notion of "youth culture", generalisations can present their own in-built problems.   For instance, Evans (2001) pointed out: "To say that all punks are the same because they dressed similarly is to sterilise the chaotic nature of youth imaginings" (p. 13). Rather, she noted that the category of youth "is constructed in the pages of academic books and in the pages of the popular press' (p. 13). Similarly, Crawford and Rossiter (1988) considered that in many ways "teenage culture" was an artificial construct "created by the media, fashion, music, entertainment and leisure industries" (p. 1).

Honner (2000) has called attention to the fact that, while the children of the twentieth century were captive to a reality called modernity, the children of the twenty first century will live in a very different world. Modernity can be characterised by a focus on logic, objectivity, progress, order, control, confidence, certainty and productivity. However, as various commentators (Honner, 2000; Starratt, 1996) observed, modernity has not been an entire success: "two world wars, increasing poverty, impending ecological crisis, and the loss of meaning have all had their impact" (Honner, p. 13). In particular, "the myth of progress" (Starratt, p. 45) has been exposed by the advent of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic cleansing, cruelty among racial, ethnic, and religious protagonists, drug abuse, prostitution, and gun-carrying children. Moreover, the apparatus of progress: "business corporations, government institutions, and cultural institutions, and the elites who run them – are often shown to be subject to a scandalous lack of rational or moral integrity" (Starratt, p. 45).

The postmodern world of the twenty-first century is likely to experience what Honner (2000) has termed "an almost unimaginable shift of focus from the 'self' to the 'other'" (p. 14). For instance, Duignan (1998) has described an emerging trend within Australia "characterised by a commitment to issues and causes beyond self" (p. 47). He argued that this trend finds expression through various forms and organisations such as the Greens, Democrats, or Friends of the Earth, and typifies "a vigorous and renewed search for meaning (a form of spirituality) beyond individualism in order to experience a sense of belonging and relationship" (p. 47). Similarly, Tacey (1995) labelled the postmodern condition as "an important cultural shift in which the once-solid world has been dissolved in the ambiguity of otherness" (p. 115). He has argued moreover, that, "whether it likes it or not, Australia is deeply affected by the postmodern movement"

(p. 115) which, he maintained, "is well timed to coincide with the necessary destructuring of the heavily defended and fortified Australian consciousness" (p. 116).

Within this postmodern context Honner (2000) has argued that the present generation of Australian school leavers is likely to be very different from the generation that preceded them:

> They already show an enthusiasm for looking after one another and a curiosity for the world. They do not respond to talk about what is right or wrong but what is of "interest": at its best this means they are sensitive to what it is that calls them into being. Their lives are finely balanced between finding meaning and falling into self-destruction (p. 16).

Similarly, Fuller (2002), a clinical psychologist involved in the promotion of mental health in young people, observed that the current generation of young people born after 1984, what he has called the "click and go" generation (p. 1), are different from past generations in several important ways. This is the age group of the "baby boomlets", those who have been "born with a mouse in their hand" (Fuller, p. 16). They stay at school for longer with fewer job prospects of a satisfying career. They seem to find life "bland, seamless and meaningless" (Fuller, p. 1). Moreover, many use "risk taking, delinquency, aggression and academic failure as ways to express their autonomy and maturity" (Fuller, p. 1). This is the generation which Mackay (1999), a leading Australian social researcher, believed, faces an uncertain future "without having inherited a stable value system, and without the compensation of assured employment" (p. 77).

Fuller (2002) pointed out that this current youth generation is not attracted by the notion that boring classes will benefit one later. Rather, he stressed that if the members of this generation are to be engaged in learning "they need to be able to set

their own goals and rewards and create a sense of flow for themselves" (p. 17). Table

2.2 identifies differences between the "click and go" age group and previous

generations.

Table 2.2

Four Generations in Australian Culture (Fuller, 2002, p. 16)

Depression / War Years	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Click and Go
Born: 1927 – 45	Born: 1946 – 64	Born: 1965 – 83	Born: 1984 - 2002
Work hard Play safe	Work hard Play hard	Work hard if it doesn't interfere with play	Good grades Compete
Save Money	Worry about money	Use Credit	Save Money
Narrow options High availability	More options High expectations	Vast options Low satisfaction	Vast options Low availability
Being seen to do the right thing	Should I really like it – what will others think?	I like it and I don't care what you think	Who are you anyway? You're old
Buy a decent house	Buy the best house you can	Reclaim the inner city	I like living at home
Strong work ethic	Money / principles	Principles/satisfaction	Cats, dogs and rats[a]

[a]Cats – loyal to the worksite. Dogs – loyal to the owner. Rats – loyal to themselves. The "click and goes" are more likely to be "rats" (Fuller).

Furthermore, youth today form their spirituality in ways that are different from

the ways of previous generations. Whereas people of older generations generally

associated any spiritual experiences with Church (Neist, 2002), many contemporary

adolescents do not tend to see religion, even the religious tradition into which they were

born, as likely to have an important place in the way they decide their values and purpose in life (Ryan & Malone, 1996). Yet this does not mean that young people have no spirituality. Commenting on what it means to be "a young adult today", Neist, a Marist Brother who works with and for young adults searching for their spirituality, highlighted five main ways in which young people meet God: "experiences of community, personal and community prayer, working for social justice, experiences of creation and working to protect the environment, and opportunities to offer ministry to others" (p. 6). Similarly, Roff (1999), director of Catholic Education in the diocese of Cairns, observed that young people possess an honesty, a critical capacity and a genuine spirituality. He noted that today's teenagers:

- despite their insecurities and uncertainty at times, subscribe to a "do it" mentality;
- are unshockable;
- avoid the language of potential oppression;
- subscribe to immediate gratification yet yearn for that which is more fulfilling;
- want simple lives but are both irritated by complexity and uncomfortable with ambiguity;
- are incredibly hospitable and less materialistic than previous generations;
- possess a wonderful sense of humour and fun – bordering at times on the irreverent;
- believe formal rules were made for others: they do not respond well to a "Thou shalt not" mentality;
- are relational rather than one dimensional in approach to the opposite sex;
- with their "teflon coated souls" they mask the existence of a deep spirituality that shapes their everyday living (p. 38).

Moreover, Roff suggested that many, although not all, of the values associated with this age are congruent with the values behind the Christian tradition.

Such considerations are important in any understanding of how youth of today function when they are invited to exercise leadership within their school. In particular, these considerations help explain what it is that young people see as valuable and valid

in leadership, what things young people like to do as leaders, in what ways young people prefer to exercise leadership, and in what circumstances young people will accept support and encouragement in their leadership activities.

2.5 Edmund Rice Spirituality

Edmund Rice spirituality is centred on the person of Edmund Rice, a Catholic Irishman, who in 1802 challenged the conventional wisdom by founding a Lay Order of men to care for and teach poor and destitute boys. This spirituality contributes to the context of the research because the researcher is a member of that Lay Order which Edmund Rice founded.

Edmund Rice spirituality promotes a vision of service in education, especially for the materially poor. This vision of service has grown and developed since the early nineteenth century and is encapsulated, both within the ethos of Order owned schools, but also in such Christian Brother sponsored organisations such as the Edmund Rice Network, Edmund Rice Camps Inc, Victoria, and the Young Adult Edmund Rice Network (Y.E.R.N.). Each of these above-mentioned organizations emphasises an anthropology that is inclusive, optimistic, service-oriented, contains a spiritual dimension, and values the leadership of young people working with other young people. Moreover, it is a spirituality that speaks of the ministry of leadership being always for mission (Congregation of Christian Brothers, 1996, par 71), that is, outreach to others. The particular leadership styles and structures deemed appropriate for this form of leadership are participative and open, and seek collaboration with those people and organisations committed to justice and the welfare of young people (Congregation of Christian Brothers, par 72).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter addressed four dimensions which contribute to the context of the research: Vatican II and its impact on Catholic education; the backgrounds of the three Catholic schools selected for this research; an understanding of young people in the twenty-first century; Edmund Rice spirituality. In the light of these four dimensions, and given the purpose of the research, literature is reviewed in Chapter 3 that focuses on organisational leadership, Christian leadership and its meaning for the Catholic School, and student leadership.

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CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

Since the purpose of the study is to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of male and female Year 12 students from three Catholic schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body, it seemed appropriate to examine the literature in (a) the general body of organisational leadership, (b) Christian leadership and the Catholic School, and (c) student leadership.

In this chapter, literature concerning organisational leadership is centred primarily on ten generalisations which have emerged in the light of current leadership theories (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997). These generalisations provide a framework and a language to conceptualise important trends in the field. Literature pertaining to Christian Leadership, and its meaning for the Catholic School, highlights the leadership style of Jesus of Nazareth (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Treston, 1994, Edwards, 1987), and the significance of this style of leadership as a model for Catholic schools (Duignan & Bhindi, 1998; Neidhart, 1998; McLaughlin, 1997). Literature on student leadership outlines various features, benefits, and concerns associated with student involvement in leadership activities (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Goldman & Newman, 1998; van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Willmett, 1997; Gordon, 1994), calls attention to the place of an adult mentor working with student leaders (Gray, 2002; Moen, 1997; Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, & Robson, 1994; Hart, 1992), and indicates ways of preparing students for their leadership responsibilities (Chapman

& Aspin, 2001; Mardon, 1999; Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, & Robson, 1994). Table 3.1 provides a structure of the literature review perceived to be pertinent to the study.

Table 3.1

Outline of the Literature Review

3.2 Conceptual Framework	
3.3 Organisational Leadership	• Transforming Leadership • Vision • Vision and Commitment • Vision and Communication of Meaning • Issues of Value • Culture • Collaborative Decision-Making • Many Kinds of Leadership Forces • Institutionalising Vision • 'Masculine' and 'Feminine' Qualities
3.4 Summary	
3.5 Christian Leadership and the Catholic School	• Christian Leadership • Leadership in Catholic Schools
3.6 Summary	
3.7 Student Leadership	• Features of Student Leadership • Leadership Development and Training • Place of an Adult Mentor • Benefits • Concerns
3.8 Summary	
3.9 Conclusion	

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The three themes outlined above, namely organisational leadership, Christian leadership and its meaning for the Catholic School, and student leadership, create an interconnected network, which forms the conceptual framework underpinning this

research into Year 12 student leadership. Firstly, literature on organisational leadership generates a structure for the research by providing an overview of past and present developments within the field. Secondly, literature on Christian Leadership, and its meaning for the Catholic School, furnishes a rationale on which to base the notion of senior student leadership within Catholic schools that is inclusive of all Year 12 students. Thirdly, material specifically on student leadership offers some guidelines for developing and nurturing senior students as they lead. These themes and their connection to the research topic are illustrated in Figure 3.1.
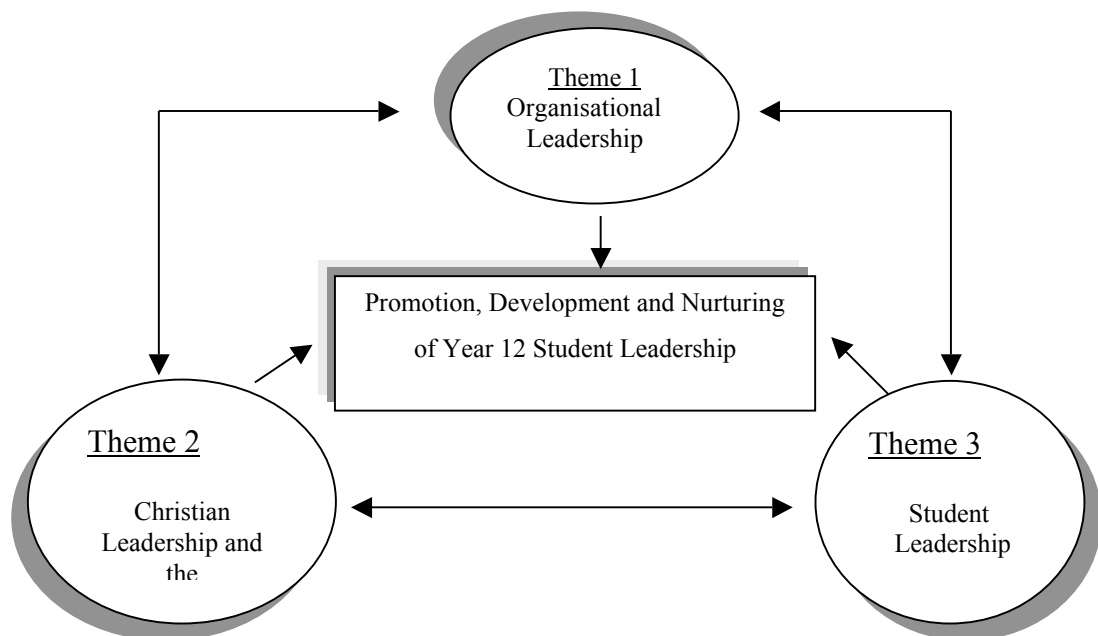
Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework of the Literature

3.3 Organisational Leadership

Definitions of leadership are diverse. Traditionally the notion of a leader had "heroic connotations and was often used in conjunction with power or authority" (Stokes & James, 1996). Early studies of leadership, therefore, focused on the traits of leaders as great people. It was anticipated that the general study of the life and work of

recognized leaders would "isolate particular traits and characteristics, either behavioural or psychological, which might identify potential leaders in another context" (Tuohy, 1999, p. 167). Leadership was then variously characterised as situational (Arbuckle, 1993), functional (Stokes & James, 1996) or in terms of a leader's style (Tucker, 1997). Distinctions were highlighted between a leader and a manager (Pitcher, 1997; Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Some authors saw such distinctions as simply "different parts of the same phenomenon" (Nahavandi, 1997, p.5). Particular theories introduced notions such as moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and the "principle-centred leader" (Covey, 1992). Certain commentators (Gronn, 1998; Crawford, 1997) criticised these theories because they "stress the importance of one person as leader" (Crawford, p. 2), preferring instead a definition which emphasised leadership as an integral part of the group process within teams (Hunter, Bailey & Taylor, 1997; Covey, 1997; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1986).

Such studies of leadership have yielded valuable insights about leaders and leadership *per se*. However, the topic of leadership can be confusing, as each definition seems to emphasise one particular aspect of leadership more than another does. For the purposes of this research the position advanced by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) regarding leadership has been adopted. They argued that there are several generalisations emerging from these and other studies, which can shape leadership. Ten such generalisations are offered. They are significant to this research because they provide a background and a language to conceptualise important trends in the field. These generalisations are now reviewed.

3.3.1 Transforming rather than transactional leadership.

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) distinguished between transactional leadership, which is a simple exchange of one thing for another, and transformational leadership that aims for "a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation" (p. 28). Transactional leadership frequently involves "a quid pro quo between the leader and the follower" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993, p. 186). That is, the role of the leader is seen primarily as "motivating followers to bring about intended outcomes, and to reward them appropriately" (Tuohy, 1999, p. 169). Sergiovanni and Starratt maintained that such transactions are "governed by instrumental values or modal values such as fairness, honesty, loyalty, integrity" (p. 186). It is leadership in which

> the leader sees to it that procedures by which people enter into agreements are clear and aboveboard, and takes into account the rights and needs of others. It is the leadership of the administrator who sees to the day-to-day management of the system, listening to the complaints and concerns of various participants, arbitrating disputes fairly, holding people accountable to their job targets, providing necessary resources for the achievement of subunit goals, etc. (Sergiovanni & Starratt, p. 186)

Transactional leadership focuses on people seeking their own, individual objectives and entails "a bargaining over the individual interests of people going about their own separate ways" (Sergiovanni & Starratt, p. 186). It is task and relationship oriented where leadership is understood in terms of style (Tuohy).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, embodies four factors: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Deluga & College, 2000). Charisma is the leader's ability to generate "good symbolic power which the employees want to identify" (Deluga & College, p. 302). Inspiration describes how the leader fervently communicates a future idealistic organisation which can be shared. Individual consideration characterises how the leader serves as

"employee mentor" (Deluga & College, p. 302), treating employees as individuals and responding to their needs and concerns. Intellectual stimulation expresses how transformational leaders "encourage employees to approach old and familiar problems in new ways" (Deluga & College, p. 302).

Transformational leadership, therefore, focuses on the communication of a community's vision in a way, which secures commitment from members of the organisation (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997; Quinn, 1996; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993). The transforming leader, while still responding to the needs among followers, looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan). Such leadership permits both leader and follower to engage each other in solving problems in ways that accentuate end values rather than private personal interests (Carey, 1991). As Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) remarked, "transformational leadership is concerned with end values such as freedom, community, equity, justice, brotherhood" (p. 186) and "calls people's attention to the basic purpose of the organization, to the relationship between the organization and society" (p. 186). Thus, followers become transformed into leaders who become agents of transformation for others (Carey, 1991). Furthermore, transformational leadership tends to build community in that it involves "an exchange of people seeking common aims, uniting them to go beyond their separate interests" (Telford, 1996, p. 8). It "transforms" people's attitudes, values, and beliefs from being self-seeking to being higher and more altruistic (Sergiovanni & Starratt).

Certain scholars (Gronn, 1998; Lakomski, 1995), however, have raised concerns about the notion of transformational leadership. Lakomski, for instance, argued: "In addition to its implicit 'great man' theory of the leader who, by dint of personality, leads … there is the assumption that knowledge is concentrated at the top of the organisational hierarchy and that it 'flows downhill'" (p. 211). Gronn highlighted what he called "a curious love-hate relationship towards transactions" (p. 202) by advocates of transformations: "Sometimes the transactional-transformational contrast is one of differences in kind, at others of degree, and at others still of differences in evolutionary stages" (p. 202).

Yet, far from a "great man" approach, transformational leadership exhibits a strong collaborative and communal dynamic (Telford, 1996; Carey, 1991) which aims at formulating shared vision (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993), shared beliefs (Telford), mutual stimulation and elevation (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997) and empowerment of others (Tuohy, 1999). Furthermore, authors such as Deluga and College (2000), Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) and Tuohy, have remarked on the interrelation between transactional and transformation leadership (as opposed to a love-hate relationship). Tuohy, for instance, argued that the development of transformational leadership involved "a radical shift from leader behaviour which focuses on planning, control and predictability, to an ability to live with ambiguity, trust and uncertainty" (p. 182). He stressed that central to this development was "the integration of the personal, transactional and transformational approaches to leadership" (p. 182). That is, individuals focus on their personal beliefs, ensuring that these beliefs represent a human, ethical and moral stance with regard to others and to their work. Leaders who strive for authenticity examine their transactional styles, seeking correlation between

their behaviour and beliefs, and ensuring that they are not attempting to dominate others. Finally, the leader needs to be aware of transformation, showing concern for others, their growth and development (Tuohy).

Deluga and College (2000), on the other hand, maintained that transformational leaders "incorporate and amplify the impact of transactional leadership" (p. 302). That is, transformational leaders "recognise and exploit those employee higher-level needs that surpass immediate self-interests" (Deluga & College, p. 302). Sultmann and McLaughlin (2000) stressed the complementary nature of these forms of leadership. Transformational behaviours, they explained, extend transactional leadership, with its emphasis on structure and rewards, by "being innovative and engaging others personally and professionally in contributing the vision and inviting commitment to the organisation's mission" (p. 89).

3.3.2   Outstanding leaders have a vision for their organisation.

Vision can be described as "the capacity to create and communicate a compelling image of a desired state of affairs" (Hough & Paine, 1997, p. 177). Weems Jr. (1993) observed that vision "is the single most common theme in leadership studies" (p. 37) and suggested that the first duty of a leader was to lead in the establishment of an appropriate and shared vision. Such a shared vision, Duignan (1997) has argued, informs and enables people to "focus on the bigger picture while helping them understand and appreciate their role in bringing it about" (p. 6). It is through shared vision that people can "move beyond focusing on self, skills and techniques to a more holistic appreciation of organisation and work" (Duignan, p. 6). Starratt (1993) proposed, moreover, that the real source of a leader's power "is in the vision which can

attract the commitment and enthusiasm of the members" (p. 43). Hence he argued: "The point of leadership is not to get people to follow *me*; rather the point is to get us to pursue a dream, an idea, a value by which we make a contribution to the world and realise our highest human potential" (p. 43).

3.3.3 Vision must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among members of an organisation.

Treston (1994) warned that while a leader may pronounce a vision for the group, a vision's legitimacy depended on the degree of ownership by the people. He perceived vision emerging from what he termed "a process of communal sharing" (p. 16) and suggested that a leader's vision "stays idle rhetoric unless there is a group commitment to its implications" (p. 16).

In this regard Sergiovanni (1996) proposed three "sources of authority" (p. 83) that underscore how a leader can secure commitment for a vision. The first two, bureaucratic and personal authority, he saw as variations on a strategy that emphasised "follow me". That is, "follow me because of my position" or "follow me because I will make it worth your while" (p. 83). The third approach, which Sergiovanni considered more appropriate to leadership in schools, is centred on community leadership with an emphasis on building a shared followership. According to Sergiovanni leadership in communities is idea-based, the goal being "to build a broad-based commitment to shared values and conceptions that become a compelling source of authority for what people must do" (p. 83). In establishing idea-based leadership, Sergiovanni argued that leaders had a special responsibility to share their vision, but to do so in an invitational mode.

3.3.4   Communication of vision requires communication of meaning.

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) have suggested that leadership cannot exist separately from what people find significant and meaningful. They noted that in recent years particular attention has been given to the use of metaphors and symbols in the communication of meaning.   Similarly, Sergiovanni (1992) argued the importance of metaphors because they frame the way we think. He proposed that the image of a school as a "learning community" suggested a very different leadership practice from that created by thinking of schools as "instructional delivery systems" (p. 45).

3.3.5   Issues of value – 'what ought to be' – are central to leadership.

Shared values have a powerful effect on institutions. Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989) pointed to the fact that "when values and beliefs become embodied in work they can intensify employees' commitment, enthusiasm and drive" (p. 73). Moreover, from research on the relationship between personal and organisational values, Kouzes and Posner (1996) discerned that shared values

   • Foster strong feelings of personal effectiveness

   • Promote high levels of loyalty to the organization

   • Facilitate consensus about key organizational goals and the organization's
     stakeholders

   • Encourage ethical behaviour

   • Promote strong norms about working hard and caring

   • Reduce levels of job stress and tension

   • Foster pride in the organization

   • Facilitate understanding about job expectations

   • Foster teamwork and esprit de corps (p. 105)

In addition, Kouzes and Posner noted, "consensus about long- and short-term values creates commitment to where the organization is going and how it's going to get there" (p. 105). For transforming leadership, where the quest of higher goals calls for full engagement and commitment, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) suggested that the leader "must be more concerned with end values such as liberty, justice and equality" (p. 31). Furthermore, a leader's ability to exemplify the shared values of an organisation is critical. Badaracco and Ellsworth stressed, "leaders should go to great lengths to avoid appearing inconsistent or acting in ways that communicate insincerity, the death knell of institutionalized values" (p. 87).

3.3.6 The leader has an important role in developing the culture of an organisation.

Culture is difficult to explain as it is largely implicit and we only see surface aspects. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbeck (1999) defined culture as "the norms, beliefs, values and assumptions shared widely by members of an organization" (p. 82). Moreover, they concluded that culture building by transformational leaders involved behaviours which developed these characteristics within an organisation. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbeck noted that some of these behaviours were the use of every opportunity to focus on vision and goals, the use of symbols and rituals to express cultural values, assisting staff to clarify shared beliefs and values, and providing opportunities for collaborative work.

3.3.7 Studies support school-based management and collaborative decision-making.

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) directed their generalisations towards school leadership. They argued that school-based management called for approaches to

school leadership which encouraged and supported high levels of collaboration within the school community. Such a call for collaboration could easily be made of leadership within any organisation. Collaboration is an important relational component of leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 1996); it is essential for the effective working of leadership teams (Gronn, 1998; Covey, 1997; Stott & Walker, 1995), and it is important within the context of Christian Leadership (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Arbuckle, 1993; Weems Jr., 1993). However, in promoting collaboration as a credible leadership characteristic, one needs to be sensitive to the "the country club model of leadership" (Weems Jr., p. 33). That is, "one gets some people together, asks them what they want, writes it down on newsprint, and then tries to make sure that it happens" (Weems Jr., p. 33). Acting collaboratively is much more than a "country club" approach. Rather, collaboration "taps into the gifts of many people, fosters creativity, and achieves greater results" (Sofield & Kuhn, p. 38).

3.3.8   There are many kinds of leadership forces – technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural – and these should be widely dispersed.

Leadership forces provide for the direction, setting and maintenance of organisations (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000). The technical, human and educational aspects of leadership encompass the task and relationship dimensions of leadership behaviour and are essential for management competency (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1997). According to Sultmann and McLaughlin, technical force involves competency through appropriate planning, organising, scheduling, team development and conflict resolution. Human force requires interpersonal relationship competency. While educational force derives from expert knowledge in the areas of education and schooling.

However, if excellence is desired, Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) maintained that symbolic and cultural forces should also be evident. Symbolic leadership calls for "modelling appropriate behaviour and actions – to give, as it were, explicit expressions to the vision and goals of an organisation" (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 90). The task of the cultural leader "is to shape this culture and to devise ways and means whereby that culture is transmitted to others" (Sultmann & McLaughlin, p. 90).

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) noted that leadership is a multi-dimensional concept and it would be rare for a leader to exercise all the leadership forces. Consistent with evidence of benefits from collaborative approaches they maintained that "highly successful leaders recognise the importance of 'leadership density'" (p. 34) where leadership roles are shared and leadership is broadly exercised.

3.3.9 Attention should be given to institutionalizing vision if leadership of the transforming kind is to be effective.

This generalisation focuses on ways vision can be articulated so that others become committed to it and daily activities are imbued with meanings and values. Starratt (1986) spelt out six elements for "leadership as a communal institutionalising of a vision" (p. 15). These are:

- The leader's power is rooted in a vision

- Vision illuminates the ordinary with dramatic significance

- Communal sharing of vision

- Transformation of institutional structures and procedures by the vision

- Institutional living out of the vision in essential decisions

- Institutional celebration of the vision. (p. 15)

Such an approach, Burford (1996) maintained, gives a different view of the concept of power: "not power over people, not power of position or personality, but the power of vision which attracts the commitment and the enthusiasm of the members" (p. 6). From this perspective, the point of leadership is to get people "to pursue a dream, an idea, a value by which we make a contribution to the world and raise our highest human potential" (Burford, p. 6).

3.3.10 Both 'masculine' and 'feminine' stereotype qualities are important in leadership, regardless of the gender of the leader.

Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) observed that there has been a cultural bias towards male leadership and that this bias was reflected in the false notion of leadership as mere control. Moreover, they noted the traditional stereotype of femininity as dependent, submissive and conforming. However, they believed that "as other conceptions of leadership take hold, especially those which deal with the relationship between leader and followers" (p. 35) there will be a shift in bias. Studies by Eagly and Johnson (2000), for instance, suggested that sex difference on leadership style reflected "the tendency for women to adopt a more democratic or participative style and for men to adopt a more autocratic or directive style" (p. 54). In this sense Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) argued for a redefinition of leadership integrating both masculine and feminine qualities. Specifically, they stressed the emerging awareness of the relational nature of leadership, and the shift in management attitudes characterised by collaborative styles so vital in transformational leadership.

3.4 Summary

The review of the literature on organisational leadership concentrated primarily on ten generalisations which have emerged in the light of current leadership theories

(Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997). These ten generalisations incorporate a notion of transforming leadership characterised by four factors: charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Deluga & College, 2000). Attention is drawn to the place of vision (Duignan, 1997; Starratt, 1993); securing commitment to a vision (Sergiovanni,1996; Treston, 1994); how vision is communicated (Sergiovanni, 1992), and how it is institutionalised (Burford, 1996; Starratt, 1986). The importance of shared values is stressed (Kouzes & Posner, 1996; Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989) along with the need for the leader to develop the culture of the organisation (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbeck, 1999). The role of collaboration within leadership (Lipman-Blumen, 1996; Gronn, 1998; Covey, 1997), and the notion of leadership forces (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000) are raised. Lastly, "masculine" and "feminine" stereotype qualities are acknowledged as important, regardless of the leader's gender (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1999).

The literature on organisational leadership is significant to this research in that it provides a framework and a language to conceptualise important trends in the field, in particular the notion of transforming leadership, the place of vision, the importance of shared values, and the significance of collaboration and leadership density. Because of the major relevancy of these issues in illuminating the complexity of the research problem, the following two questions evolved as a focus for the conduct of the research:

- What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?

- What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership and how is this understanding articulated?

3.5 Christian Leadership and the Catholic School

The ten aforementioned "emerging generalisations" proposed by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1997) generate an overview and a structure by which organisational leadership can be viewed. This research project aims specifically to explore Year 12 student leadership in three Catholic schools whose fundamental principles are centred on those values as exemplified in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. Christian leadership and its significance for leadership in Catholic schools are now considered.

3.5.1 Christian Leadership

Jesus is the primary model for all Christian leaders. Treston (1994) has maintained that Christian leaders inherit from Jesus a foundational tenet for all leadership: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). In like manner, Sofield and Kuhn (1995) argued that what differentiated Jesus as a leader was "his all-abiding and foundational belief in God's love" (p. 33). Jesus' ministry reflected a theological truth: God's love is universal (Edwards, 1987). His mission centred on proclaiming "a counter wisdom to that of the world, a subversive wisdom based on love and compassion" (Jolley, 1997, p. 136) as opposed to domination and power.

Sofield and Kuhn (1995) have proposed a model for Christian leadership derived from the teachings and life of Jesus in which they list eleven "basic characteristics and behaviours" (p. 34), along with twelve "recommendations for Christian Leaders" (p. 36). This model is illustrated in Figure 3.2 and provides the basis for an understanding of Christian Leadership within this research.
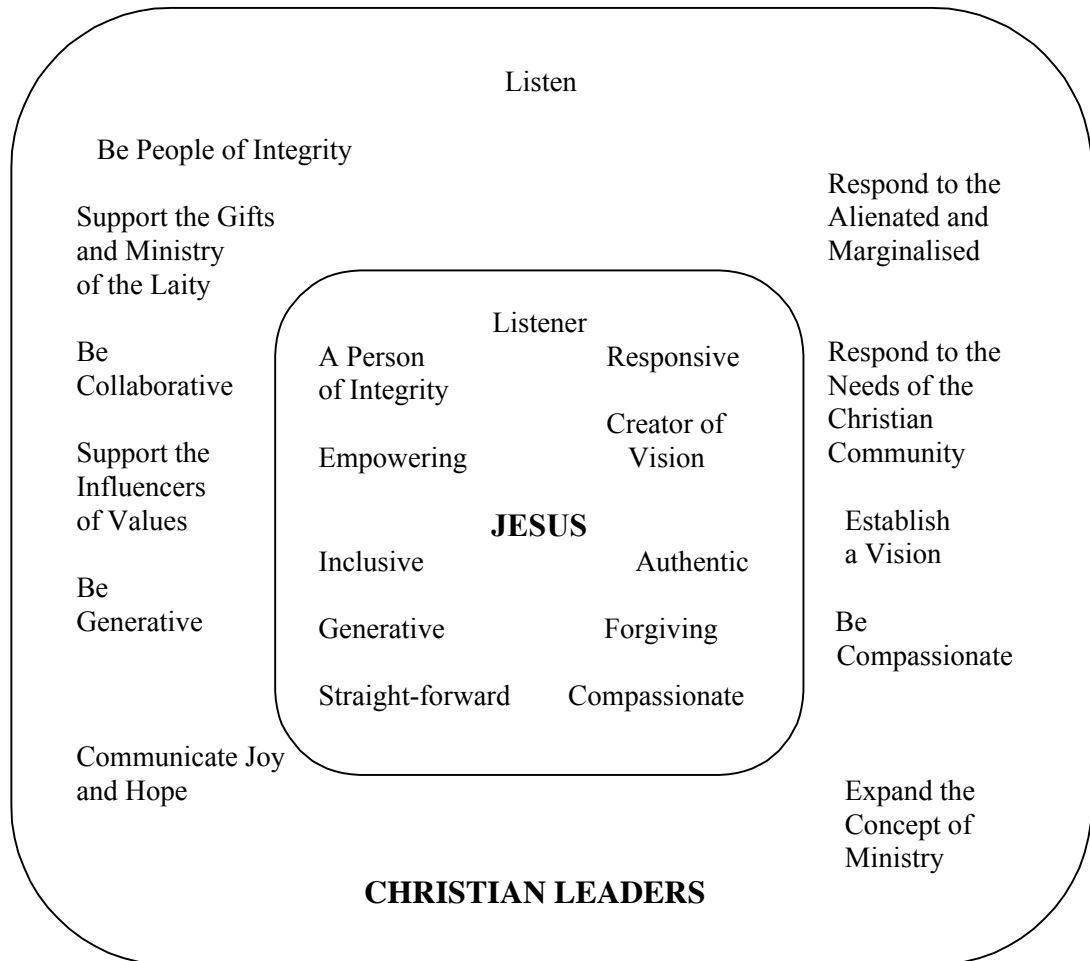
Figure 3.2: Jesus: The Model for Christian Leaders (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995, p. 40)

Jesus was a creator of vision. He proposed a view of the future and indicated a direction for getting there, yet did not prescribe detailed steps to be followed (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995). The beatitudes outlined this vision. They spoke of a world where the poor, the gentle and the hungry, those marginalised and defenceless within society, were cared for. It was a vision, which, while acknowledging the place of pain and suffering, offered comfort to those who mourn.   It was a vision, which placed great value on peace, justice, honesty and integrity of spirit (Mt 5:1-12). Moreover, through story and parable Jesus communicated his vision in ways that people could understand and identify.

Jesus was a person of integrity, committed to doing what he believed to be right irrespective of the consequences (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995). Treston (1994) has noted that integrity implies a certain harmony between the words of the leader and how the leader acts; it is a manifestation of a leader's character. In addition, Weems Jr. (1993) has linked integrity in leadership with "consistency between articulated values and behavior" (p. 123). Integrity, according to Weems Jr, implies that personal values, as well as organizational aims, "will powerfully influence what a person does and says" (p. 123). That is, what a leader does is what a leader is. Moreover, a leader who is honest and truthful evokes trust in followers (Treston). Jesus understood the importance of integrity, berating "the hypocrites" who were more interested with the splinter in their neighbour's eye than their own more prominent faults (Lk 6:41-42). Furthermore, as a person who was honest, authentic and sincere, Jesus also evoked trust in his followers. The response of the first disciples to Jesus' call was to leave everything and follow him (Mt: 5:11).

Values are foundational to the concept of Christian leadership. Neidhart (1998) described spirituality as "the search for God's presence in every dimension of life, and the integration of the whole of life in terms of ultimate values" (p. 87). A spirituality of Christian Leadership manifests "ultimate values" which draw inspiration from the Gospel of Jesus (Neidhart). Ryan, Brennan and Willmett (1996) have warned that Christians need to "resist the temptation to appropriate all truly human values as if they were exclusively or distinctively Christian" (p. 24). However, by His words and actions, Jesus gave new and distinctive meaning and prominence to certain human values. In particular, he proclaimed "freedom, love, hope, faith, concern for the poor, humility, God's reign, prayer, forgiveness, peace and justice" (Ryan, Brennan &

Willmett, p. 24). Moreover, the leadership Jesus modelled was based on faithful service, even at personal cost (Mark), collegiality and genuine participation (John), a commitment to justice, especially the poor and marginalised (Luke), and compassion (Luke). It is, as Neidhart explained, a leadership primarily of service in which the leader becomes the servant of all.

Collaboration and empowerment form key features of Christian leadership. John's Gospel reveals the depths of Jesus' collaborative and participatory approach:

> I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father (Jn 15:15)

Edwards (1987) has argued that the disciples were called not only to participate in Jesus' mission, but also into relationship with Jesus. Moreover, Edwards maintained that Jesus' entire ministry was an empowering leadership as exemplified by the "formation of the disciples, the call to a new community, his meals, his healing ministry, and his way of preaching the kingdom of God in parable" (p. 105). Similarly, Sofield and Juliano (2000) stressed that, from the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus gathered a group of disciples to minister with him. He taught, formed, and instilled in them a sense of mission, and then sent them out in pairs into ministry. Moreover, Sofield and Juliano pointed out that Jesus was there to receive the disciples when they returned from their journeys and he helped them to reflect on their successes and failures. In this way Jesus promoted a culture whereby all were invited to exercise what Whitehead and Whitehead (1993) have called "the service of leadership" which "arises not in a master / slave economy but among a community of disciples" (p. 103).

The notion of servant leadership is an all-pervasive element of Christian leadership (Jolley, 1997; Roloff, 1997; Edwards, 1987). Jolley referred to "the Gospel of service, grounded in love compassion and forgiveness" (p. 138), as exemplified in the life and teaching of Jesus.   Similarly, Roloff indicated that the principle of Christian leadership "goes back to Jesus' pre-Easter discipleship community and to the basic norm of Jesus' own conduct" (p. 140). According to Roloff, Jesus framed his mission in terms of service to others: "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be a slave to all" (Mt: 10:44). Moreover, Edwards noted that the word chosen to express the New Testament understanding of leadership is *diakonia,* which has the meaning "to wait on table" (p. 96). This term in secular Greek usage was not a title of honour. Rather, as Edwards explained, "serving and ministering, was thought of as demeaning" (p. 96). However, Edwards maintained that what Jesus did "by teaching, by example, by symbolic gesture, and, above all in his death, is to reverse completely the ordinary evaluation of service and being served" (p. 96).

As a person of integrity Jesus was authentic, letting himself be known for what he was. He was generative, continually focused on others. Moreover, he was compassionate and forgiving, being present to people, feeling their pain, and freely taking away people's burdens and helping them set new directions in their lives (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995). Jesus' leadership was characterised by an ability to listen to people, to respond to what he heard, to create and communicate a vision, to include all in his community, and to empower people and communities to implement this vision (Sofield & Kuhn). Moreover, by his words and actions Jesus made clear that "true leadership is grounded in love which must issue as service" (Engstrom, 1976, p. 37).

By his actions Jesus personified a transformational approach to leadership. According to Arbuckle (1993) the transforming leader develops processes, which "encourage the responsible exercise of authority, both individually and collectively, so that people become generative of ideas and the agents of their own growth and that of the group," (p. 106). Arbuckle has noted that this was the style of leadership preferred by Jesus. It was an approach made evident in the visionary, compassionate, empowering, inclusive and forgiving way he interacted with people (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995). Jesus exercised what Edwards (1987) called "relational power" (p. 94), the capacity to influence others and be influenced by them in such a way that "people help to create each other" (p. 95). The leadership of Jesus "was not just an expression of his own ministry but also a leadership which served others by supporting them to take on their own mastery of situations and events" (Sultmann & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 95). It was a leadership which, Sultmann and McLaughlin noted, provided people "with personal skills to become active and meaningful contributors to their own welfare and that of others" (p. 95). In this sense, Carey (1991) argued that Jesus' method of "making the kingdom of God present" (p. 30) was "to transform his followers into leaders who themselves serve as agents of moral growth and development for others" (p. 30). The transformational leadership displayed by Jesus, was invitational (Arbuckle), power sharing and empowering (Burford, 1996), and never an exercise in authority or control (Engstrom, 1976). Rather, it empowered "both leader and followers to raise each other to higher levels of motivation" (Carey, p. 33).

3.5.2 Leadership in Catholic Schools

The task of Catholic education is principally concerned with handing on the vision of human life taught by Jesus Christ (Burn, 1990). It is a vision which presents a

counter wisdom to that of the world, a wisdom based on love and compassion over power and control (Jolley, 1997). Furthermore, if one regards Jesus as the raison d'être of Catholic schools, then leadership within Catholic schools "must reflect the leadership of Jesus Christ, adapted to the contemporary context" (McLaughlin, 1997, p. 25). Such leadership, McLaughlin has pointed out, is communal, transformative and serving. In addition, authors such as Neidhart (1998), Duignan and Bhindi (1998) have stressed the importance of a spirituality of leadership in the context of the Catholic school. These four characteristics comprise the conception of Catholic school leadership, which informs this study. They are now considered.

Communal leadership in a Catholic school is both relational and participatory. Because the leader and 'followers' are in some relationship, the leadership dynamic is a function of the group and not merely of the individual (McLaughlin, 1997). Burn (1990), writing on leadership within Catholic schools, visualised the role of the leader as enabling "the unique gifts of others to flower" (p. 79). He noted, moreover, that the work of leadership "is shared by all who have responsibility for the well-being of the school" (p. 79). Similarly, Ryan (1997) identified effective school leadership as essentially empowering and enabling individuals to grow through the work they were doing:

> Leadership is … about establishing a climate where people feel that they are valued and trusted, where the work they do is appreciated, and their achievements are recognised. It is about fostering a sense of being part of a shared enterprise whose philosophy is known and respected and whose stated goals are seen as worthy of commitment and effort. (p. 207)

Such an understanding of leadership does not deny that leaders possess an authority by virtue of their office. However, as McLaughlin pointed out: "if the participatory

dimension is ignored by those exercising a leadership role in Catholic schools, it is difficult to expect that a Catholic school can fulfil its mandate" (p. 16).

Authors such as McLaughlin (1997), Burford (1996) and Carey (1991) have argued the importance of transformational leadership within Catholic schools. Carey has observed that "all too often" (p. 32) groups of Christians working together in ministry, such as teachers with a Catholic school principal, "have gone away from encounters with leaders with feelings of anger, resentment, or even worse, apathy" (p. 32). The reason for such bitter feelings, Carey has suggested, is that people enter into a process which should be an experience of God's presence in the midst of the faith community, that which Carey distinguishes as transforming leadership, only to experience nothing, or worse still, oppression. McLaughlin proposed that the relational and communal essence of the Catholic school "leads logically to its transforming perspective" (p. 18). He noted that transformational leadership is "about the articulation of a community's vision and the development of a particular organisation culture that nourishes that vision" (p. 19). He maintained, moreover, that leaders in Catholic schools should "mutually harness their own and their followers' knowledge, skills, insights and implementation strategies to redefine and reinterpret the educational mission of the Catholic school in order to meet changing and complex cultural conditions" (p. 19). Similarly Burford emphasised the importance of leadership of the transforming kind, with its emphasis on power sharing and empowering, as a means of nurturing "excellence" in Catholic schools. He pointed to the significance of ownership within a school community as a force behind excellence, and how that sense of ownership is affected by its relationship to decision-making and authority structures within the school.

Service is a key facet of the vision of leadership within Catholic schools (Jolley, 1997; McLaughlin, 1997; Grace, 1996). Jolley, for instance, identified a "theology of leadership" (p. 137) exemplified in the gospel text which sees Jesus wash the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper (Jn 13: 1-15). Such leadership, he argued, is based on service, empowerment and inclusiveness. It presents a model where leaders in Catholic schools are invited "to enter into a relationship with Jesus, and others, that is motivated by love and grounded in compassion and a desire to serve," (Jolley, p. 137). Similarly, McLaughlin pointed out that "humility, suffering and service were the integral dynamic of Christ's leadership" (p. 22). As such he argued that service forms the basis of genuine and authentic leadership in Catholic schools. He stressed, moreover, "anything less might well be a charade and reflect a distortion of the vision that lends legitimacy to Catholic education" (p. 22). McLaughlin warned, however, that such a perspective does not deliver "a rationale for subservience, indecision or perennial surrender" (p. 22). In addition, Grace, when investigating the responses of Catholic "headteachers" to the changing culture of English schooling, found that "many of the participants saw a social ethic of 'serving others' as central to the mission of the Catholic school" (p. 74).

Linked with the notion of service leadership in Catholic schools is the idea of a spirituality of leadership. Neidhart (1998) argued that leadership in the context of the Catholic school is, above all, ministry and that the appropriate spirituality of ministry is holistic, integrated and Gospel-centred. She pointed out that Gospel leadership, as modelled by Jesus, is primarily one of service (Mt 10:41-45). As such, Neidhart stressed that "the spirituality of the one who leads must be other-directed and altruistic, and not focused on meeting personal needs" (p. 89). Neidhart maintained that the leader of a school community has a major responsibility to develop the spirituality of

that community. Similarly, Duignan and Bhindi (1998) indicated the primacy of spirituality in what they call "authentic leadership". Such spirituality, they proposed, "entails finding the balance between the responsibility and authority of position and allowing others in the organization the freedom to express their point of view and realise their potential" (p. 97). In this sense, Duignan and Bhindi suggested that the type of leadership required for Catholic schooling is concerned with the human spirit, its values and relationships.

3. 6 Summary

The review of the literature on Christian leadership, and its significance for leadership in Catholic schools, called attention to the leadership style of Jesus of Nazareth and the importance of this style of leadership as a model for Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 1997; Burn, 1997). Christian leadership is characterised as transformative, evidenced by the empowering, compassionate, inclusive, and relational way Jesus interacted with people (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Arbuckle, 1993; Carey, 1991). Its fundamental vision is encapsulated in Jesus' words at the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5: 1 – 12). Moreover, personal integrity, and a commitment to values centred on service, collegiality, justice and compassion, are viewed as essential elements of Christian leadership (Neidhart, 1998, Sofield & Kuhn, 1993). Furthermore, collaboration and empowerment are highlighted as important features (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993, Edwards, 1987). Finally, Jesus' ministry reflected a theological truth: God's love is universal (Edwards, 1987). In Catholic schools, which are concerned with the handing on of the vision of human life as taught by Jesus, leadership is described as communal, transformative, serving, and distinguished by a spirituality that is other-centred (Neidhart, 1998; McLaughlin, 1997; Jolley, 1997; Carey, 1991).

The literature on Christian leadership, and its significance for leadership in Catholic schools, is significant to this research in that it offers the schema for how a student leader should act in a Catholic school. The communal and collaborative approach inherent in Christian leadership furnishes a rationale for inviting all Year 12 students to actively participate in leadership activities. Because of the major relevancy of these issues in illuminating the complexity of the research problem, the following question evolved as a focus for the conduct of the research.

• What are Year 12 students called to do in their role as leaders?

3.7 Student Leadership

The third theme, which impacts upon this research project into Year 12 leadership, is literature on student leadership *per se*. A number of issues emerge from the literature and provide a guideline for the development and nurturing of senior student leaders. These issues can be broadly categorised under the following headings: features of student leadership, leadership development and training, the place of an adult mentor, benefits, and concerns.

3.7.1 Features of Student Leadership

There is a strong sense that student leadership should be centred on ministration, namely civic service (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Moen, 1997), or servant leadership (East, 1994) or leadership as ministry (Willmett, 1997) whereby students develop a belief that their talents are to be used for others and the common good (Ryan. 1997). For instance, East (1994), in noting five principles of student leadership, suggested: "the blessing and burden of leadership can be chosen by people who feel ready to become servant to the community" (p. 147). Willmett underlined the need for a school

community to "identify and develop the practice of student leadership as ministry" (p. 27). In addition, he argued: "if service is understood to mean to bring out the potential of another person because of a belief in the dignity of each person, then the particular approach to student leadership … will need to be invitational, cooperative and collaborative" (p. 27). Moen commented on the merit of service as a component of student leadership, noting "students not only learn the value of giving something back to society, but can readily practise skills while participating in a service project" (p. 1). Likewise, Hawkes (1999) raised the need for school leaders to exercise a "servant heart" (p. 23) and suggested frequent checks to ensure this was the case.

Various commentators (Wright, 1999; Hawkes, 1999; Moore, 1999) have looked at what is involved in being a student leader. For instance, Wright stressed that leadership is "fundamentally about nurturing a better quality of humanity" (p. 26):

> leadership is about seeking to clarify what is most good, most true and most worthwhile and why it is such and then of seeking to create that environment of discipline, order, ritual, tradition and trust which will best enable noble action to follow noble thought or ideal. (p. 26)

Such requirements, Wright contended, are not beyond the capabilities of schools. In the same way, Hawkes pointed out that the task of school leadership is "to bring about within the school community a desire to know the good, desire the good, and do the good" (p. 24). What this means for student leaders, Hawkes observed, is that they "are required to animate their communities, to excite their school to do the things that are worthy of them" (p. 23). In particular, he emphasised that school leaders "need to work to make themselves redundant, to cause within their community the acceptance of values and behaviours which are perpetuated even when the leader is absent" (p. 23). Hawkes noted that student leaders are also required to anticipate, be pro-active, inspire confidence, believe in themselves and believe in others. Moreover, he suggested that

good school leaders needed "to break out of the pack and at times, run separate from the herd" (p. 23).

Hawkes (1999) also highlighted the value of student leaders having a high degree of emotional intelligence – the ability to empathise, to sense mood, to behave appropriately within a social setting, and to have the maturity to work towards a deferred goal. He noted that such leaders "are the sorts of people who will take the time to inspect a child's grazed knee, and the glass jar in which there is housed a black crawling thing" (p. 23). In this regard, Goldman (1996) pointed out that the skills of emotional intelligence can be taught to children, thus giving them "a better chance to use whatever intellectual potential the genetic lottery may have given them" (p. xii). He argued, furthermore, that there was "a pressing moral imperative" (p. xii) for doing this. Goldman indicated the growing evidence that fundamental ethical stances in life stem from underlying emotional capabilities. He highlighted impulse as the medium of emotion, with the ability to control impulse being the basis of will and character, and stressed that the root of altruism lies in empathy, the ability to read emotions in others. Moreover, Goldman believed, "if there are any two moral stances that our times call for, they are precisely these, self-restraint and compassion" (p. xii).

Also of importance is the need to help student leaders think about their roles as leaders, and to encourage them to recognise the power they have to make a difference in their schools. Moore (1999) proposed seven features of leadership worth consideration by students. These include having a clear sense of purpose and direction to make things happen, acquiring and maintaining an air of confidence linked with an ability to articulate their vision, and a preparedness "to be first to abseil down the cliff and last to

climb aboard the lifeboat" (p. 19). She noted that leaders must be strong when others need their help yet compassionate for those who are weaker. Furthermore, they must accept fully the trust placed in them and put their sense of service before their sense of self. In addition, Moore observed: "the courage of youth makes for more instant leadership than the caution of maturity. Each has its place" (p. 19). Lastly, Moore commented that leadership is not always obvious – "when a rowing eight is on the water, is it the stroke who is the leader or is it the cox?" (p. 19).

Gordon (1994), who has worked with students in developing the UNIS/UN Student Conference held annually at the United Nations, highlighted the importance of empowerment and team cooperation within student leadership. She suggested that, when we think of how to encourage student leadership, the real question becomes one of student empowerment. Empowerment, Gordon noted, can be a daunting and confrontational word, eliciting connotations of taking power from those who have it and are not enthusiastic about sharing it. Yet, as she has pointed out: "to have value, and effect, empowerment cannot be 'given' to young people" (p. 43). Rather, empowerment can only be achieved by students through "active doing":

> Real empowerment does not bring a sense of power over anyone, but a
> realisation of one's own competence to achieve any task one sets oneself.
> The 'power' is the understanding of the nature of the problem, of what
> needs to be done to solve it, and how to do it. It goes with a sense of
> responsibility to oneself and to the group that has undertaken a task. It
> assumes a right to fulfil that responsibility, and an attitude of mutual
> respect between the group and the community within which it functions
> (Gordon, p. 44).

Hence Gordon argued that if we want to empower students "competitive, compulsive ego-trips are not the kind of leadership we want to develop" (p. 44). She indicated that empowerment can only be achieved "through participation in an activity that leads to a result which has needed a whole group effort to succeed" (p. 44).

3.7.2 Leadership Development and Training

Increasingly, there has been an appreciation of the value of leadership training

and development for elected student leaders (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Mardon, 1999;

Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, & Robson, 1994). Such training often takes the form of a

school camp or leadership in-service day. For instance, Chapman and Aspin described

a student leadership program at Eastdale High School in Ontario in which one part of

that program was a four-day leadership camp retreat:

> The aim of the camp is to bring students together in a setting where they
> are away from school, where they are able to work on Club activities and
> where they are able to develop skills and co-ordinate activities and learn
> to support one another, so that they become self-supporting and self-
> regenerating. (p. 433)

The Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School in Western Australia also sends its student

executive on a leadership camp. Fourteen Year 12 students, along with senior staff

members, attend a course in development training lasting two days and one night.

Activities include a caving experience in which students and staff clamber over rocks

and other obstacles in the dark, and the Pamper Pole where students are required to

climb a twelve metre pole and then leap into a void to catch a swinging trapeze. It

also includes discussion about problems faced by students in their leadership roles, as

well as time spent on overall goal setting for the year. Learning outcomes incorporate

a realisation that autocratic leadership does not work, roles need to be shared and that

leadership is a group experience which involves trust and support (Mardon).

Alternatively, Highlife Education (2000) conducts an annual "National Young

Leaders' Day" during November in five of the capital cities around Australia.

Principals are invited to nominate senior school leaders to attend the event. The four

objectives of the day centre on inspiring students, motivating students, empowering

students, and exposing students to a diverse range of leaders in society. Highlife Education uses a process of selecting "a group of high profile personalities to speak and interact with the students" (p. 3), and aspires to challenge students "not only to reach their own personal goals but the goals of those they are leading" (p. 3).

A result of such leadership programs, however, is that frequently schools provide little else in the way of leadership training for their student leaders. In their research into practices of student leadership in primary and secondary schools in New South Wales, Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, and Robson (1994) reported that many schools have extensive leadership programs. Yet, they observed that few, if any of these schools, carried out on-going leadership courses for their student leaders. Rather they noted the tendency for schools to treat training in student leadership as "a 'one-off' time, and expect that students, having undergone a leadership camp, would have a clear understanding of what being a leader is all about, instead of seeing it as a continuing learning process" (p. 34).

Van Linden and Fertman (1998) proposed a more wide-ranging attitude towards leadership development in students. It is their conviction that "all adolescents have leadership potential" (p. xvii). Working with adolescents in the United States they found that while teenagers "do not come naturally to a belief in their own leadership abilities" (p. xvii), teenagers constantly exhibit leadership skills in everyday life. Moreover, van Linden and Fertman argued that many leadership opportunities lie within reach for young people. Van Linden and Fertman delineated three areas of leadership interaction: people, activities, and learning experiences. Furthermore, they saw schools as playing an important part in this leadership interaction. In particular,

schools are the place where youths begin to learn how to behave in groups outside their family, where adolescents learn a lot about leadership from their teachers, and where older adolescents become models for younger adolescents. In addition, they noted that schools not only provide leadership opportunities for adolescents; teenagers also learn much of what they know about leadership through formal education and schooling. Van Linden and Fertman proposed a three-stage approach to leadership development based on awareness, interaction and mastery. Underpinning this approach was firstly, the need to introduce students to the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership, and secondly, helping students "reach a balance" (p. 74) in their exercise of these forms of leadership.

Goldman and Newman (1998) also adopted a more comprehensive approach to student leadership. In an innovative program begun in 1991, they trialled their "Quality Student Leadership model" at a high school in Michigan. This model aimed to train students "to take more ownership in their schools and communities and become active partners in school and community improvement" (p. 6). The focus of the Quality Student Leadership process was the development of personal skills that would allow students to be leaders:

> Quality Student Leadership emphasises the development of *the innate leadership potential of every student* through a systematic and interactive process of self-esteem building, critical thinking and problem solving, team development, and action planning. (Goldman and Newman, p. 11).

The model incorporated a three-phase process, self-esteem/leadership, teambuilding and action planning where facilitators and trained school staff worked with student leaders. Moreover, Goldman and Newman indicated that the involvement in this program had led to "some radical improvements in the school culture" (p. 5).

There is also the case of the Student Action Teams Program which was set up in Victoria during 1998 as a collaboration between the Victorian Government's Department of Justice and the Department of Education. Under this program, Student Action Teams were established in twenty Victorian secondary schools during 1999. In each Student Action Team (SAT), a group of students identified and tackled a school or community issue: they researched the issue, made plans and proposals about it, and took action on it. The underlying principle was that such initiatives "engage students in purposeful, authentic activities which are valued by the students, which have broader community value and which meet or exceed mandated curriculum goals" (Holdsworth, Stafford, Stokes, & Tyler, 2001, p. 5). A key aim of the SAT program was to improve and extend leadership opportunities amongst participating students. Training was provided by the Australian Red Cross and incorporated a two-day student training activity for a team comprising four students and a teacher from participating schools.

3.7.3 Place of an Adult Mentor

Various commentators (Gray, 2002; Moen, 1997; Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, & Robson,1994; Hart, 1992) have stressed the place and value of an adult mentor working with elected student leaders. Defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1984) as an "experienced and trusted advisor" (p. 633) the term "mentor" has its roots in Homer's Odyssey to identify the trusted advisor of Ulysses' young son, Telemachus. Hart, for example, pointed to the value of adult involvement with young people, both for the guidance adults can offer, and also for the lessons adults need to learn. Moen, in reviewing the role of student leaders in school reform, concluded: "there should be an adult mentor ... who helps the students and encourages them to participate"(p. 1). Gray, writing of student participation in schools, recommended that members of a student

representative council "discuss who they would prefer as their advisory teachers, then contact those teachers to seek their support and involvement" (p. 12). Furthermore, Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, and Robson, argued that strong staff support was an essential feature of any school student leadership program, noting that "if there is one reason for the failure or death of a Student Representative Council it was largely due to lack of staff support" (p. 34).

The actual responsibilities of an adult mentor will vary according to the needs of the students. However, the capacity to listen, to explore ideas, to share experiences, to facilitate processes, to share information, to give advice (sparingly), and to provide feedback (Hunter, Bailey, and Taylor, 1997) would seem to be central. Gordon (1994) proposed that the role of the teacher is one of facilitator, not boss:

> It requires a tricky combination of using one's authority to teach and protect the young people from their mistakes, but never quite 'taking over'. The teacher must listen, clarify, and present possible outcomes and alternatives. Each student must be respected and encouraged, but a balance must be kept between the energy and the ambitions of the members of the group (p. 49).

Gordon asserted, moreover, that values of "understanding, mutual respect, cooperation, compassion and commitment must be insisted upon" (p. 49-50). In such a way she noted that the teacher was to "help forge a family, a team, with a sense of responsibility to each other as well as to the tasks its members have undertaken" (p. 45). Similarly, Appleton (2002), drawing on her own experiences in supporting student leaders, highlighted the need for a mentor to be both flexible and consultative so that "students genuinely experienced leadership in designing and planning and not merely in the implementation phase" (p. 19).

The manner in which the adult engages in the mentoring process is vitally important. Treston (2001), writing on student performance, noted that research "has demonstrated that a vital aspect of student performance is the teacher's belief about the students' ability" (p. 24). He concluded, "if a teacher has a negative perception about a student's ability, then this negativity tends to diminish the quality of work done by the student" (p. 24). Hunter, Bailey, and Taylor (1997) recommended that it helps to view those being mentored "as your equal – someone you respect, who is yet to reach their full potential" (p. 99). They advised to "avoid the parent-child relationship" since "your role is to empower them so they can be fully themselves" (p. 99). In addition, Freeborn (2000) proposed that schools should invest in books, videos, CD ROMs, kits, and other training manuals that assist students in their "vital leadership and communication role" (p. 19).

3.7.4 Benefits

Evidence suggests various benefits for students involved in school-based leadership. For instance, there are advantages for student leaders working in collaborative activities such as "team projects" (Gordon, 1994), student councils (Carey, 1994) or student leadership teams (Appleton, 2002). Gordon emphasised the value of student leaders working on student cooperative team projects focused on a worthy goal. In particular she noted that such activities gave students "confidence in themselves and in the way in which they relate to their peers, teachers and administrators" (p. 50). Carey, writing of his own teaching experiences in schools, discerned that students could have their lives enriched through involvement in student councils:

> When the student council teaches students how to be effective, then the students' attitudes towards their school community change and they can see themselves as being effective. … By giving students a chance to feel that they belong and do make a difference and by promoting the self-

worth of students, student councils can play a critical role in the quest for excellence in education (p. 16)

In addition, Appleton highlighted the positive feelings, notably enthusiasm, enjoyment and delight, of a student leadership team at a primary school who were involved in designing, planning, and implementing a series of lunchtime activities for the student community. She noted, moreover, her own enjoyment in the role as facilitator and the experience of standing back and supporting the students. Moreover, Hawkes (1999), when commenting on the rewards of student leadership, highlighted the privilege of being given the gift of control, and of influencing the actions and thoughts of others.

Researchers have also observed that when students are given opportunities to lead they can play a significant role in various school decision-making processes (Rafferty, 1997); they can make a genuine and significant contribution to the school community (Lavery 1999), and they are able to effect change (Carey, 1994). For instance, case-study research by Rafferty into giving primary age students "a voice" in school decision-making led her to point out significant benefits for the students. She perceived that the children involved were able to translate their ideas into practical outcomes on numerous occasions and that their observations were perceptive and astute. Furthermore, she noted:

> Giving children a voice helped in personal and social development, raising confidence and encouraging good citizenship. The 'social age' of the children changed – they took on 'adult responsibilities' and behaved in a 'grownup' way (p. 10).

Lavery commented on the positive approach of student leaders when given scope to be proactive in areas such as litter control, speaking at staff meetings, addressing the student body, and being ambassadors for the school. Carey highlighted the vital role student councils play in the overall educational program of a school by the way they

teach all students how "it is possible to be part of the world around them and that they can make change happen" (p. 16).

The development of confidence and self-esteem are significant benefits of leadership involvement. Lavery (1999) found that student leaders, after participating in a leadership camp program, believed they had gained confidence to lead, developed a sense of teamwork, experienced feelings of enthusiasm, and had improved their leadership skills. Cadzow (1999) interviewed six former school captains from "the class of '77'", to see whether the "golden girls and boys continue to dazzle when their blazers are in mothballs" (p. 34). The people she interviewed were the former senior prefect, head prefect, and school captains, of Geelong Grammar, Abbotsleigh in Sydney, North Sydney Boys High School, Sydney Cronulla High School, Catholic Ladies College, Melbourne, and Northcote High School in Melbourne. Only one spoke negatively, the boy who stayed back a year to be the senior prefect. His experience had been "pretty lonely" (p. 34). The other five all talked about the "the real sense of confidence" (p. 35) such an opportunity provides:

> It did give me confidence at an age when a lot of adolescents are in perpetual crisis and feeling very inadequate and I think probably that essential self-esteem never goes away. (p. 35).

> I think the most tangible benefit of being captain was the boost to self-confidence and self-esteem. (p. 35)

> It has to be a confidence booster. Someone has thought enough of you to put you in that position. (p. 35)

> Being school captain was a very positive experience. I think it gave me a boost in self-esteem, which is really important to get you through life. Whatever I set out to do, I have confidence that I'll be able to do it. (p. 38)

> I can't speak highly enough of what Northcote High gave me. It had a hugely positive effect on my life and still does. (p. 38)

Other comments from these five reflected feelings such as "a wonderful year" (p. 35), "a great honour" (p. 35), "it was great at the time" (p. 35), "a very personal benefit" (p. 37), "we were treated wonderfully well" (p. 38), and "I still love the place" (p. 38).

In addition, the leadership style advanced as the basis of student leadership, that of ministry and the servant leader, holds benefits, both for the students involved, but also for the wider school community and society in general. A notion of servant leadership shifts the focus from leadership as power that emphasises the "I", to leadership as service with an emphasis on the "other". Greenleaf (1977) argued that servant leadership "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*" (p. 13). He stressed that at the heart of such leadership is the wish "to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (p. 13). Greenleaf concluded that the best test of servant leadership is: "Do those being served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 13). Moreover, he asked: "What is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived?" (p. 14). Such an approach not only casts doubt on an attitude to leadership where people "shoulder their way into leadership positions, driven by upward mobility and a thirst for personal success" (Beare, 1998, p. 2), it also suggests an alternative that is "selfless, large-souled, (and) expansively visioned" (Beare, p. 3).

3.7.5 Concerns

Most schools aspire to provide their elected student leaders with experiences in leadership, to offer some form of leadership training, to appoint an adult mentor, or mentors, to guide the students in their leadership activities, and to indicate some model

of leadership to guide behaviour. Such issues and examples are important in pointing to the inherent value of student leadership as well as those ways student leadership may be developed and nurtured within schools.

However, researchers such as Hart (1992), Rafferty (1997), Carey (1994), and Gordon (1994), have raised concerns that sometimes students' participation in leadership is little more than manipulation, decoration or tokenism.   For instance, Hart questioned what exactly was student participation? This is a question which could just as easily be asked of student leadership. He used a "ladder metaphor" (p. 9) to outline eight levels of young people's involvement in endeavours, with the first three categories, Manipulation, Decoration, and Tokenism, incorporating no real level of student participation. Yet Hart noted that these three categories often explained the very way students are used. As he pointed out, "there is a strong tendency on the part of adults to underestimate the competence of children while at the same time using them in events to influence some cause" (p. 8). Hart argued, furthermore, "because children are not as naïve as usually assumed, they learn from such experiences that participation can be a sham" (p. 10). Rafferty, referring to Hart's ladder of participation, stated, "much that is classed as 'participation' by children would not warrant this classification" (p. 10). Carey asserted that student participation should "not be tokenistic, and it should not be conducted with students operating from positions of weakness or inferior status" (p. 16).   Gordon has asked of student leaders: "Are they being co-opted into the system in a rather patronising way, expected to play the part of willing co-operators with the decisions others make?" (p. 43).

In addition, Gray (2002) highlighted the danger of trivialisation, of having an S.R.C. in name only which can lead to student distrust, disrespect and a consequent withering of student interest. Moreover, Hawkes (2001) observed that schools often confuse student leadership "with doing duties, and the duties are usually menial administrative tasks on behalf of the school" (p. 241). In this sense Willmett (1997) has described student leadership in terms of "the figure-head role" (p. 26) where students are used mainly for public relations or "the supervisory role" (p. 26) where students operate as an extension of the management of the school. Willmett suggested that the sorts of questions accompanying the selection of students to the figurehead role are:

> Are they of good character? Do they cause any disturbances to the orderly running of the school? Are they a popular choice? Are they skilful in their particular sport or creative art? Can they speak well? Will they embarrass anyone? Will they bring an even higher public profile to the school? (p. 26)

Moreover, he described the supervisory role as assisting "in the administration of policies and practices of the school" (p. 26). Examples are: school canteen supervision, observance and reporting of behaviour on public transport, and supervising groups of students for study or in the school grounds. These roles stand in contrast to what he termed "the Student Representative model" (p. 26) with its broad-based student representation.

Yet, the major concern with the figurehead and supervisory roles as described by Willmett (1997) is not so much what each role entails, but rather, the assumption that student leadership is limited exclusively to one role, and hence, one behaviour. Certain responsibilities like representing the college at functions or welcoming guests to the school are quite valid roles for student leaders (Freeborn, 2000). And if student leaders perceive inappropriate actions such as stealing, or dangerous behaviour on public

transport, then is there not some obligation to take steps to redress the situation? Moreover, is there a problem with having the student leaders being of "good character"?

There is also the question of who exactly is to be prepared for leadership and in what ways is this to be done? Woyach (1992) has noted: "those few courses on leadership that do exist typically serve a narrow group of (elected) student leaders" (p. 2). Carey (1994) pointed to the fact that student councils usually involve small, select groups of students. He suggested, moreover, that sometimes these councils operate "more as leadership programs working for the benefit of the particular students involved, rather than as representative, participatory programs" (p. 16).

Furthermore, Carey (1994) indicated that even "where there is a will amongst student council members to represent the views of their constituencies they often do not know how to do this, or have not been given the resources for them to try" (p. 16). The result, Carey observed, was that at best the student councils may only involve small numbers of students, while at worst many students will be apathetic or negative towards their student councils. In such situations, Carey noted: "Members of student councils often find themselves isolated from or ostracised by their peers" (p. 16). Similarly, Willmett (1997) argued: "Consideration needs to be given to the student leadership process so that it does not disempower students at a young age by setting them apart" (p. 28).

There is also the concern, as pointed out by van Linden & Fertman (1998), that many high school students do not consider themselves as having leadership potential. From their studies in the United States they found that "few adolescents think about

leadership" (p. 5), and when they do, "they usually don't think of it in relation to themselves" (p. 20). Van Linden and Fertman believed that frequently, adolescents viewed leadership as something formal and distant, something "only for the popular kids, for those who make things happen; it is something adults have and teens don't; it is being the boss, doing the right thing" (p. 20). An added complication, according to van Linden and Fertman, was that many adolescents understood leadership in terms of "the great person" theory of leadership: leaders are born, not made.

3.8 Summary

The review of the literature on student leadership highlighted five major issues associated with the development and nurturing of senior student leadership. These issues are broadly categorised under the following heading: features of student leadership, leadership development and training, the place of an adult mentor, benefits, and concerns.

Five features of student leadership are identified. There is a strong sense that student leadership be centred on ministration, in particular service (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Willmett, 1997; Moen, 1997; East, 1994). The value of promoting "the good" within the school community is noted (Wright, 1999; Hawkes, 1999), along with the significance of student leaders having a high degree of emotional intelligence (Hawkes; Goldman, 1996). The importance of empowering student leaders through activities involving group participation is raised (Gordon, 1994). Finally, student leaders are encouraged to recognise the power they have to make a difference in their schools (Moore, 1999).

Attention is drawn to the importance and value of leadership development and training, both for elected student leaders (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Mardon, 1999), but also for the wider student community (van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Goldman & Newman, 1998). Furthermore, the place and importance of an adult mentor working with students in leadership is stressed (Gray, 2002; Moen, 1997; Gordon, 1994; Buscall, Guerin, Macallister, & Robson, 1994; Hart, 1992). Benefits associated with student leadership are detailed. These include: lives being enriched, increased personal confidence and self-esteem, enjoyment and delight, developing a sense of teamwork, improved leadership skills, and a sense of service (Appleton, 2002; Lavery, 1999; Cadzow, 1999; Carey 1994; Gordon, 1994). Finally, concerns regarding student involvement in leadership are raised, in particular, the level of student participation in leadership (Hawkes, 2001; Rafferty, 1997; Carey, 1994; Gordon, 1994), the trivialisation of student leadership (Hawkes, 2001; Willmett, 1997; Gordon, 1994), and the misunderstandings students have of leadership (van Linden & Fertman, 1998).

The literature on student leadership is significant to this research. Firstly, it indicates the value and place of student leadership within schools, secondly, it offers a guideline for developing and nurturing senior students as they lead, and thirdly, it raises concerns about student involvement in leadership. Because of the major relevancy of these issues in illuminating the complexity of the research problem, the following four questions evolved as a focus for the conduct of the research:

- How are Year 12 students prepared, supported, and encouraged to exercise leadership?
- What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?

• What are the concerns of Year 12 students, and of their schools, about Year 12
student involvement in leadership?

• How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to participate in
and to exercise leadership?

3.9 Conclusion

The three themes which form the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1)
underpinning this research into Year 12 student leadership, create an interconnected
network that not only links the themes with the research topic, but also the themes with
one another. Discussion on organisational leadership, on Christian leadership and its
significance for leadership in Catholic schools, and on student leadership, impacts upon
the research topic in various ways. (Summaries: 3.4; 3.6; 3.8). Specifically, literature
on organisational leadership provides a framework and a language to conceptualise
important trends within the field; in particular the notion of transforming leadership, the
place of vision, the importance of shared values, and the significance of collaboration
and leadership density. Literature on Christian leadership, and its significance for
leadership in Catholic schools, offers a model for how a student leader might act in a
Catholic school. The communal and collaborative approach inherent in Christian
leadership furnishes a rationale for inviting all Year 12 students to actively participate
in leadership activities. Lastly, literature on student leadership indicates the value and
place of student leadership within schools, offers a guideline for developing and
nurturing senior student leaders, and raises specific concerns regarding student
involvement in leadership. Table 3.2 summarises the leadership characteristics of each
of the three themes within the conceptual framework (Figure 3.1).

Table 3.2

Leadership Characteristics within the Conceptual Framework

Organisational Leadership	Christian Leadership And Catholic Schools	Student Leadership
• Transforming	• Listener	• Features
• Vision	• Responsive	- Service
• Vision Communicated	• Creator of Vision	- The Good
• Communication of meaning	• Authentic	- Emotional Intel
• Issues of Value	• Compassionate	- Roles
• Culture	• Forgiving	- Empowerment
• Collaboration	• Straight-forward	- Growth
• Leadership Forces	• Generative	• Training
• Institutionalising vision	• Inclusive	• Adult Mentor
• Masculine / Feminine	• Empowering	• Benefits
	• Person of Integrity	• Concerns
	• Values	
	• Service	
	• Transforming	
	• Communal	
	• Spiritual	

The review of the literature, therefore, illuminates this research in two principal ways. Firstly, it identifies concepts which inform our understanding of Year 12 student participation in leadership. Secondly, literature explicit to student leadership highlights particular issues that help shape a notion of senior student leadership inclusive of all Year 12 students. Table 3.3 outlines these two principal ways the review of the literature illuminates this research.

Table 3.3

Principal Ways the Review of the Literature Illuminates this Research

3.9.1 Concepts	• Collaboration
	• Transformational Leadership
	• Vision
	• Shared Values
	• Service
3.9.2 Specific Issues	• Leader Development
	• Support Structures
	• Benefits
	• Concerns

3.9.1 Concepts

The literature indicates that the idea of collaborative leadership is critical in all three leadership themes. That is, collaboration is essential for the efficient working of leadership teams (Gronn, 1998; Covey, 1997; Stott & Walker, 1995), and is an important element, both within the context of Christian leadership (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995; Arbuckle, 1993, Weems Jr., 1993), and Catholic school leadership (McLaughlin, 1997; Burn, 1997; Ryan, 1997). Furthermore, working in collaborative activities is acknowledged as a vital strategy by which student leaders not only exercise their office of leadership, but also learn and benefit from the experience, most notably through increased confidence, a sense of achievement, enjoyment and enthusiasm (Appleton, 2002; Gordon, 1994, Carey, 1994). The notion of collaboration constitutes an important and recognised element in effective leadership. Moreover, it provides an underlying principle for seeking to include all Year 12 students in the leadership process.

Transformational leadership forms a vital concept within literature on leadership. It is significant in the understanding of organisational leadership (Tuohy, 1999; Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997; Quinn, 1996; Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1993). Leadership of the transforming kind is seen as describing both Christian leadership (Arbuckle, 1993; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993; Carey, 1991), and the leadership applicable to Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 1997; Burford, 1996; Carey, 1991). Furthermore, van Linden and Fertman (1998) stressed the impact of transformational and transactional leadership within youth leadership. In particular, they emphasised a transformational approach to decision-making, where youth leaders "take into account input from everyone involved and then make decisions" (p. 44).

The place and importance of vision and shared values is highlighted within the literature in organisational leadership, as well as literature about Christian leadership and its significance for leadership in Catholic schools. That is, a notion of vision is fundamental to organisational leadership (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997; Hough & Paine, 1997; Starratt, 1986), to Christian leadership (Sofield and Kuhn, 1995; Treston, 1994), and to Catholic school leadership (McLaughlin, 1997: Burn, 1997; Jolley, 1997). In addition, the concept of shared values is viewed as crucial within organisational leadership (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1997; Kouzes and Posner, 1996; Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989), and in Christian leadership (Neidhart. 1998; Sofield & Kuhn, 1993). It is considered significant for what Duignan and Bhindi (1998) called "authentic leadership" in Catholic schools.

Issues associated with transformational leadership, vision, and shared values are fundamental to the very nature of young people's involvement in leadership; for, as

leaders, what exactly are students required to do? Who decides what they do? What is the vision driving their actions? How is that vision formulated, critiqued, and communicated? In what ways are student leaders expected to interact with other students, teaching staff, and the wider school community? Moreover, is student leadership only for those who get the badge, the "chosen elite" (Lavery, 2002, p. 39)? Or is there merit in considering a more comprehensive attitude (van Linden & Fertman, 1998; Goldman & Newman, 1998)?

Furthermore, a notion of service is prominent in literature on student leadership (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Willmett, 1997; Moen, 1997; East, 1994), Christian Leadership (Neidhart, 1998, Sofield & Kuhn, 1993) and leadership within Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 1997; Jolley, 1997). Although not featuring in Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan's (1997) ten generalisations, service does have a place within literature on organisational leadership (Beare, 1998; Lopez, 1995; Greenleaf, 1977). Service is an important notion within this research for it impacts on how student leaders assume their role as leaders. Given this emphasis within the literature it would seem important to review ways all Year 12 students might have opportunities to serve as leaders. Or are we to assume that only those students elected to formal office are called to serve?

3.9.2 Specific Issues

Literature on student leadership highlights certain factors relevant to students elected to formal leadership positions. In particular, there is a focus on leader development, support structures available to students involved in leadership, benefits gained from leadership participation, and specific concerns associated with student

involvement in leadership. Such issues, however, are also significant when considering the impact of inclusive Year 12 student leadership. All students involved in leadership have the right to preparation, support, and those benefits associated with the experience.

In addition, concerns associated with the degree and quality of students' participation in leadership, with the ambiguity over the role of elected student leaders, with elected leaders being isolated from their peers, and with elected students working primarily for themselves, raise questions as to whether a more comprehensive student leadership model needs to be considered. Elected student leaders are still important. They have a mandate from the school community to act on behalf of that community (Freeborn, 2000). However, the challenge is to embrace a model open to all rather than just the leadership group of college captains and prefects / S.R.C. members. In particular, do schools have a responsibility of attempting to train all senior students for leadership? And if so, how can this be most effectively done for senior students? Woyach (1992) has noted that studies of adult leaders "clearly indicate that youth leadership experiences in school-based clubs and organizations play a significant role in encouraging and preparing youth for leadership as adults" (p. 2). What practicable roles, therefore, can be given to a significantly increased number of Year 12 students that will give real experience in leadership? Moreover, can our elected Year 12 student leaders become "leaders of the leaders"? A review of the literature indicates that, while there are studies addressing elected student leadership (Hawkes, 1999; Moore, 1999; Lavery, 1999; Willmett, 1997; Gordon, 1994; Carey, 1994), the idea of inclusive Year 12 leadership is less well researched. This study attempts to address this lacuna in the literature.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH PLAN

4.1 Introduction

The review of the literature in Chapter 3 drew attention to three themes, namely organisational leadership, Christian leadership and its meaning for the Catholic School, and student leadership, which formed the conceptual framework underpinning this research into Year 12 student leadership. Seven questions evolved from this review and provided the focus for the conduct of the study. In the light of these questions, and considering the purpose of the study, it seemed appropriate to undertake the research as follows.

Since this research attempts to explore the nature of senior student leadership through the experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from three targeted schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body, it is more concerned with words than numbers. In addition, the research is context-sensitive. Thus the environments of the three schools involved in the study, as well as the broader social milieu of the Year 12 student age group participating in the research, are explored. Given that the three schools are Catholic, certain evolutionary aspects of the Catholic Church since Vatican II are described. The research involves the researcher as an instrument of data collection. These characteristics suggest an approach that is (a) predominantly qualitative, (b) interpretive, and (c) planned around case study. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the main elements of the research plan.

Table 4.1

Overview of the Research Plan

4.2 Theoretical Framework	• Epistemology • Theoretical perspective
4.3 Research Design	• Case study
4.4 Data Collection	• Document search • Key informant staff interview • Year 12 survey questionnaire • Year 12 focus groups
4.5 Research Participants	• Key informant staff members • Year 12 students
4.6 Trustworthiness	• Credibility • Generalisability • Dependability • Confirmability • Methodological Rigour
4.7 Data Analysis	• General analytic strategy • Layering themes • Cross-case analysis
4.8 Ethical Considerations	

4.2 Theoretical Framework

4.2.1 Epistemology

Research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on certain fundamental assumptions about what constitutes valid research and which research methods are appropriate. According to Myers (1997) the most pertinent philosophical assumptions are those which relate to the underlying epistemology that guides the inquiry. Epistemology has been defined as a branch of philosophy that investigates the origin, methods and limits of human knowledge (Wiersma, 1995).

This research into senior student leadership is predominantly qualitative. The underlying epistemology of qualitative research exhibits certain foundational principles. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) the word qualitative implies "an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency" (p. 4). Moreover,

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. (Denzin and Lincoln, p. 4)

Such researchers seek to answer questions, which stress how social experience is created and given meaning. As a result, a primary feature of qualitative research is that suitable explanations of social activities "require a substantial appreciation of the perceptions, culture and 'world-views' of the actors involved" (Allan, 1991, p. 177). Furthermore, it is a research design, which is holistic (Janesick, 1994; Patton, 1990) in that it assumes "the whole is understood as a complex system that is greater than the sum of its parts" (Patton, p. 49). In addition, qualitative research is characterised by flexibility in prediction and in methods of investigation (Wiersma, 1995). Qualitative research, therefore, describes phenomena in words. It is context-specific in that the researcher is involved in the situation. Moreover, qualitative research is based on a notion of context sensitivity, the belief that the particular physical and social environment has a significant bearing on human behaviour (Wiersma).

However, it would be inaccurate to consider qualitative research as constituting a unified, single approach to conducting research. Rather, there are various traditions or "subdisciplines" (Wiersma, 1995, p. 212) within qualitative research. While there exists commonality across these traditions there are also differences, influenced by the

purposes of the research (Wiersma). The specific tradition that underscores this inquiry into senior student leadership is interpretivism.

Interpretivism rests upon the philosophical doctrine of idealism, a view which holds that the world we see around us is the creation of the mind. It is by understanding the individual experience of subjective interpretivism that one can appreciate why human beings behave in the way they do (Williams & May, 1996). Furthermore, Neuman (1997) has stressed that interpretive social science "is rooted in an empathetic understanding, or *Verstehen,* of the everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings" (p. 68). The goal of interpretive social science, therefore, is to understand the complex world of lived experience from the viewpoint of those who live it. Interpretive inquiry strives to discover what is meaningful or relevant to people being studied and tries to gain a feel for their social reality (Neuman). This inquiry attempts to explore and understand the lived experience of senior student leadership with those most intimately associated with it – Year 12 students.

4.2.2 Theoretical Perspective

Perspectives are crucially important as they make it possible for people to create sense and order out of the world they observe and experience. Perspectives form, what Charon (1998) has termed, "points of view – eyeglasses, sensitisers – that guide our perceptions of reality" (p. 10). Moreover, perspectives can be described as conceptual frameworks, that is, a set of assumptions, values and beliefs used to organise one's perceptions and control one's behaviour (Charon). Within interpretive social science there are a number of theoretical perspectives which emphasise different elements of human action. One such theoretical perspective, and the one which underscores the

approach within this study, is symbolic interactionism. Charon has pointed out that since symbolic interactionism is part of social science, it focuses on people and tries to understand human behaviour. Since it is part of sociology, it attempts to uncover the significance of our social life. However, because symbolic interactionism emphasises certain qualities of human beings and ignores others it, like all perspectives, is limited. What then, is the significance of symbolic interactionism to this inquiry?

A symbolic interactionist approach presents life as "an unfolding process in which individuals interpret their environment and act upon it on the basis of that interpretation" (Morrison, 2002, p. 18). The symbolic interactionist asks: "What common set of symbols and understandings have emerged to give meaning to people's interactions?" (Patton, 1990, p. 75). The focus is on ways "that people interact through using symbols to carry their meanings, interpret others' and try to control the patterns of the interactions" (Wiseman, 1993, p. 134). As a social psychological approach, symbolic interactionism is closely associated with Mead and Blumer (Patton). The Blumer-Mead model rests on three premises:

> First, human beings act toward the physical objects and other beings in their environment on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them. Second, these meanings derive from the social interaction (communication, broadly understood) between and among individuals. … Third, these meanings are established and modified through an interpretative process. (Schwandt, 1994, p. 124)

Underlying the notion of symbolic interaction, therefore, is the threefold belief that people do not respond simply to stimuli, but act towards things on the basis of the meanings which the things have for them, that people give meaning to the activity of others as well as give meaning to their own action, and that meaning is handled in, and adjusted through an interpretive process used by people in dealing with the things they encounter (Dimmock & O'Donoghue, 1997).

Pivotal to the notion of symbolic interactionism is the placing of oneself in the setting of the other, of considering situations from the point of view of "the actor". Methodologically, symbolic interactionism directs investigators to take, to the best of their ability, the standpoint of those studied (Crotty, 1998). It is this role taking which is an interaction. Moreover, the interaction is symbolic because it occurs only by means of "the 'significant symbols' – that is language and other symbolic tools – that we humans share and through which we communicate" (Crotty, p. 75). Through discourse one thus becomes aware of the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and is able to construe their meanings and intent.

Consistent with symbolic interactionism this study of senior student leadership is undertaken from the standpoint of those being studied – the male and female Year 12 students in the three case study schools. Moreover, Wiseman (1993) has indicated that much of the research in symbolic interactionism involves collecting and studying naturally occurring talk between people, as well as textual analysis of written material "to which an intention of communication is attributed by the researcher" (p. 135). Such approaches are reflective of the data collection methods used within this study – a document search, interviews, and a primarily open-ended written survey questionnaire.

4.3 Research Design

The research project is planned around "snapshot" (Rose, 1991, p. 194) case studies of three Catholic secondary colleges. As a research design case study "is characterized by very flexible and open-ended techniques of data collection and analysis" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 302) and can employ both qualitative and quantitative data. Case study was selected as the study design because, consistent with

a symbolic interactionist approach, it attempts to bring out details "from the viewpoint of the participants" (Tellis, 1997, p. 1) and makes use of such methods as interviews, participant observation, and content analyses of written documents (Tellis; Patton, 1990). Moreover, case studies are "multi-perspectival analyses" (Tellis, p. 1), in that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. Tellis identified this aspect as a salient point in the characteristic that case studies possess – "they give a voice to the powerless and voiceless" (p. 1). Thus research into Year 12 student leadership offered all Year 12 students from the three case study schools the opportunity to "voice" their opinions regarding senior student leadership.

4.3.1 Case Study

Stake (1994) distinguished three types of case study – intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Intrinsic and instrumental case studies are based on research into a specific case, which the researcher wishes to understand better, or which provides insight into a precise issue or refinement of a theory where the case is of secondary interest. Collective case study, which forms the methodological structure of this research, involves exploring a number of cases jointly in order to examine a phenomenon, population or general condition. Particular cases in the collection are chosen because "it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, p. 237). The phenomenon being explored in this collective case study is inclusive Year 12 student leadership.

Linked with the methodological structure of collective case study is the rationale for choosing the three case studies for this research. "Maximum variation sampling"

(Patton, 1990, p. 172) was used as the basis for purposefully selecting the three schools.

Patton argued that a small sample of great diversity will yield two kinds of findings:

> high quality, detailed descriptions of each case, which are useful for documenting uniqueness, and … important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. (p. 172)

The three Catholic secondary colleges selected from within the Melbourne and Hobart archdioceses for this study mirror a range of school realities that can exist in Catholic education. Specifically, the schools reflect different forms of education: a single sex boys' school from Preparatory to Year 12, a single sex girls' school from Year 7 to Year 12, and a coeducational school of Year 11 and 12 students only. Furthermore, the three schools make use of different modes of pastoral care for senior students: vertical pastoral care tutor groups comprising boys from Years 10, 11 and 12, coeducational tutor groups of Year 11 and 12 students, and home room classes of Year 12 girls.

There are, however, a number of concerns about the case study approach: subject bias, generalisation, time and information overload, reliability, validity, and rigour (Burns, 1994). These are now addressed.

The major issue with case study has been the role of human subjectivity when selecting evidence to support or refute arguments (Burns, 1994). Personal views or oblique evidence can unduly influence the researcher in the way findings or conclusions are presented. Burns has observed, however, that bias can enter into the conduct of experiments as well. My personal predispositions and motivation have been noted in the "Introduction" and "Context" chapters. As recommended by Yin (1998), I have also tested my own tolerance of contrary findings by reporting my preliminary results (draft copy of Chapter 5) to three colleagues: a retired headmaster, a senior program advisor in

the Victorian Department of Human Services, and a member of the college leadership team at one of the case study schools. They returned six pages of comprehensive notes. Sample comments included: "the statements and observations of students and staff are appropriately referenced, the charts are simple yet illuminating, and the quotations are sufficient in number to support any of the author's comments and conclusions"; "your research has left a very transparent, complex, yet manageable challenge to school communities"; "you have provided a very accurate picture with simple adroit language and not too many statistics".

A second concern is that case studies provide very little evidence for scientific generalisation. Two issues need to be considered. Firstly, is generalising theory the only worthwhile goal of research? And secondly, is generalisation a purpose of case study? Rose (1991) for instance, commented that "typicality in the statistical sense is not a major concern for case-study research" (p. 192). Furthermore, Burns (1994) has suggested that proponents of case study "would argue that any generalisations should be reader-made ones" (p. 327). That is, readers decide to what degree the researcher's case has relevance to theirs. Certainly the purpose of this case study research into senior student leadership aims more at increasing understanding and informing discussion than at generating statistical generalisations.

A third objection to case studies is that they are time consuming and produce a massive amount of information, which is impossible to analyse effectively. The result is a tendency towards selectivity and bias (Burns, 1994). The solution, Burns has suggested, is to choose a manageable topic, specify succinctly the initial proposition, identify the essential interviewees and observational settings, and analyse data as they

come in. This process was used in the current research into senior student leadership. In particular, the three case studies were "snapshot", rather than longitudinal studies, the student survey questionnaire combined quantitative as well as qualitative questions, interviews were limited to one staff member and two student focus groups per school, and the research did not include "lengthy participant observation with tomes of ethnographic fieldnotes" (Burns, p. 327).

There are also criticisms pertaining to the reliability and validity of the case study approach, as well as concerns about methodological rigour (Burns, 1994). These issues are addressed in the section on Trustworthiness.

4.4 Data Collection

Data collection methods used in each of the three case study schools include:

a) a document search focusing on senior student leadership,

b) an interview with a key informant staff member who works with senior students on leadership activities,

c) a survey questionnaire to all Year 12 students about student leadership issues,

d) two focus group interviews, with up to nine Year 12 students in each group.

4.4.1 Document Search

In qualitative inquiry written documents include material from "organizational, clinical or program records; memoranda and correspondence; official publications and reports; personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys" (Patton, 1990, p. 10). Document collection within the case studies took the

form of (a) memoranda and correspondence concerning student leadership, (b) official publications such as the College Prospectus, Handbook, Year Book, along with periodicals to the school community, and (c) student leadership program outlines.

The purpose of the document search was to generate insights and background information from official school documentation regarding senior student leadership. An added value of the document search, and one which was used with the key informant interview, was that it can provide insights about important questions to pursue through interviews (Patton, 1990). A weakness of this method is that documentation can be selective and biased, only reporting certain aspects of a program (Patton). This proved not to be of concern, since the purpose of the document search was clearly defined.

4.4.2 A Key Informant Staff Interview

An interview is a conversation, the purpose being "to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 1996, pp 5-6). A "key informant" (Patton, 1990, p. 263) is a person who is "particularly knowledgeable and articulate" (Patton, p. 263), someone whose insights are useful in helping the researcher understand what is happening. The key informant staff interview was with a teacher purposefully selected because of that teacher's work and connection with Year 12 students in leadership. The interview was open-ended and involved "the general interview guide approach" (Patton, p. 280), that is, an interview guide was prepared to ensure specific topics were covered. However, the process allowed the interviewer the opportunity "to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style" (Patton, p. 283).

With permission, a cassette tape recorder was used to record each key informant staff interview. The purpose of the recording was to increase the accuracy of the data collection and to enhance the interactive nature of the interview by removing the need to take verbatim notes (Patton, 1990). The tape recorder was not large and was placed on a table in the room where the interview occurred. The researcher and the key informant staff member tested the machine's volume and clarity immediately before commencing each interview. At the completion of the recorded interview the tape was checked to see if it had functioned correctly. Full transcriptions were made of the conversations within a week of the interviews and transcriptions were subsequently validated by the particular key informant.

The aim of the staff interview was to explore how the school administration promoted senior student leadership and what form of leadership the school expected. As mentioned, one of the questions asked centred on literature drawn from the document search. The strengths underlying this form of interview are that it is "targeted" (Yin, 1998, p. 231), focusing directly on the case study topic. It is also flexible with respect to how and when questions are asked. Furthermore, since the interviewer is present, use can also be made of any unanticipated data interviewees offer (Gochros, 1984). However, it is acknowledged that single interviews do have limitations as participants can report only their own perceptions and perspectives and thus these perceptions and perspectives can be subject to personal bias (Patton, 1990).

4.4.3 Year 12 Survey Questionnaire

Usually, in qualitative research open-ended written responses to questionnaires fall within the category of written documents. However the student questionnaire used

for this study was considered as a separate research method and a separate phase of the data collection. This was partly because of the combined qualitative / quantitative nature of the questionnaire. It also reflected the differing rationale of the questionnaire from that of the document search. The purpose of the questionnaire was to give all Year 12 students within each of the three schools, and not merely those students elected to leadership positions, the opportunity to express their points of view regarding senior student leadership. For convenience, and to maximise response rate, the survey questionnaire was "group administered" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 229) to all Year 12 students who were prepared to participate in the study.

The questionnaire was predominantly qualitative. Twelve of the seventeen questions were open-ended and designed to permit a free response. The remaining five were closed-ended in that one used a "Likert-type scale" format (Kidder, 1981, p. 218), three were multiple response questions, and one asked for a yes / no choice in conjunction with a qualitative explanation. Two reasons lay behind this arrangement. Firstly, the predominance of qualitative questions reflected the fact that the investigator did not know all the alternative choices to many of the questions being asked. Linked with this was an appreciation that open-ended questions allow respondents the opportunity to go into detail and to express greater depth in their answers (Mindel, 1984). Secondly, it was intended to enhance generality. Punch (1998) has observed: "the addition of some quantitative evidence may help to mitigate the fact that it is often not possible to generalise (in a statistical sense) the findings derived form qualitative research" (p. 247). This questionnaire used quantitative questions to identify what students do, and how they understand senior student leadership. The open-ended responses allowed students an opportunity to explore the more personal side of their

leadership. There are, of course, also disadvantages in this approach, among them being the fact that there is no control over the manner in which the respondents choose to answer the questions and the fact that some items may be left unanswered (Austin & Crowell, 1984). Possibly because of the design and trialling of the questionnaire (see Methodological Rigour) the former was not a problem. However, some questionnaires were not completed fully. Unanswered questions were invariably qualitative and the unanswered response was usually a dash, "N/A", or a blank space. I did not see this as a major issue because of the far greater number of questionnaires that were completed.

4.4.4 Focus Groups

The final research method involved two "focus group interviews" (Patton, 1990, p. 335) per case study, one with elected student leaders, and the other with students not elected to formal office. Up to nine students were involved in each focus group and the same questions were used. The interviews were open-ended, and employed the general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) similar to that used for the key informant staff interviews. Interviews were taped with permission of the participants and transcriptions were made within a week of the conversations.

The purpose of the interviews was to explore student experiences of leadership, to attempt to draw out lessons learnt from these experiences, and to examine ideas about how senior student leadership might be enhanced at each school. Specific issues that emerged from the student questionnaire were also considered in greater depth during this interview. In addition, participating in focus group interviews gave students involved the opportunity to firstly "hear each other's responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses" (Patton, 1990, p. 335), and secondly, to

"correct each other on points of detail" (Wragg, 2002, pp. 150) until a consensus was established. However, Kvale (1996) cautioned that group interaction does reduce the interviewer's control of the interview situation and the price can be a relatively chaotic data collection. This concern did not eventuate in the study.

4.5 Research Participants

The number of research participants from each school, and the manner of their involvement, is specified in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Research Participants

Research Site	Data Collection Strategies			
	Key informant Staff Interview	Student Questionnaire	Student Focus Group Interview Elected[a]	Student Focus Group Interview Non-Elected[b]
Catholic Ladies' College	1	92	8	8
St Kevin's College	1	139	9	8
Guilford Young College	1	137	7	7
Total	**3**	**368**	**24**	**23**

[a]Focus group comprising Year 12 students elected to official leadership positions.

[b]Focus group comprising Year 12 students not elected to formal office.

4.6 Trustworthiness

In the social sciences verification of knowledge is often discussed in relation to concepts of reliability, validity, and generalisability (Yin, 1998; Wiersma, 1995, Kidder, 1981), especially from a positivist perspective. However, increasingly, qualitative

researchers have moved away from the use of such quantitative criteria for evaluating their work (Janesick, 1998; Kvale, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Patton, 1990), either dismissing them completely or reconceptualising them in ways deemed to be more appropriate to qualitative research. For instance, Denzin and Lincoln have noted that in interpretive research, "terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, replace the usual positive criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity" (p. 14). Qualitative research attempts to build "trustworthiness" (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, p. 28), in order to make a reasonable claim on methodological soundness. Table 4.3 details procedures used in this inquiry to establish trustworthiness.

Table 4.3

Establishing Trustworthiness

Criterion	Naturalistic Term	Research Techniques
Truth Value	Credibility	Multiple sources of evidence Member checks
Applicability	Generalisability[a]	Purposive sampling Reader generalisation
Consistency	Dependability	Case study protocol Case study database
Neutrality	Confirmability	Detailed design processes Chain of evidence

Adapted from Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper and Allen, 1993

[a]Viewed in a qualitative sense

4.6.1 Credibility

The central question for any inquiry relates to the degree of confidence in the "truth" that the findings have for the participants with which the inquiry was carried

out. In other words, credibility can be assessed "by determining whether the description developed through inquiry in a particular setting 'rings true' for those persons who are members of that setting" (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p. 30). One efficient way to elicit the various and differing interpretations of reality that exist within the context of a study is to collect information about different events and relationships from different points of view (Wiersma, 1995; Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Five sources of evidence were used in each of the three case studies in this research: a document search, a key informant staff interview, a Year 12 student survey questionnaire, and two Year 12 student focus group interviews. Member checks also provide a strategy for building credibility (Janesick, 1998; Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The three key informants interviewed for this research reviewed the transcripts of their interviews. They also critiqued the draft case study reports of their own schools. In addition, I reported preliminary results to various colleagues for comment.

4.6.2 Generalisability

Kvale (1996) has pointed to three forms of generalisability in qualitative research: naturalistic, statistical and analytic. Naturalistic generalisation rests on personal experience, statistical generalisation is formal and explicit, while analytical generalisation "involves a reasoned judgement about the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation" (p. 233). Analytic generalisation is based on analysis of similarities and differences of situations. Collective case study, such as used in this research, lends itself to analytical generalisation. The benefits of multiple case studies rest with the fact that they can "strengthen or broaden the analytic generalizations" (Yin, 1998, p. 239):

> Analytic generalizations may be strengthened because the multiple-cases were designed to "replicate" each other – producing corroboratory evidence from two or more cases. Alternatively, generalizations may be broadened because the multiple cases were designed to cover different theoretical conditions, producing contrasting results, but for predicable reasons. (Yin, p. 240)

Purposive sampling is a key strategy in facilitating analytic generalisation, as it allows the researcher to "maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about that context" (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, p. 33). The three case study schools selected for this research were deliberately chosen, not only for their capacity "to replicate" (Yin, 1998, p. 240) each other, but also for their potential to add differing perspectives on ways senior student leadership might be encouraged and promoted within the entire Year 12 student body.

There is also the issue in qualitative research of who should conduct the analytical generalisation, the researcher or the reader (Kvale, 1996). For instance, Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper and Allen (1993) have proposed that the obligation for determining transferability in naturalistic inquiry "belongs to those who would apply it to the receiving context" (p. 33). Thus observers of other contexts can make tentative judgements about applicability of certain observations for their contexts. As previously mentioned, this research into Year 12 student leadership aims at increasing understanding and informing discussion. While implications for the profession are discussed in Chapter 6, "Review and Conclusions", any generalising is left to the reader.

4.6.3 Dependability

An inquiry must provide its audience with evidence that if it were repeated with the same or similar respondents in the same or similar context, its findings would be

replicated (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). That is to say, an inquiry must meet the criterion of consistency. Allan (1991) has pointed to the fact that qualitative methods can be replicable, "in purpose if not in detailed procedures, and cumulative" (p. 183). In this way qualitative researchers can study the same range of phenomena and generate analyses which can each inform the other and lead to new studies. Moreover, Yin (1998) has recommended two case study tactics to enhance dependability, both of which are used in this research. The first is to employ a formal case study protocol which contains procedures and general rules to be followed in data collection. This protocol not only delineates the case study questions; it also clarifies how these questions are to be reframed in the field. The second tactic Yin proposed is to develop a case study database as a formal way of organising evidence. Such a database forces one to organise all evidence into topics that reflect the case study design. It also allows a synthesis of evidence from across multiple sources.

4.5.4 Confirmability

Lastly, a study is judged in terms of the degree to which its findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, 1993). Quantitative research strives to achieve neutrality by establishing objectivity through a methodology that is "explicated, open to public scrutiny, and replicable" and which "insulates observations from the biases of the researcher" (Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper & Allen, p. 34). While this research into Year 12 student leadership is predominately qualitative, I have adopted elements of the above approach by detailing, in a separate section on methodological rigour, the design processes for the student survey questionnaire, the key informant staff interview questions, and the focus group questions.

However, as Erlandson, Edwards, Skipper and Allen (1993) have pointed out, the naturalistic researcher does not attempt to ensure that observations are free from contamination by the researcher. Rather, the researcher trusts in "the 'confirmability' of the data" (p. 34) in that the data can be tracked to their sources and the reasons for assembling the interpretations are clearly indicated. In this research attempts have been made to ensure confirmability through establishing a chain of evidence, in that there is appropriate citation to the case study database, by creating an up-to-date database, and through consistent use of the case study protocol (Yin, 1998).

4.6.5 Methodological Rigour

In the context of this research "methodological rigour" refers to the precision of the instruments used for data collection. Three instruments were specifically constructed: the key informant staff interview questions (Appendix B), the student survey questionnaire (Appendix C), and the student focus group interview questions (Appendix D).

The questions for the key informant staff interview were generated through a three-stage procedure. The researcher initially drafted questions under specific headings. This set of questions was then individually reviewed and critiqued by six people with extensive experience in Catholic education and with Year 12 students. Two of the people are senior Catholic Education Office consultants. Four are teachers, two working in coeducation, one from a single sex boys' school and one from a single sex girls' school. The revised set of questions was then "tested" on a "key informant staff member" at the school where the student survey questionnaire was trialled.

The design of the student survey questionnaire underwent a three-stage process of "field-testing" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 253). Following completion of a first draft based on a list of topics for exploration, the questionnaire was re-examined and revised four times by Year 12 students and teaching staff from eight Catholic schools. This review process considered style, clarity of expression, and appropriateness of questions. In all, eleven staff and fifty-one Year 12 students were involved in this part of the critique. After completion of the critique the student questionnaire was trialled on a "judgement sample" (Oppenheim, 1992, p. 43) of twenty-five Year 12 students. The aim of the trial was to test the questionnaire's effectiveness, whether changes were necessary, if there were any unforeseen problems in its administration, and how long the questionnaire took to answer. As part of this stage, a group of students met to discuss the questionnaire with the researcher. Data from the trial were assessed by hand tabulation to ensure that findings were compatible with the aims of the research. The revised survey questionnaire was then trialled on a further twelve students.

Student focus group questions were produced in two stages. After finalising the student survey questionnaire, an initial set of questions was drawn up for the focus group interviews. These questions were subsequently modified to concentrate on themes that emerged in the light of student responses to the survey questionnaire.

It is important to note that in qualitative research the researcher is also the instrument of measurement (Patton, 1990). Trustworthiness in qualitative research will therefore, hinge, to varying degrees, on the skill, competence, and rigour of the person doing fieldwork. Burns (1994) has outlined five skills needed by the case study investigator. The person needs to formulate relevant and precise questions, to be a good

listener, to be adaptive and flexible, to be able to grasp the issues being studied, and to exercise a lack of bias in interpreting evidence. The researcher acknowledges the importance of these skills, and attempted to employ them within the study.

4.7 Data Analysis

The core of qualitative analysis is embodied in the "related processes of describing phenomena, classifying them, and seeing how our concepts interconnect" (Dey, 1993, p. 30). In the analysis of case study data Yin (1994) recommended the use of a "general analytic strategy" (p. 102). Such a strategy yields priorities for what to analyse and why. The general analytic strategy used within this research was to follow the theoretical propositions which led to the study. Such an approach, Yin observed, is the first and most preferred strategy to employ when analysing case study evidence. As he pointed out: "the original objectives and design of the case study presumably were based on such propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and new insights" (p. 103). Yin noted, furthermore, that propositions shape the data collection plan and, therefore, give priorities to the relevant analytic strategies. In addition, propositions help to focus attention on certain data and to ignore other data. The two theoretical propositions underlying this research into senior student leadership are: all Year 12 students are called to some form of leadership within their schools; and the schools themselves should strive to build leadership cultures inclusive of all their Year 12 students. The purpose and design of the three case studies were based on these propositions which, in turn, reflected a set of research questions. This course of action is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

PROPOSITIONS
1. All Year 12 students are called to leadership
2. Build an inclusive Senior Student leadership culture

1.3 PURPOSE
To review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of all Year 12 students from the three targeted schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body.

1.2 Research Question Part A
What are the school experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students at each school about the role, and purpose of senior student leadership?

1.2 Research Question Part B
How do student experiences and self-perceptions compare with the understanding of senior student leadership as expressed by schools?

1.4 Sub Questions
• What do Year 12 students understand by senior student leadership?
• How are Year 12s prepared and encouraged?
• What are Year 12s called to as leaders?
• What are the potential benefits for Year 12s?
• What are the concerns of Year 12 students about involvement in leadership?
• How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities for leadership?

1.4 Sub Questions
• What do schools understand by senior student leadership and how is this understanding articulated?
• How are Year 12s prepared and encouraged?
• What are Year 12s called to as leaders?
• What are the potential benefits for Year 12s?
• What are the schools' concerns about Year 12 student involvement in leadership?
• How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities for leadership?

3.4 Data Collection
• Document search
• Student survey questionnaire
• Focus group interviews

3.4 Data Collection
• Document search
• Key informant interview

1.2 Research Question Part C
What are the implications for developing an understanding of Year 12 student leadership, which encourages every senior student to be a leader?
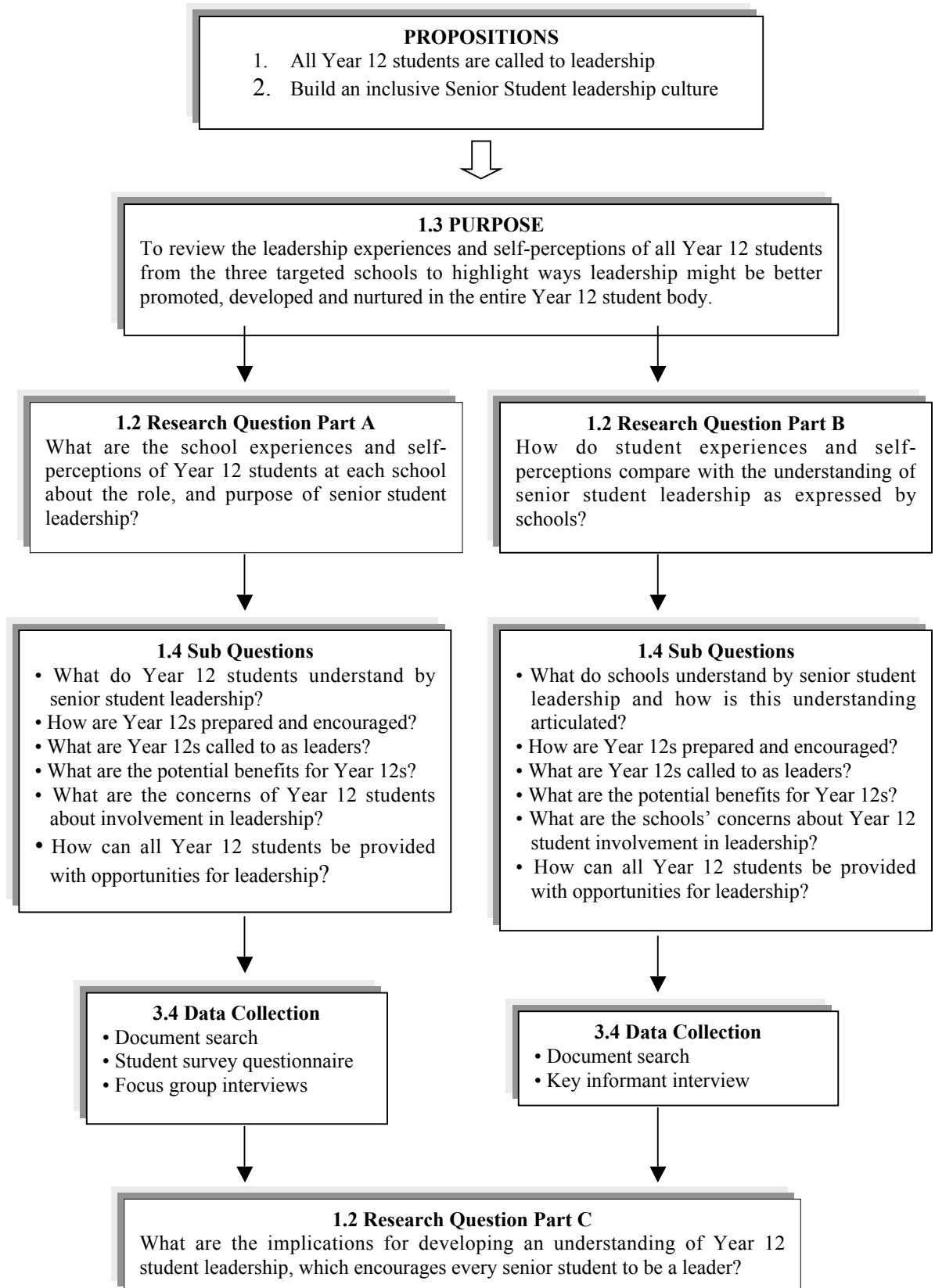
Figure 4.1. General Analytic Strategy for the research.

Preliminary exploration focused on each school's understanding of senior student leadership. The analysis was generated through a document search and a key informant staff interview and the data were initially categorised and tabulated using the six research questions as outlined for Part B of the General Analytic Strategy (Figure 4.1). These data provided contextual and background information regarding Year 12 leadership as well as a basis for comparison with student self-perceptions and experiences.

Sophistication and complexity were built into the qualitative analysis by a process of "layering themes" (Creswell, 2002, p. 273). This method "builds on the idea of major and minor themes, but organises the themes into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones" (Creswell, p. 273). That is:

> Layering the analysis (also called first and second order abstractions) means representing the data using interconnected levels of themes. Minor themes are subsumed with major themes and major themes lead to broader themes. The entire analysis becomes more complex as the researcher works upwards toward the broader levels of abstraction. (Creswell, p. 273)

A four-layer analysis was used with data involving school understanding of senior student leadership. That is, for each of the three schools, data were collected from various sources (layer 1) and analysed using the six research questions for Part B of the General Analytic Strategy (layer 2). From this analysis a matrix of five themes was built (layer 3). These themes were combined according to their applicability to the two broad groupings of Year 12 students (layer 4). This process is outlined in Figure 4.2.

A similar four-tier system of theme layering was employed in the analysis of data on Year 12 student self-perceptions and experiences of leadership. For each of the

Layer 4   **Applicability to Year 12 Students**

| Elected Year 12 Student Leaders | General Body of Year 12 Students |

Layer 3   **Five themes identified from the data**

| Role | Preparation | Style | Benefits | Mentoring |

Layer 2   **Descriptive Analysis using Research Questions**

| Categorisation of Data |

Layer 1   **Database: Key Informant Staff Interview,**
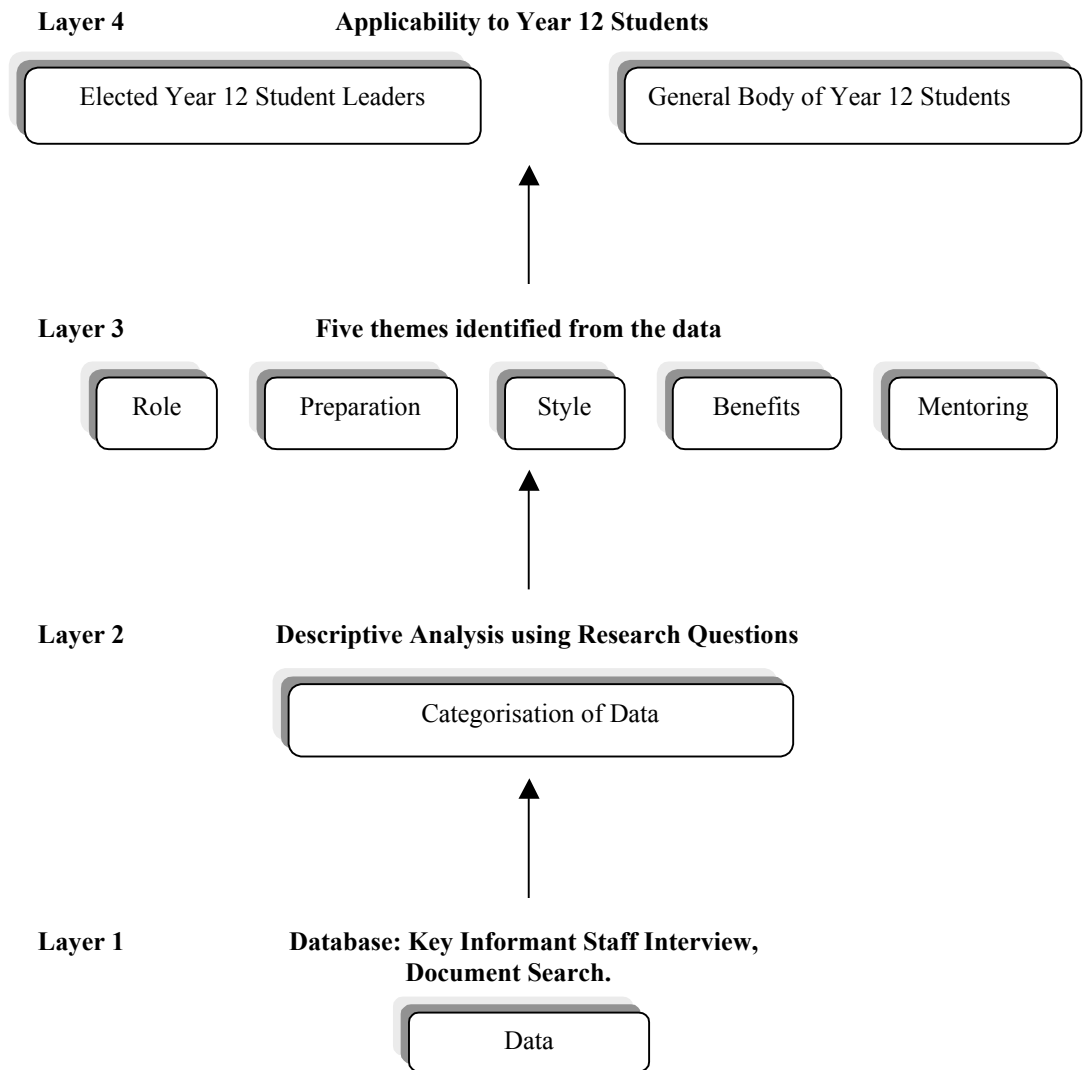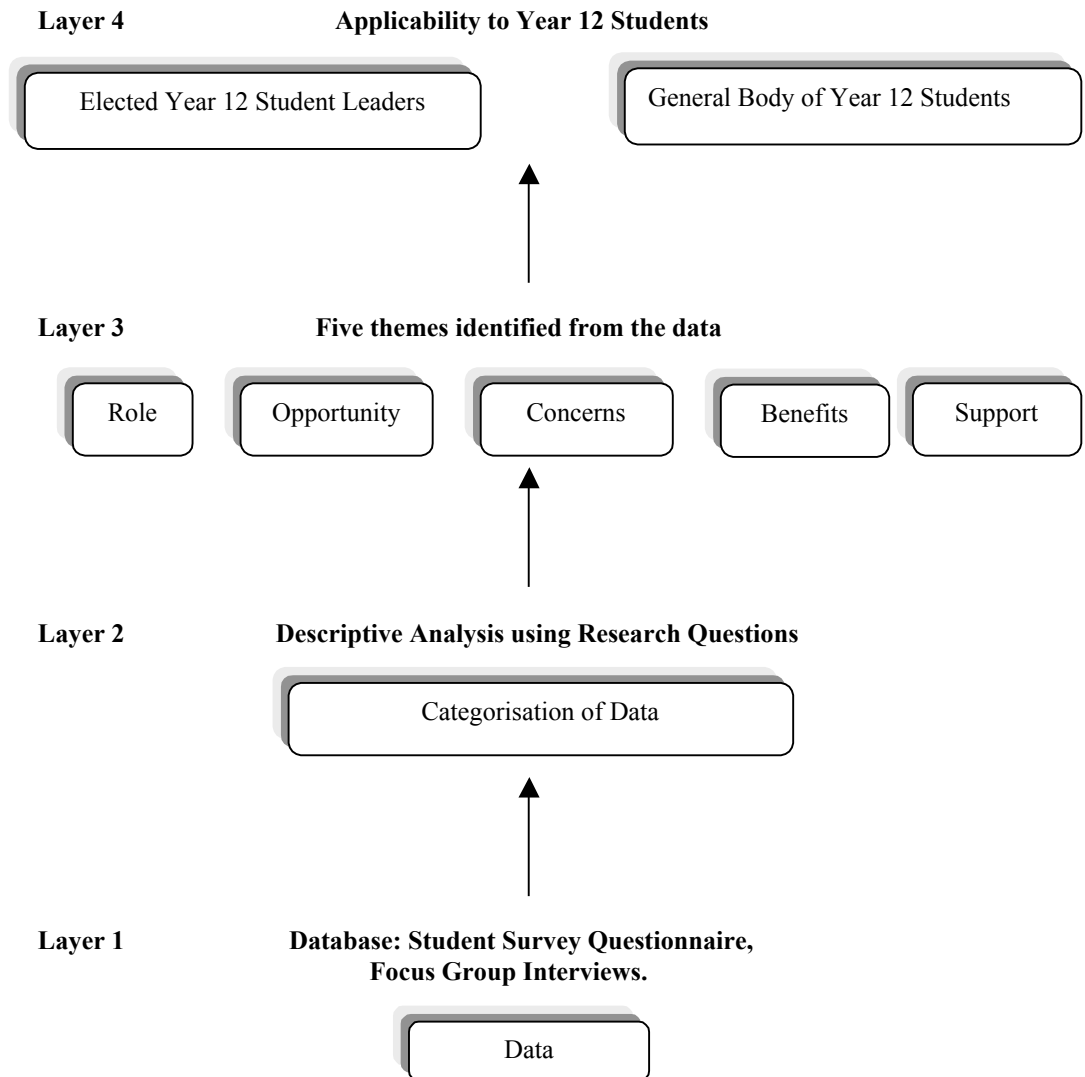**Document Search.**

| Data |

Figure 4.2. Layers in the schools' understanding of senior student leadership

three schools, data were collected through a student survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews (layer 1). These data were initially categorised and tabulated using the six research questions for Part A of the General Analytic Strategy (Layer 2). The analysis was essentially descriptive, although mean, standard deviation, mode, and the construction of bar graphs / histograms using Microsoft Excel, were used where applicable to generate a statistical summary of the results from the five quantitative questions contained in the survey questionnaire. From this analysis a matrix of five themes was formed (layer 3) and these themes were combined according to their

applicability to the two broad groupings of Year 12 students (layer 4). This process is outlined in Figure 4.3.

Layer 4   **Applicability to Year 12 Students**

Elected Year 12 Student Leaders   General Body of Year 12 Students

Layer 3   **Five themes identified from the data**

Role   Opportunity   Concerns   Benefits   Support

Layer 2   **Descriptive Analysis using Research Questions**

Categorisation of Data

Layer 1   **Database: Student Survey Questionnaire,**
                                    Focus Group Interviews.

Data

Figure 4.3. Layers in students' understandings of senior student leadership

The next stage of the analysis involved contrasting student experiences and self-perceptions of senior student leadership with the school understanding of senior student leadership. This was done separately for each of the three case study schools. Cross-case analysis (Patton, 1990, p. 376) then followed, the aim being to identify overarching

themes, highlight successful practices, and draw attention to insights from students' perceptions and experiences of senior student leadership. On the basis of this cross-case analysis a summary list of findings was drawn up, indicating ways senior student leadership might be better developed, promoted and nurtured within the entire Year 12 student body.

4.8 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (1997), from which body ethics clearance was obtained (Appendix E). In particular:

1. Approval was gained from the Directors of Catholic Education in the archdioceses of Melbourne and Hobart, where the three case study schools are situated. (Appendices F & G). Permission was also received from each of the three school principals.

2. Students and staff were not identified. Anonymity of staff was ensured through the allocation of aliases. Students were never referred to by name.

3. Before the commencement of the study participants received an information sheet summarising the research procedures and potential benefits. (Appendix H)

4. Participants completed consent forms prior to their involvement. (Appendix I)

5. Written parental permission was gained before Year 12 students participated in the study. (Appendix J)

6. All records of interviews and questionnaires have been stored in a locked filing cabinet in the principal supervisor's office at ACU.

4.9 Design Summary

Table 4.4

Design Summary

Schedule	Source	Activity
April 2002	• Pilot School	Trial of • Student survey questionnaire • Key informant interview questions
May – June 2002	• Guilford Young College	• Document search • Key informant staff interview • Student survey questionnaire
June – July 2002	• Catholic Ladies' College	• Document search • Key informant staff interview • Student survey questionnaire
July – August 2002	• St Kevin's College	• Document search • Key informant staff interview • Student survey questionnaire
	• Guilford Young College	• Focus group interviews
September – October 2002	• Catholic Ladies' College	• Focus group interviews
	• St Kevin's College	• Focus group interviews
November – December 2002		• Analysis of data
January 2003		• Draft report • Review of the draft report by key informants
February – April 2003		• Final report
May 2003		• Submit thesis

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from three targeted schools to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body. Underpinning this purpose is a belief that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in their school setting, not only for the benefits and learnings students can gain from such leadership, but also for that which the students can contribute to their school communities.

5.2 Design of Research

The methodological structure underlying this research is collective case study. The "snapshot" (Rose, 1991, p. 194) case studies of three Catholic secondary colleges, Catholic Ladies' College, Eltham, St Kevin's College, Toorak, and Guilford Young College, Hobart, were researched in order to better understand the phenomenon of senior student leadership.

Data collection methods used in each of the three case study schools included:

a) a document search focusing on senior student leadership.

b) an interview with a key informant staff member.

c) a survey questionnaire to all Year 12 students about student leadership issues.

d) two focus group interviews with up to nine Year 12 students in each group.

In each of the three case study schools the key informant interview took place with a teacher purposefully selected because of that person's work and connection with Year 12 students in leadership: "Ms Green" at Catholic Ladies' College; "Mr Heyington" at St Kevin's College; "Mr Darcy" at Guilford Young College. This interview, along with the relevant document search, provided the background information about each school's understanding of senior student leadership.

Student experiences and self-perceptions of leadership were generated by a student survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews. The student survey questionnaire was "group administered" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 229) to Year 12 students at the three schools both for convenience and to maximise response rate. The Year 12 student focus group interviews were based on "homogeneous samples" (Patton, 1990, p. 173), that is, one focus group comprised elected student leaders, while the other contained students not elected to formal office. All students who participated in the focus groups were volunteers.

Data analysis involved applying a "general analytic strategy" (Yin, 1994, p. 102) based on the theoretical propositions leading to the study. These propositions are: all Year 12 students are called to some form of leadership within a school; and schools should strive to build a leadership culture inclusive of all their Year 12 students. The propositions, in turn, reflect a set of research questions (Figure 4.1). A process of "layering themes" (Creswell, 2002, p. 273) was then applied to enhance sophistication and complexity. This method employs the idea of major and minor themes in that themes are organised into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones (Creswell). Data involving school understanding of senior student leadership were

subjected to a four-layer analysis (Figure 4.2). Similarly, a four-tier system of theme layering was used with data on student self-perceptions and experiences of leadership (Figure 4.3).

The findings are presented in four sections of which the first three involve case analysis of the three schools involved in the study. The fourth section is that of cross-case analysis. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the presentation of the findings.

Table 5.1

Overview of the Presentation of Findings

Section One	5.3 Catholic Ladies College – School Understanding
	5.4 Catholic Ladies College – Student Perceptions
	5.5 Comparison
Section Two	5.6 St Kevin's College– School Understanding
	5.7 St Kevin's College – Student Perceptions
	5.8 Comparison
Section Three	5.9 Guilford Young College–School Understanding
	5.10 Guilford Young College – Student Perceptions
	5.11 Comparison
Section Four	5.12 Cross-Case Analysis

Each school's understanding of senior student leadership, generated by an interview with a key staff member and the document search, is outlined through discussion of five themes identified from the data (Figure 4.2). These themes are:

(a) Role: what Year 12 students do as leaders.

(b) Style: how they exercise leadership.

(c) Preparation: in what ways they are trained for leadership.

(d) Mentoring: how they are supported in leadership.

(e) Benefits: what is gained from Year 12 student leadership.

Student self-perceptions and experiences of Year 12 leadership are represented through analysis of five themes identified from the data (Figure 4.3). These themes are:

(a) Role: the ways in which Year 12 students exercise leadership.

(b) Opportunity: the options Year 12 students have to exercise leadership.

(c) Support: how Year 12 students have been nurtured in leadership.

(d) Benefits: what Year 12 students believe they have received from leadership experiences.

(e) Concerns: what Year 12s students perceive as those challenges and difficulties associated with senior student leadership.

The majority of student self-perceptions and experiences were based on references to the student survey questionnaire database (Catholic Ladies' College: 92 students; St Kevin's College: 139 students; Guilford Young College: 137 students). For ease of referencing, only statements drawn from the two student focus group interviews were specifically acknowledged.

5.3 Case Study One: Catholic Ladies' College (CLC) – School Understanding

5.3.1 Role

Catholic Ladies' College has three ways in which senior student leaders can exercise leadership. There are elected leadership positions involving those Year 12 students voted onto the Student Representative Council (Figure 5.1) and the Student Executive Council (Figure 5.2). Secondly, there are the elected classroom positions of homeroom representative and magazine committee member, as well as appointed positions of responsibility: social justice captain, and debating captain (*Leadership Handbook*, 2000). Thirdly, as Ms Green (May 2, 2002) indicated in the staff interview, there is the status and responsibility *per se* of being a Year 12 student.
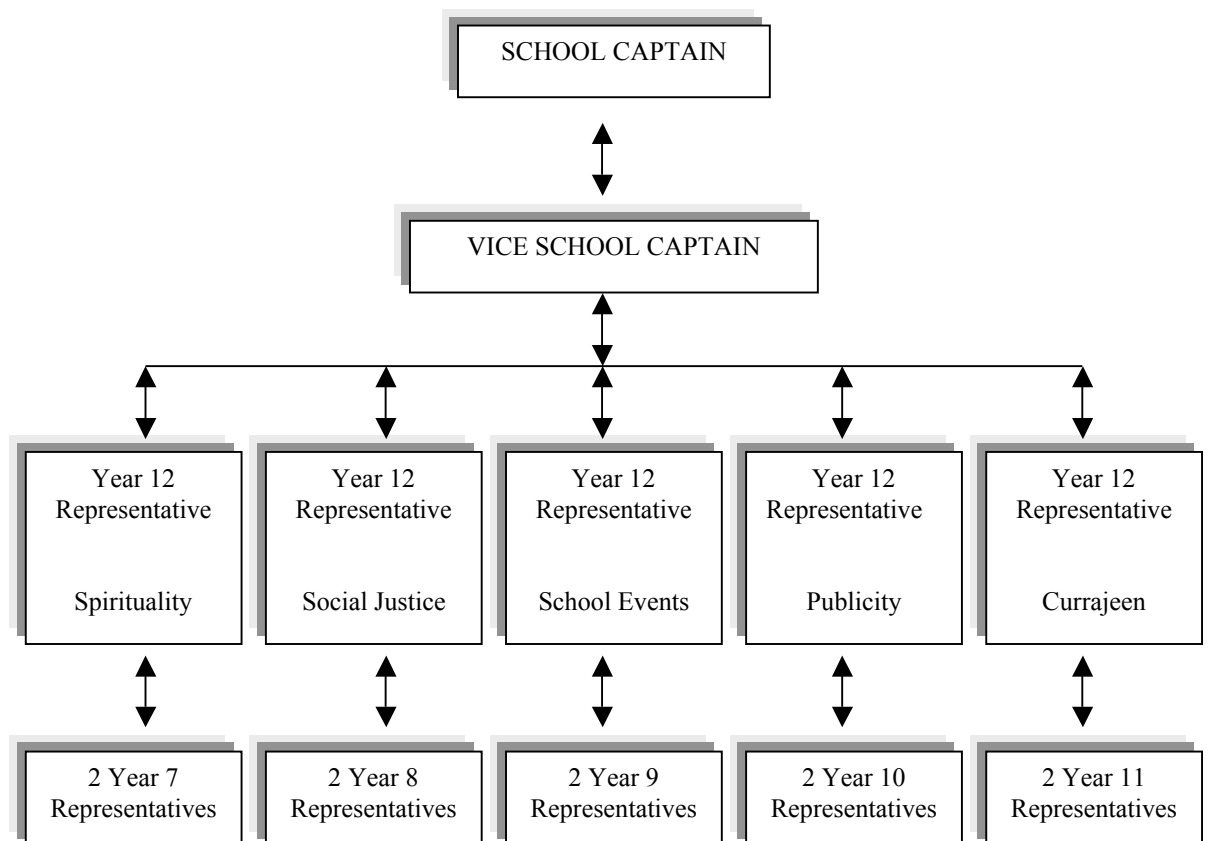
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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │   SCHOOL CAPTAIN    │
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Year 12 Representative Spirituality	Year 12 Representative Social Justice	Year 12 Representative School Events	Year 12 Representative Publicity	Year 12 Representative Currajeen
↕	↕	↕	↕	↕
2 Year 7 Representatives	2 Year 8 Representatives	2 Year 9 Representatives	2 Year 10 Representatives	2 Year 11 Representatives

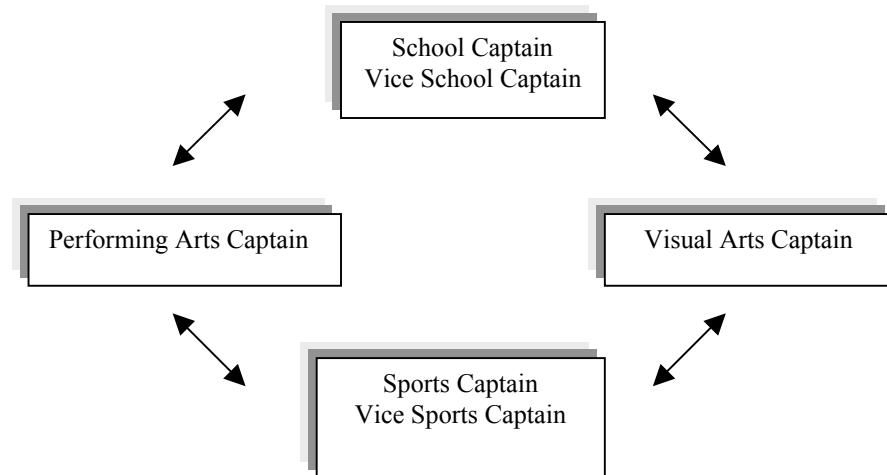Figure 5.1. CLC Student Representative Council (*Leadership Handbook*, 2000, p. 7)

Figure 5.2. CLC Student Executive Council (*Leadership Handbook*, 2000, p. 13)

Role descriptions for all designated leadership positions are outlined in the CLC *Leadership Handbook* (2000). Table 5.2 compares the particular role descriptions of the members of the SRC – school captain, vice school captain and Year 12 SRC Representative – and provides an example of the level of detail contained within each role description. This table depicts the two components of student responsibility inherent within each leadership position: a responsibility to the school and a responsibility to the student body. Furthermore, during the announcement of the 2003 Year 12 student leaders at a full school assembly on October 10, the Principal emphasised the importance of the student leaders' role in "working with and being visible examples to students in all year levels". She pointed out that this example "will be seen in many different ways in classes, in the school grounds, and may even extend beyond the school boundary". The Principal noted, moreover, that there will be times when "their leadership will not be visible to many, and sometimes the expectations of the role will come before their own needs". She also believed that the senior student leaders would "always act with honesty and consideration to others".

Table 5.2.

Year 12 Student Leadership Roles at CLC

School Captain	Vice School Captain	Yr 12 SRC Representative
School Responsibilities	**School Responsibilities**	**School Responsibilities**
•Actively support the Mission Statement of the College.	•Actively support the Mission Statement of the College.	•Actively support the Mission Statement of the College.
•Present proposals and seek advice from the College Leadership Team		
•Be master of ceremonies at school assemblies	• Speak at year level and whole school assemblies.	• Speak at year level and whole school assemblies.
•Introduce outside guests at school events and to give a vote of thanks to guest speakers.	• Attendance at whole school events.	• Attendance and support of whole school events.
• Represent the school at social functions that may occur outside the school	• Represent the school at social functions that may occur outside the school	
• Liaise with the Year 12 coordinator regarding special issues relevant to the year level.	• Liaise with the Year 12 coordinator regarding special issues relevant to the year level	• Liaise with the relevant Year Level Co-ordinators.
• Engender support for all school activities.	• Engender support from the rest of the school community for any school activities.	• Engender support from the rest of the school community for any school activities.
• Support and abide by all school rules.	• Support and abide by all school rules.	• Support and abide by all school rules.
Student Responsibilities	**Student Responsibilities**	**Student Responsibilities**
• Be responsive and attentive to student ideas and concerns	• Be responsive and attentive to student ideas and concerns	• Be responsive and attentive to student ideas and concerns
• Be able to delegate and liase with other leaders across the school community.	• Be able to delegate and liase with other leaders across the school community.	• Liase with other members of the SRC and the school community.
• Chair SRC meetings, empower and give confidence to other members of the committee.	•Support and work co-operatively with the School Captain	• Support the School Captain and the Vice School Captain.
• Coordinate SRC activities.	• Help coordinate SRC activities.	• Assist the two SRC representatives from the Year level for which they have been given responsibility.
• Chair Student Executive Meetings.		• Report back to the year level regarding matters discussed at SRC meetings and other issues relevant to the student body.
		• Assist in the organisation and activities associated with one of the following aspects of college life: spirituality, school events, Currajeen, publicity, and social justice.
• Have sound organisational skills and the ability to prioritise.	• Have sound organisational skills and the ability to prioritise.	• Have sound organisational skills and the ability to prioritise

There is also the expectation at CLC that being a Year 12 student requires the exercise of leadership. In the key informant staff interview Ms Green, (May 2, 2002), pointed out: "I think it is very important that the seniors are the leaders of the school … they should be there to support, empower, and encourage involvement from the junior school". She noted that CLC has a "buddy" system in place where, during third term, the Year 11 students write a letter to a prospective Year 7 student. These letters are given to the Year 7 students when they come for their orientation day in November. Ms Green commented: "I usually try to just give a generic letter, but they can write their own with stamps and pretty things. Some people put chocolates and lollies in them". Ms Green explained that the Year 7 students therefore "have a sense that there is someone that they are going to meet on the first day". She indicated, moreover, that the Year 7 and Year 12 students meet as a group on special occasions during the year, usually for a morning tea. In this fashion a mentor system is developed where "that little 'buddy' can always chat to her senior".

In addition, Ms Green (May 2, 2002) believed the Year 12 students "should also be supportive of staff and their own peers". She pointed to an example which occurred at the 2002 school swimming carnival when "it was wonderful seeing the general Year 12 body being supportive of the teacher in charge". The teacher was so impressed that she "came up and gave them all a little ribbon where she had written on it, 'thank you for all your assistance'".

Ms Green (May 2, 2002) commented on two other ways in which the Year 12 students as a group exercise leadership. Firstly, she stressed their value as role models. In particular she highlighted the issue of wearing the college uniform correctly,

especially as the Year 12 students "stand out because they have the black jumper". Secondly, she emphasised the importance of exercising independence, especially independence in learning: "I hope to push them to be independent and to realise that they have to make their decisions, because they're going out within four months into the world".

5.3.2 Style

The foundations for leadership at CLC are to be found in the College Mission Statement and the Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Charity (*Leadership Handbook,* 2002). The College *Mission Statement* (n.d.) begins: "Catholic Ladies College was founded by the Sisters of Charity in 1902 to educate, in partnership with parents, women of faith, integrity, individuality and compassion, confident of their own worth, and wholly involved in the transformation of society" (p. 1). The Sisters of Charity Education Philosophy (1992) states: "In their colleges, the Sisters of Charity strive to provide appropriate models of female leadership and educate the students to be independent, articulate leaders in the Church and Society of tomorrow – Women of faith, confident in their own worth as women and vitally involved in the promotion and practice of justice" (Point XIII, quoted in *Leadership Handbook,* p. 3). It is this understanding of leadership which underlies a list of suggested qualities needed by those wishing to take on a leadership position at CLC:

- having courage
- having good self-control
- having persistence
- being able to make decisions
- having a strong sense of fair play

- being definite about plans (i.e. goals, action, target dates)

- being diligent and developing the habit of always doing more than is required

- having a willingness to share

- having a willingness to assume responsibility

- having a pleasing personality

- being generous to others with your time and possessions

- being able to admit to your own faults and mistakes

- being able to apologise when you have made an error or done something wrong.

(*Leadership Handbook,* p. 3)

In addition, it is stressed in the *Leadership Handbook* that "students are encouraged to use their potential for the benefit of not just themselves but the whole community" (p. 3)

When Ms Green (May 2, 2002) was asked about the type of leadership CLC was looking for from its senior students, she talked in terms of "compassionate leadership that is not from the top down, but empowering of younger students".   She commented on how well the School Captain and Vice School Captain constantly administered their responses with the younger students at SRC Council meetings, asking the students for their opinions and involving them in the decision-making processes. She highlighted the very strong sense of collaboration present at these meetings as opposed to a "we are the top – we make the decisions" approach.   Likewise, Ms Green saw the need for a similar kind of leadership from the general body of Year 12 students, "of collaborating and friendliness, that they're not simply Year 12s …not distant but part of the school".

During the key informant interview, Ms Green (May 2, 2002) also raised the concern that some students who nominate for leadership positions might find it difficult to meet the demands of both schoolwork and leadership. As she pointed out:

> Sometimes at the end of the year when I see the nominations, I might have a chat with some girls and say: 'Do you really think that you are able to do it?' If they say yes, well, I can't say no. But sometimes they say no, and I've said, 'well that's a good choice'. Because, you know, sometimes the students can over-commit themselves.

Ms Green indicated that there exist other opportunities for students who wish to be actively involved, such as the position of Home Room Representative.

5.3.3 Preparation

Leadership involvement in the younger classes is seen at CLC as an important factor in preparing students for leadership in Year 12. During her interview Ms Green (May 2, 2002) commented: "by the time they get into Year 12 I'm hoping they have had the chance to be a Home Room Rep or a Magazine Rep in the junior school". From the beginning of Year 7 students can participate in the Magazine Committee, the Student Representative Council, and the Social Justice Committee, as a Homeroom Representative and in debating.   Students in Year 10 can also take part in the Pastoral Care Committee and in Peer Support. Year 11 students have the opportunity to contribute to the Curriculum Committee (*Leadership Handbook,* 2002).

Ms Green (May 2, 2002) indicated the election process in third term as an important time of preparation for the senior students. "We have a lot of discussions in home room …I usually have a meeting with the Year 11 student body and go through, with an overhead, the different roles, school responsibilities and job descriptions". At CLC the majority of senior leaders are elected at the end of Term 3 of their Year 11

year and their leadership role concludes at the end of third term of their Year 12 year (*Leadership Handbook,* 2002). Students are nominated for positions of responsibility and if they accept the nomination are required to fill out a generic application form, which is then posted for all to read. There are six questions:

1. Outline the reasons why you are applying for the position of …

2. Describe the strengths and skills you have which will enable you to effectively fulfil the role of …

3. Outline your vision of this role. What ideas and initiatives do you have in mind for next year?

4. How confident are you in your ability to balance your Year 12 VCE workload with the commitments of (leadership position)?

5. Have you been nominated for leadership roles in the past?

6. Describe the contribution you have made to the life of the college over the past five years. (*Leadership Handbook*, pp 76 – 107).

Ms Green stated that the students liked the procedure and "loved reading" the application forms "because the girls put a lot of effort into them". She also noted that CLC used the Electoral Commission to conduct the elections for School Captain and Vice School Captain.

CLC also provides opportunities for its elected student leaders "to participate in Leadership training session/s organised by the Leadership Group and members of the Leadership Group" (*Leadership Handbook,* 2002, p. 5). This usually occurs in first term. Ms Green (May 2, 2002) indicated, moreover, that she hoped to have "some leadership time before the end of the year" with the new senior leaders. She also remarked that the school encouraged and sent the School Captain and Vice School

Captain to the Amberley Retreat Centre in February for a weekend with senior leaders

from other schools.

5.3.4 Mentoring

The College *Leadership Handbook* (2002) states that ongoing support, informal

as well as structured, will be provided for student leaders by "the College Leadership

(Administration) team, the Leadership Group, the SRC staff representative and year

level co-ordinators" (p. 5). The Student Executive Council and the Student

Representative Council each has an assigned staff member. Teachers are also appointed

to work in conjunction with student leaders in the Sports, Visual Arts, Performing Arts,

Magazine Committee, Social Justice and Debating. The previous four School Captains

all commented on this support in their SRC President's Report within the College

Magazine, *Caritas*:

> I could never have survived the year without the help and on-going
> support of a number of people in the CLC community. Ms Morrissey's
> tremendous guidance to me and the SRC throughout the year, her energy
> and hard work … Mr Morgan and Mrs McCudden have been wonderful,
> extremely patient and supportive at all times (Moloney, 1998, p. 7)

> The ongoing support from the teaching and administration staff was
> always appreciated, especially the tremendous guidance from Mrs Evans
> and Mr Morgan. Miss Ryan and Mrs McKenna provided me with
> endless encouragement (Cattapan, 1999, p. 5)

> Mrs Evan's guidance and support have been invaluable to the SRC this
> year. I would also like to thank Mr Nillson for his support, Mrs Selleck
> and Mrs Hosking from the office who have been lovely (O'Sullivan,
> 2000, p. 5)

> To Mrs Evans, thank you for your guidance and support. Without your
> help this year, many of the achievements would not have been possible.
> A huge thank you goes to all the administration staff, whose assistance
> and support has been fantastic throughout the year (Vaughan, 2001, p. 5)

One formal mechanism at CLC by which teachers are able to dialogue with, and mentor, senior student leaders is via the Student Leaders Performance Review. Ms Green (May 2, 2002) spoke about how the Review is administered to all senior student leaders around mid-year. It involves each student leader filling out a questionnaire that lists her leadership role description and then raises three questions:

1. How well do you feel you have carried out your role this year?

2. What areas could you improve upon?

3. What are your goals for the rest of the year?

Senior members of staff read and discuss the student answers to the questionnaire. Designated teachers then meet individually with students to discuss and critique leadership performance.

5.3.5 Benefits

During the key informant interview, Ms Green (May 2, 2002) suggested that engaging in leadership activities provides those students concerned with "such a tremendous sense of involvement and sense of achievement". She pointed out: "it develops their speaking, their interactive skills and helps their confidence". Skills, which she noted, are important in today's world.

Ms Green's (May 2, 2002) comments are mirrored in statements made by the previous four School Captains at CLC (as recorded in the College Magazine, *Caritas*): "I was so proud that I was SRC President of 1998, a role which proved very challenging, however, I loved every minute of it" (Moloney, 1998, p. 7); "we are so incredibly lucky at CLC: we have the ability to dream and then, much more than that, the trust to initiate and create" (Cattapan, 1999, p. 5); "I was honoured to have the role

of SRC President. It was incredibly challenging and rewarding at the same time"
(O'Sullivan, 2000, p. 5); "It has been such an amazing honour to lead this supportive
and caring school community as College Captain" (Vaughan, 2001, p. 5).

The school also highlights the election process as an important learning
experience for the students. As pointed out in the *Leadership Handbook* (2002): "It is
hoped that by participating in the College leadership program, whether it be as a
nominee, a voter, or as an elected leader, all students will gain a greater knowledge and
understanding of what effective civics and citizenship is all about" (p. 5)

5.4 Case Study One: Catholic Ladies' College – Student Perceptions

5.4.1 Role

Year 12 responses to the student survey questionnaire and the two focus group
interviews indicated four main elements which describe the role of senior student
leadership at Catholic Ladies College. These elements can be broadly classified as
service, the position of Year 12 students as the most senior class, interaction with
younger students, and duty. While these four elements are not mutually exclusive but
rather strongly interrelated, they do delineate the principal ways by which senior girls at
CLC identified the nature of their role as student leaders. Ninety-two students answered
the survey questionnaire, with sixteen of these students also taking part in the two focus
group interviews, eight in each focus group.

Survey question one provided students with twelve statements to be graded from
1 (little importance) through to 5 (very important), in terms of how significant they
believed each statement was to exercising senior student leadership. The following four

statements obtained a mean of over 3.50: representing the needs of other students (4.10), being a current Year 12 student (4.08), being a role model for younger students (3.76), and striving to bring about change in the school (3.60). Three of these statements also recorded a mode of 5 (very important). Two statements, "Striving to promote community within the school", and "Being a College Captain / Deputy Captain", produced bimodal results. Eleven of the twelve statements registered a mean above three, indicating that Year 12 students at CLC generally saw these activities as significant components of senior student leadership. Table 5.3 presents a statistical summary for each statement within Question One, incorporating mode, mean, and standard deviation.

Student responses to the survey questionnaire as a whole indicated that many senior students at CLC saw service as an important ingredient in their role of leadership. When asked what they had to offer their school as a Year 12 leader, student replies included: "patience, understanding, enthusiasm, popularity amongst peers", "support and encouragement", "friendship, compassion, help, love, care, kindness, support", "fun and humour, organisation, trustworthiness, friendship, support and memories". The desire to "help" and "support" others were common answers. One senior girl noted: "I try my hardest to make whatever we do the best possible, so every student is happy with the end result". Similarly a different student remarked: "my desire is to help others, so that the school can be a more enjoyable place". Another area of service, that of "cleaning the common room" was highlighted in student responses to the question about what students do which they are not asked to do. Furthermore, students rated the statement "representing the needs of other students" in Question One very strongly with a mean of 4.10 and a mode of 5: Very Important.

Table 5.3

Statements about Student Leadership – CLC: Mode, Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mode %	Mean	Standard Deviation
• Being a member of a student group involved in community service	Some Importance 40%	2.59	0.98
• Being an SRC / College Prefect	Fairly Important 30%	3.21	1.30
• Being a co-curricular captain (e.g. sporting, music, debating)	Fairly Important 38%	3.22	1.04
• Representing the needs of other students	Very Important 48%	4.10	1.08
• Being in a peer support group (or its equivalent) with younger students	Important 29%	3.05	1.15
• Striving to promote community within the school	Fairly Important Important[a] 25%	3.24	1.26
• Being a current Year 12 student	Very Important 51%	4.08	1.14
• Being a College Captain / Deputy Captain	Important Very Important[a] 25%	3.30	1.37
• Striving to bring about change in the school	Important 29%	3.67	1.12
• Being a member of any other student committee	Fairly Important 46%	3.03	0.95
• Being a role model for younger students	Very Important 34%	3.76	1.17
• Representing the school in the community (e.g. sport, music, debating)	Important (4) 34%	3.32	1.12

Note. N = 92. SD is a measure of dispersion, with 67% of results between the mean ± one SD.

Mode: 1: Little Importance 2: Some Importance 3: Fairly Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

[a]Bimodal result

Year 12 responses to the survey questionnaire emphasised "setting a good example", being "a good Year 12 role model", and befriending "the younger year levels" as the key elements of leadership involvement with younger students. Some senior students at CLC observed that role modelling and good example were often

achieved by "wearing correct uniform and acting appropriately". Numerous remarks highlighted the need to be friendly with younger students: "to make them feel comfortable", "so that they feel at home and part of the College community". One student mentioned:

> I smile lots! Nah. I'll always go out of my way to be nice and encouraging to the younger kids because I remember how scared I used to be of Year 12s when I was their age.

Other statements commented on the ability "to influence the younger students, which is different from that of the teachers' perspective", of keeping "in contact with my Year 7 buddy that we were given at the beginning of the year", and helping "younger students when they are in trouble and in need of help". One student leader observed in the focus group interview (September 16, 2002) that "its really good to see on sports days the Year 12s trying to make all the younger girls enthusiastic". Another student leader commented: "you've got to be motivated because the younger year levels look up to you and think, if she's into it, I might do the same".

The idea of duty and being "responsible" surfaced as an important part of the CLC students' understanding of Year 12 leadership. "I'm committed to my school and I attend it in a positive, respectful manner" wrote one student. Another Year 12 student remarked on her "involvement in the school community" and "representation of my school in extra curricular activities and interschool events". One senior girl commented that "I enjoy working with the other members on the SRC and we all work very well together as a team". Another student believed she could offer "100% commitment and dedication" to her school by attending "to all functions and events held by the school". In addition, one of the elected student leaders remarked: "While I don't really have original ideas myself, I can take someone else's and make it possible. I get on well with

most students, I delegate tasks, and can be a middleman (sic) between the students and staff". There was also the statement by a student who noted:

> After six years I would have had to be in every club / group possible so I have fairly good relationships with the teachers. This involvement in the school has helped me to be respected and my opinion is fairly influential. I love encouraging the younger girls, particularly with the production and debating.

The ability "to have pride in the school", exercise "good behaviour", exhibit a "responsible nature", be "a reliable school member", offer "co-operation", show "respect of school image", and "set an example for the rest of the school" were further examples of the way the senior students at CLC saw the duty of leadership.

A number of senior students at CLC also expressed their understanding of leadership in terms of position and experience as a Year 12 student. Comments centred on "personal experience", "knowledge" and "confidence" as a senior student, being "an influence over the rest of the student body", using "the opportunity to do as best I can in my last year in high school", and the fact that as "the older members / students of the College we are fairly big influences on the younger students". One student observed:

> I am a member of the school's choir, orchestra, chamber ensemble, production and debating team. I often take school tours and represent my school in interschool sports. Just because I am a Year 12 people look up to me in these activities.

A senior girl also noted: "most Year 12 students think of school as maybe a second home and it is their one year to make a change".

5.4.2 Opportunity

Eighty-nine percent of Year 12 students surveyed at CLC (82 students) believed that all senior students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in some capacity at their school. Three reasons were advanced: the right as a Year 12 student,

the chance to "give something back to the school", and benefits associated with leadership.

Senior students who perceived leadership as a prerogative of being in Year 12 identified two reasons: "everyone should have the right, no matter who they are" and "everyone should be able to if they really want to". One senior student observed: "I believe every student member should have the opportunity to experience a leadership position if they wish, as it is a great achievement". Another Year 12 student noted: "If they really want to do it, and show that they are capable of being a good leader, they should be allowed to become a leader". Further comments focused on "it's only fair", "everyone deserves a chance", "everyone has unique talents", "it doesn't matter if you have a badge or not", and "we should be able to give everyone a chance". Even some students who believed that not all should have the opportunity to lead conceded, "it is up to individuals to decide how involved they get".

Year 12 students at CLC also saw senior student leadership in terms of giving something to the school. One student referred to Year 12 leadership as "a chance to make some improvement to the school". Another student wrote that every senior "has something to offer the school community, and should be able to exercise leadership in some capacity". Other comments referred to "giving a bit more back to the school", "recognition that I do care about my school community", "wanted to give back to the school what its given to me". One Year 12 student noted:

> This school has offered me so much in the past and has given me opportunities that have helped shape the person I am. I want to give back to the school in any way I can.

The positive influence of senior leadership on younger students was also highlighted: "Each has personal experience that they can share with others at school. Automatically, younger students look up to the Year 12s for this experience and maturity". This point was particular strong in the focus group interview involving students not elected to formal office (16 September, 2002) who saw their role "as providing a good influence on younger students".

The idea that leadership experiences produce inherent benefits was also seen as an important reason all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership. Students noted that leadership practice "can boost self-esteem", "enable us to grow as adults", "allows people to show commitment and dedication", "gives us the last chance to experience responsibility", "helps strengthen us", and "matures people". Students highlighted leadership as "important in growing up and getting ready for the future". On a slightly different note, one senior student at CLC saw participation in leadership as important because "it unites all girls involved in the school more. It sets a standard for the school, and having all girls involved shows a good image to others".

Question Three on the student survey questionnaire invited senior students to indicate how they personally exercised leadership at their College. Thirteen statements were provided. Ninety-three percent of CLC senior students surveyed (86 students) indicated that being a current Year 12 student was one way they exercised leadership; seven percent (six students) also commented "I do not believe I exercise leadership". Figure 5. 3 illustrates how Year 12 students at CLC saw their own leadership experience.
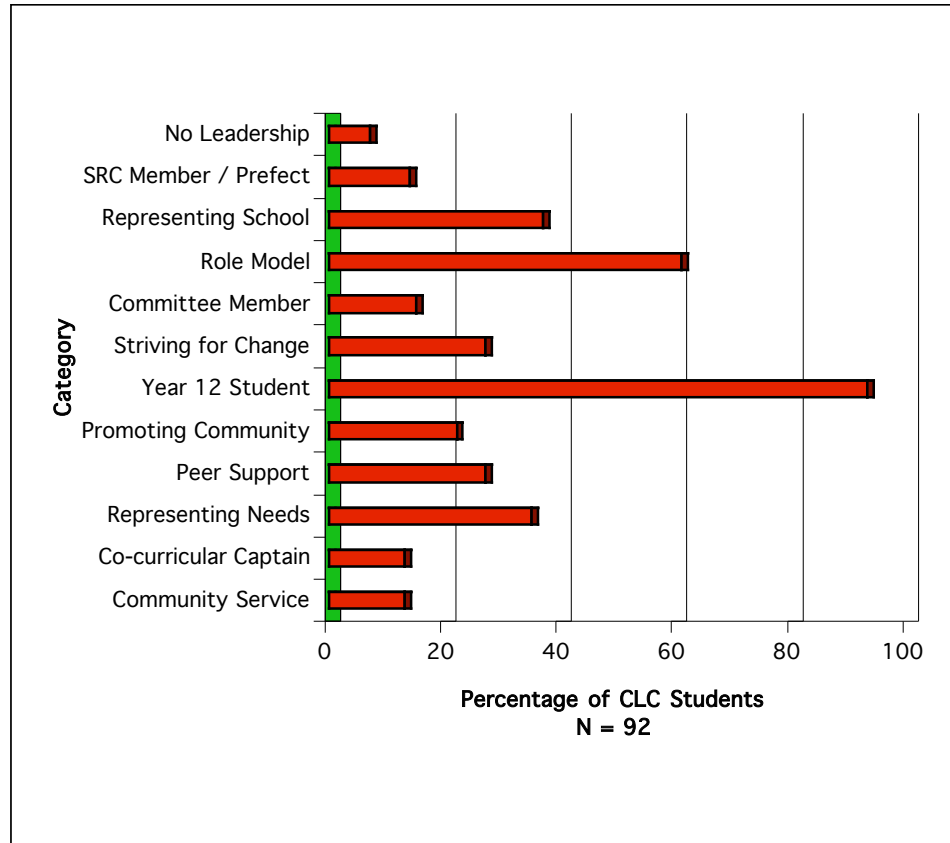
Figure 5.3. Ways senior students at CLC personally exercise leadership

5.4.3 Support

By far the most prominent way senior students at CLC believed they had been prepared for leadership was through past leadership experiences in younger classes. Answers such as "in previous years" and "in lower levels" punctuated the responses to the question on how students had been prepared for leadership in Year 12. Comments include: "We have been encouraged to do as much from day one of school", "minor leadership roles in younger year levels", "opportunities for leadership ever since Year 7", and "leadership duties in younger year levels". Being involved as "an SRC rep", acting as a Peer Support Leader, and participating in extra curricular activities such as debating, magazine committee, public speaking, and various sports, were highlighted as

the main avenues for gaining leadership experience in younger years. Certain CLC Year 12 students also made mention of "leadership days" and "leadership programs", "past leaders talking to the future leaders", and "seeing older students before us" as the other ways students had been prepared as leaders for Year 12.

Question Five on the student survey questionnaire asked students how Year 12 leadership is encouraged at the school. Students were provided with eight statements and could nominate any or all of the statements. Figure 5.4 indicates the degree to which those CLC senior students surveyed believed each statement was pertinent to the way CLC is presently promoting senior leadership. "Recognition through exclusive
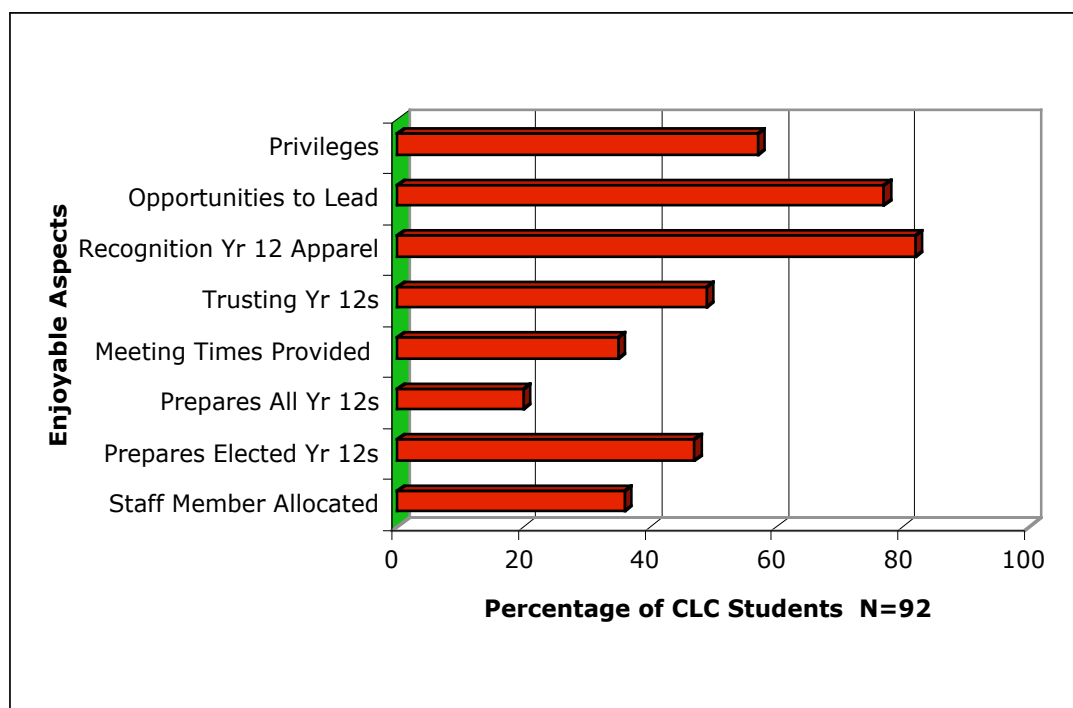
Figure 5.4. Ways senior student leadership is encouraged at CLC

Year 12 apparel", "the school providing leadership opportunities for its senior students", and "acknowledgement of Year 12 students through privileges", appeared the most relevant methods. Students were also asked to specify what privileges the school

offered. The most commonly acknowledged were: "finishing class early", "free classes", "the Year 12 common room", "Currajeen" (Year 12 campus at CLC), and "the kitchen adjacent to the common room". These results are illustrated in Figure 5.5.
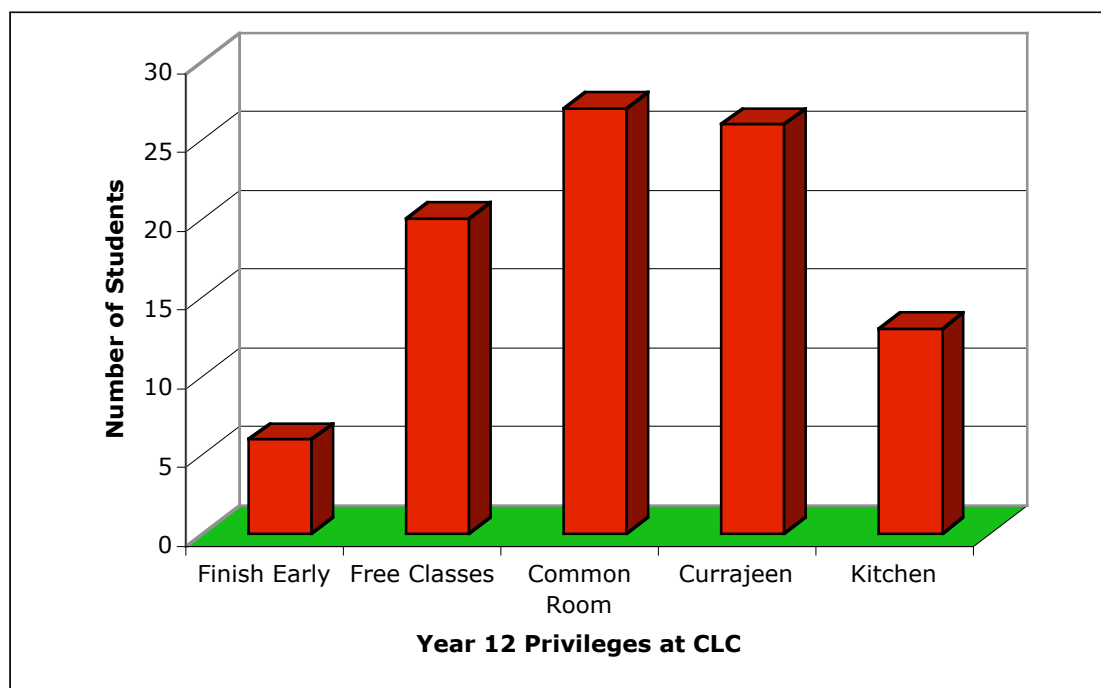
Figure 5.5. Year 12 privileges at CLC

5.4.4 Benefits

Senior students at CLC indicated three major benefits associated with Year 12 student leadership. These can broadly be classified as preparation for the future, personal development, and improved people skills. A number of students saw the benefits of leadership in terms of "applying for jobs" and "preparing us for the work place". One student wrote that leadership "prepares you for responsibilities in the rest of your life". Another student commented that leadership opportunities "help in life later on after high school, like uni". Similarly, a student noted: "When applying for university / TAFE, it's good to show that you have had experience in leadership roles". There were references to being "prepared for the 'real world'", of enjoying "improved

employment opportunities", and that leadership "prepares you for the workforce and further studies".

Year 12 students at CLC strongly indicated that leadership opportunities enhanced personal development. In particular, students drew attention to such things as increased confidence, greater maturity, becoming "more positive and involved", being "more independent", improved initiative, a sense of pride, greater motivation, and developing into "a better person". One senior girl noted: "I really feel comfortable speaking in front of the school now, especially because I feel strongly for my area of responsibility". Another student remarked:

> I love my school. Sounds silly, but it's true. I have been involved fully at school since Year 7 and this is just an extension of that. There is a certain amount of pride, also that I get things done and am acknowledged for that.

Yet another student wrote: "I am less naïve, more confident and I feel I can be whatever I want to be. This hope and confidence is a real gift". Discussion in the student leaders focus group (September 16, 2002) also highlighted increased confidence as a result of leadership experiences. One student leader observed, leadership is a "completely new experience, you realise things about yourself which you never knew you could do".

Students at CLC also pointed to improved people skills, especially with staff, as a benefit of being a leader in Year 12. One senior student commented on how "the teachers seem to have a newfound respect for me, which makes school more enjoyable". Another noted, "Teachers, the ones that I work with in my department, have shown me a higher level of respect, treated me not as lower but as an equal when working alongside them". A further student observed, "I think that I am respected by my teachers more than I was in previous years of education. They treat me as maybe an

adult". One senior student remarked on "a certain leniency and better relationships with the staff". She also made note of "the way the younger girls know who I am and come to say hello and have a chat, which is lovely". Another senior girl declared: "Yes, I've decided I'm going to become a teacher because of the experiences I've had as a leader in the CLC community".

Question four on the student survey questionnaire invited students to indicate the enjoyable / positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12. Seven statements were offered. Figure 5.6 illustrates how the students from CLC ranked the "enjoyable / positive factor" of each statement. Three of the statements rated over fifty percent, the highest being "having a sense of pride in yourself" (68%). The other two were: "having a sense of recognition as a leader" and, "helping other students".
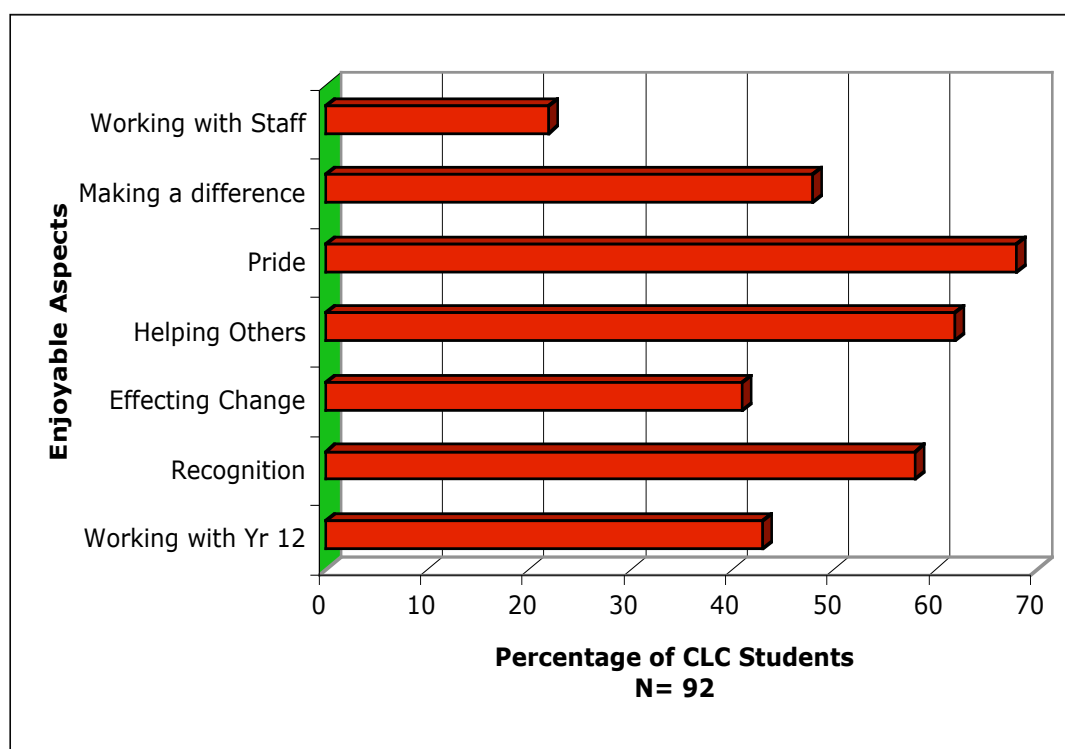

Figure 5.6. Student Perceptions: enjoyable / positive aspects of leadership at CLC

5.4.5 Concerns

Senior students at CLC identified five "challenges of being a leader in Year 12". Three of these challenges centred on the pressure of taking on "more responsibility", "balancing the workload of Year 12 studies with the leadership role", and expectations linked with being "a role model". Comments included "to always have responsibilities, and be doing the right thing all the time", "being able to manage schoolwork and a leadership role so that you have time for everything", or "everyone looks up to you and follows what you do and if you make a mistake things may go wrong". One student commented in the Year 12 focus group (September 16, 2002), "my friend is one of the student leaders. I know I couldn't do what she does and do my studies too".

A fourth issue of concern was raised in the student leaders focus group interview (September 16, 2002) and centred on motives for taking up the role of an elected leader. A number of the student leaders believed that becoming a school leader simply to "get the badge", " be known", or to "be popular enough to be voted for as opposed to having goals", were unsatisfactory reasons for seeking formal leadership positions. Debate then centred on popularity and what that implied. One senior girl commented:

> Popularity, where over the years you're shown yourself to be involved, and the reason you're popular is because people know you, and you've talked to them, and you're actually good friends with them through your involvement – that's OK". However, if you're popular because you're the one always making the rude comment, and just putting down the school other than trying to promote it, that's the wrong type of popularity.

Some students also highlighted leadership "frustrations" associated with being in a student-teacher relationship. Comments included: "Having lots of responsibilities but not being allowed to make a lot of your own decisions", "having to deal with teachers

who don't take us seriously", "being treated like a child while being expected to be a role model and lead", "being given responsibilities but then treated like a five year old when the teacher is in a bad mood", or "extra responsibility and the pressure from teachers for you to be what they want you to be and act".   Such statements should be balanced with remarks from the student leaders focus group: "Teachers help us, they give a lot of independence and put their trust in you to do the right thing", and "we get to organise a lot of things and the teachers don't look over us all the time".

5.5 Comparisons

5.5.1 School Understanding and Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership at CLC

Various links exist between the school understanding (key informant staff interview, document search) and Year 12 student perceptions (survey questionnaire, focus group interviews) of senior student leadership at CLC. Exercising a twin responsibility to the students and to the school is a significant element of the school understanding of senior student leadership. Many senior students also identified a sense of duty and being responsible as an important part of their leadership. Year 12 students at CLC are encouraged by the school administration to think of themselves as leaders. This theme was reflected in comments by senior students who expressed an awareness of leadership in terms of their position and experience as a Year 12 student. Being a role model also emerged as part of the school understanding of senior student leadership. Sixty-one percent of students surveyed indicated that they personally exercised leadership in this manner (Figure 5.3). Other connections centred on how senior students were prepared for leadership along with benefits associated with leadership involvement. Table 5.4 summarises and contrasts school understanding of senior student leadership with student perceptions of senior student leadership at CLC.

Table 5.4

School Understanding and Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership – CLC:

Summary and Contrast

School Understanding of Senior Student Leadership	Student Self-Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership

1. Role
• Elected Student Leaders
  - responsibility to the school
  - responsibility to the students
• Being a Year 12 student
• Role Model
• Supportive of Staff and Peers
	1. Role
	• Duty
	  - responsible
	  - pride in the school
	  - setting a good example
	• Service
	• Position and Experience as a Year 12 student
	• Interaction with younger students

2. Style
• Women of faith confident in their own worth
• Compassionate leadership
• Collaborative leadership
	2. Opportunity
	• 89% - all should have the chance to lead
	  - the right as a Year 12 student
	  - give something back to the school
	  - personal benefits
	• 93% believed they exercised leadership
	  - being a Year 12 student (93%)
	  - being a role model (61%)

3. Preparation
• Leadership in the younger classes
• Election process
• Leadership training by the school
	3. Support
	• Preparation
	  - past leadership experiences in earlier years
	  - student leaders felt good support from staff
	  - recognition through Year 12 apparel
	  - opportunities to lead
	  - Year 12 privileges

4. Mentoring • Staff appointed to SRC and SEC • Staff appointed to work in areas of Sport, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Magazine Committee, Social Justice, Debating. • Student leader performance review	

5. Benefits
• Sense of Involvement and fulfilment
  - public speaking
  - confidence
  - interactive skills
	4. Benefits
	• Preparation for the future
	• Personal development
	• Improved People Skills
	• A sense of pride in self (68%)
	• Satisfaction in helping others (62%)

2. Style – Concerns • Demands of schoolwork and leadership • Students over-committed	**5. Concerns** • Pressure of taking on more responsibility • Balancing schoolwork and leadership • Expectations with being a role model • Motives for taking on elected leadership • Student-teacher relationship

5.5.2 Leadership of Elected Leaders and of Students not elected to Formal Office.

Three comparisons can be made between the leadership of Year 12 students elected to the Student Leadership Team, and that of senior students not elected to this position. These comparisons centre on role, preparation, and mentoring.

Firstly, the leadership role of senior students not elected to leadership positions consists primarily of being a role model and a good student (key informant staff interview; Year 12 student focus group interview). Elected leaders also do these things, as well as any designated duties assigned to their particular leadership position (*Leadership Handbook,* 2000; key informant staff interview). Moreover, leadership participation is high with 93% of all students surveyed at CLC believing they exercised some form of leadership at the College.

Secondly, at the commencement of the year the College Captain and Deputy Captain attend a weekend for student leaders at the Amberley Retreat Centre (key informant staff interview). Elected student leaders usually attend a one-day school based leadership program (*Leadership Handbook,* 2000). Most other leadership preparation consists of past leadership experiences in previous years. Thirdly, teachers are appointed to work with elected student leaders (key informant staff interview). Elected student leaders felt they were supported by staff (focus group interview, September 16, 2002). Students in the second focus group (Year 12 students not elected to formal office, September, 16, 2002)) also believed that teachers were supportive of leadership initiatives. Thirty-six percent of Year 12 students surveyed (33 students) believed the school provided a staff member to work with the general body of senior students in leadership activities (Figure 5.3).

5.6 Case Study Two: St Kevin's College (SKC) – School Understanding

5.6.1 Theme One: Role

Data from the key informant staff interview and the document search described senior student leadership at St Kevin's College on two levels – elected student leaders (Figure 5.7) and the general body of Year 12 students. Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002), the key informant staff member from SKC, described elected leadership thus: "I have tried to set up amongst the Year 12s a group of College Captains, Prefects and Officers who really understand the vision of what the school is about and who have very good communication with the Headmaster". (The origin and role of "Officers" is explained in Theme Three: Preparation). Mr Heyington stressed that the leaders are given "positions of real influence around the school so that they would be the leaven in the midst". They are the ones "visiting classes, saying the right things, helping to encourage the good things and helping discourage the poorer side of human nature".
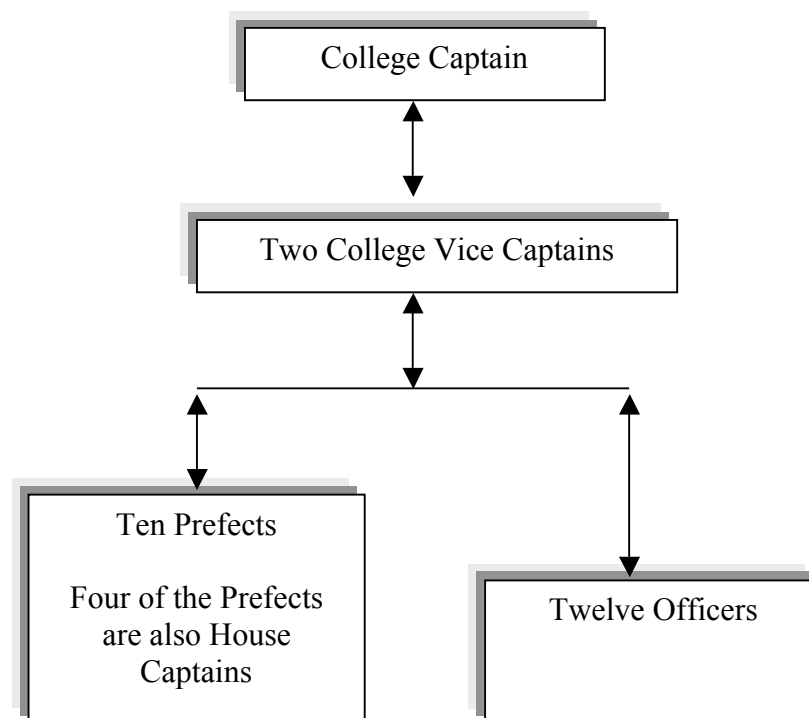

Figure 5.7. Structure of elected senior student leadership at SKC

The role of being a senior student leader at SKC is spelt out in the document

Responsibilities of a Prefect / Officer (2002) under four headings:

Correct Example in Role Modelling
- Courtesy to Staff and Students
- Correct wearing of uniform and grooming
- Endeavour in class and study
- Participation in co-curricular activities

Lifestyle Fitting a Model Catholic Student
- Personal integrity – honesty, truthfulness
- Active respect for others
- Avoidance of harmful substances / occasions
- Reverence and spiritual openness

Commitment to Specific Duties
- Class visitation
- Transport monitoring assignments
- Yard / Tuckshop duty
- Attendance at meetings
- Assigned Tasks

Leadership at College Functions
- Assemblies – speaking
- Masses – leading singing
- Sporting events – cheer squad
- Open days / functions – host, guide, usher

Prefects and Officers also commit to one of five "Mandate Groups", namely Student Welfare, Activities, Spirituality, Community, and Recognition. Student Welfare deals with issues that concern the well being of either individual students or the student body as a whole. The Activities group involves compiling proposals for activities undertaken by the prefect and officer bodies. Spirituality looks at the continued growth of spirituality in St Kevin's students. Community is responsible for the fostering of sound relationships across all sectors of the school community. The Recognition group is in charge of acknowledging any worthy issue or achievement (*Prefect and Officers Meeting,* 1 February 2002).

The general body of Year 12 students also plays a part in senior leadership at SKC. In the Headmaster's Report of the 1997 *College Magazine* the Headmaster of St Kevin's College, Br Wilding emphasised a collective leadership role for the Year 12 students: "leadership in a school comes largely from the spirit of the senior class" (p. 3). He went on to comment about the class of 1997:

> Their genuine respect and friendliness for each other, together with their love of the College, have made them great role models for the rest of the school. They have been hard working students consistently giving appropriate commitment in their studies. In sport, music, and other activities, they have taken St Kevin's to the top (p. 3).

When the school moved to a vertical pastoral system in 1998 he observed, "the positive influence of Year 12 students on the younger years will have greater scope" (*Headmaster's Report*, 1998, p. 4). One House Head at SKC noted after the school's swimming carnival:

> The Year 12 students organised and encouraged the swimmers from each year level very well. They also showed a lot of energy and initiative in devising and leading various *War Cries* and chants (McCormack, 1999 p. 1).

Furthermore, Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) observed that it is in the tutor groups where "the great majority of Year 12s are doing something to set up good communication and be a role model".

Year 12 students other than the Prefects and Officers are also appointed as captains and vice captains of summer and winter sports, debating and music. Their leadership responsibilities include speaking at the Headmaster's Assembly, liaising and supporting the teacher-in-charge, a general responsibility for all boys in their area, and, in the case of sports captains, delivering after-match congratulations and thanks (*Responsibilities of a Sports Captain,* n.d.).

5.6.2 Style

Two elements underpin the school philosophy of leadership at SKC and dictate the style of leadership expected of senior students at the College: a notion of service to the school community, and the idea of courage in the face of injustice and adversity. Commenting in the College periodical (*Omnia*, 2001) on senior student leadership, the Headmaster, Br Wilding (2001), emphasised that accepting "the responsibility of leadership" committed student leaders "to support the Christian mission of the College, to work for the good of all students and the St Kevin's Community, to provide good example and to display courage in acting against injustice and wrong" (p. 1). He went on to state: "The leadership that the college asks for is one that requires integrity and good values. It has its cost in time, energy and emotion. Essentially, it is for the service of others" (p. 1). In each student leader's Letter of Appointment from the Headmaster (2002) the following paragraph appears:

> In the understanding of all our discussions at Silver Creek, which emphasised that student leadership at St Kevin's was to be in a spirit of service to the College community, I now invite you to accept a position of student leadership for 2002

Furthermore, when accepting positions of leadership, the Prefects and Officers sign a document of *Understanding* (n.d.) in which they pledge to support the mission of the College, act responsibly, work for the good of students and the community, provide good example and show courage in acting against injustice and wrong.

During the key informant interview, Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) strongly accentuated the need for courage in leadership. "We're looking for people with some courage", he commented, "we want people who will be leaders, who will stand up for things …they have to be the ones to give a lead for someone in distress. They will without hesitation know what they should do". Furthermore, he remarked "if leadership

is to bring about formation of attitudes, allegiances, and alliances, it's also about bringing about actions to happen". To illustrate this point Mr Heyington gave the following example:

> The first ever Edmund Rice Award (award for excellence) was given to a boy on a bus over at Glen Waverley who found this group of boys attacking a little boy. They were all from the same school. They didn't go to our school. So he stopped it, and next found where the little boy was getting off. So he got off with him, got the whole story, rang the boy's parents, rang the school, gave them all the details. We got that from the principal of the school at the time. He performed better than a member of staff usually does.

Such a case, Mr Heyington believed, exemplified the rationale behind leadership development at SKC, "to give young men the insight into what they should be doing, and how they should be doing it, and the confidence and courage to actually do it". His major concern about senior student leadership was that students might not have the courage to lead.

5.6.3 Preparation

Direct preparation for senior student leadership at SKC takes the form of a leadership camp conducted in November for 25 boys who have been nominated by their peers. Mr Heyington explained that the nomination process takes place in fourth term and involves the College Captain and two Deputy Captains speaking "to all the Year 11s about their understanding of leadership, what their experience has taught them, and how, in a week's time when they're nominating the leaders for the following year, what qualities they should be looking for". A week later the students fill in nomination sheets. From this process 25 boys are invited by the Headmaster to participate in a two-day leadership camp at Silver Creek, the St Kevin's outdoor education campsite. Activities and sessions for the 2001 student leadership camp included:

- A Gospel Vision of Leadership

- Trust games
- Low and High ropes activities
- "Blindfold" Awareness – support
- Attributes of a Leader
- Vision for 2002
- Duties of a Prefect / Officer
- Where I stand – A Reflection
- Oppressive Experiences
- Challenges for 2002
- Commitment
- Vote, Evaluation
- Eucharist (*Leadership Camp Silver Creek*, 2001)

The position of Officer evolved as a result of instituting the leadership camp. Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) indicated that when the idea of a camp was initially proposed, "we would take only 12 or so away. It seemed small, so we opened it up to a group of 25. But then there would be 12 or so boys left out who weren't going to be anything. We made them officers".   Mr Heyinton noted that while these students did not have the standing of Prefect, theirs was still "another role of service".

The opportunity for leadership in earlier years is also recognised at SKC as an important element in the overall preparation of boys for senior leadership. In particular, Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) referred to the Year 11 Outdoor Activities Program and its significance in preparing boys for leadership. The 1999 Headmaster's Report noted the scope for such leadership throughout the College:

> Students from Year 11 are engaged in cross-age tutoring to students in Years 7 and 8. Year 11 Outdoor Activity Program leaders take active roles in Outdoor Education camps for Years 5 – 8 students. House Councils and year level SRCs work with House Heads and Year Level Coordinators to bring to the fore problems and positive ways of solving them at their respective levels. Year 10 students this year have helped induct Year 7s into the life of the College. (Wilding, p. 3)

Mr Heyington also highlighted the value of role modelling by all senior students. He pointed out that a Prefect or Officer is appointed to every class from Preparatory to Year

8; that once a week a Prefect or Officer goes to the Waterford Campus (Year 9) to give an address at their assembly; that the Year 10 and 11 students have Year 12 students in their tutor groups; and that every week students hear the College Captain "give a magnificent address". In such a way he explained, "There's an expectation building up in their minds of what a good Year 12 would do, what a Prefect and Officer does".

5.6.4 Mentoring

Mentoring is an important part of the student leadership structure at SKC. In his interview Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) remarked of the senior student leaders, "If you put them up in high positions, you have to help them and ensure that they're the best of leaders". The Headmaster takes an active role in working with the Prefects and Officers. Mr Heyington explained that the Headmaster meets with the Captain and Deputy Captains every Tuesday at 8.00 a.m. and attends both the Prefect meetings and the Prefect and Officer meetings held on alternate Thursdays. The College Captain chairs these meetings. The February 21 agenda for the *Prefect and Officer Meeting* (2002) illustrates the character of these meetings:

1. Prayer (student)

2. Address by the College Captain concerning the correct use of study periods, followed by a discussion on possible improvements.

3. A review by a Prefect of what is expected of leaders on public transport, including: reporting smoking, uniform / behaviour standard.

4. Discussion of nominations for the guest speaker program.

5. An address by the Deputy Headmaster on duties and expectations for the beginning of the school year mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

6. A proposal to be made by two students concerning a house rowing competition.

Senior student leaders also complete an "Appraisal of Performance" form at the end of Terms One and Two. Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) indicated that the appraisals "are a set evaluation" and are read by both the Headmaster and College Captain. Areas for review include:

- Meetings   - punctuality, attendance, action taken, contribution
- Supervision
- Courageous Action
- Occasions of Neglect
- Class visitation
- Transport
- Influence of peers
- Leader / Action admired
- Resolve for Next Term

Follow-up involves the Headmaster, and in some instances the College Captain, speaking individually with student leaders over issues raised in the appraisals. Mr Heyington also noted that class teachers are encouraged to communicate with their respective student leader about any aspects of class visitation.

Previous College Captains have remarked on the type of support offered the senior student leaders at SKC. Examples derive from the College Captains' Reports which are found in the annual *School Magazine*:

> It would be remiss of me not to mention our Headmaster, Brother Wilding, our Deputy Headmaster, Mr Russell and Year 12 Co-ordinator, Mr Petrie. These three men have guided us through one of the most turbulent, rewarding and challenging years that we will ever have to face and for this we are eternally grateful. (Orlando, College Captain 1998, p. 6)

> Thanks must go to Brs Wilding and McCarthy who have given me amazing support and guidance. (Prior, College Captain 2000, p. 6)

> I look back on the success of the year, and think of the fantastic leadership we have in the form of Br William J Wilding. His strength of character, vision and faith in his convictions have been of remarkable benefit and inspiration to me during the year. (Schumann, College Captain, 2001, p. 6)

Mentoring of the general body of Year 12 students at SKC has increasingly become the responsibility of the four House Heads. Mr Heyington (July 3. 2002) observed that the House system, introduced in 1999, has meant that House Heads have taken on "a developmental role for boys within their own house". The role description affirms the place of the House Head as "a constant figure in a senior student's life at St Kevin's" (*House Head Role Description*, 2001, p. 2). Moreover, one of the specific responsibilities of a House Head is "to help train and guide senior students in their roles as House and College leaders" (*House Head Role Description*, p. 2)

5.6.5 Benefits

Benefits associated with leadership involvement at SKC are seen primarily in terms of personal growth and outreach to the wider community. Mr Heyington (July 3, 2002) noted in his interview that leadership experiences make of students "young men who are capable of leadership and bringing out those qualities, because leadership is not just for Year 12, it's going to be throughout the rest of their lives". Mr Heyington talked about the importance of leadership for life, at university, as well as involvement in parish life. He stated, moreover, that, at St Kevin's, "we've got a big responsibility for providing leadership for our community, and we don't take that lightly". The College Prospectus also attests to this idea of leadership development for society:

> We have enjoyed success in creating an environment where loyalty, leadership, individuality and self assurance synthesise to produce young Catholic gentlemen of integrity who are able to assume responsible roles in society (*St Kevin's College*, n.d., p. 16).

College Captain Prior (2000) wrote in the College Captain's Report for the school annual: "At the end of the day very few Year 12s can say that they are not ready to leave St Kevin's College" (p. 6). He pointed out, "We are leaving a school that we have loved, and will continue to love, but also one that has prepared us so that we are ready to embrace what the rest of our lives will bring" (p. 6).

5.7 Case Study Two: St Kevin's College (SKC) – Student Perceptions

5.7.1 Role

Responses made by senior students at St Kevin's College to the student survey questionnaire, and within the two focus group interviews, indicated four main components of their role as leaders at the College. These components can be categorised as duty, service, interaction with younger students, and personal skills. As with CLC, these components are not mutually exclusive but rather interrelated. One hundred and thirty nine students answered the survey questionnaire with eighteen of these students also taking part in the focus group interviews, nine in each focus group.

Survey Question One examined ways senior students exercise leadership. Students were presented with twelve statements about student leadership and required to rank each statement from 1 (little importance) to 5 (very important). The following four statements obtained a mean of over 3.50: being a role model for younger students (3.98), being a current Year 12 student (3.86), representing the needs of other students (3.84), and representing the school in the community (3.60). Three of these statements also recorded a mode of 5 (very important). Nine of the twelve statements registered a mean above three, indicating that Year 12 students at SKC generally saw these activities as significant components of senior student leadership. Table 5.5 presents a statistical

summary for each statement within Question One, incorporating mode, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 5.5

Statements about Student Leadership – SKC: Mode, Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mode %	Mean	Standard Deviation
• Being a member of a student group involved in community service	Some Importance 40%	2.50	1.09
• Being an SRC / College Prefect	Fairly Important 30%	2.99	1.35
• Being a co-curricular captain (e.g. sporting, music, debating)	Fairly Important 38%	3.24	1.22
• Representing the needs of other students	Very Important 48%	3.84	1.11
• Being in a peer support group (or its equivalent) with younger students	Important 29%	3.19	1.17
• Striving to promote community within the school	Fairly Important Important[a] 25%	3.42	1.19
• Being a current Year 12 student	Very Important 51%	3.86	1.24
• Being a College Captain / Deputy Captain	Important Very Important[a] 25%	3.43	1.42
• Striving to bring about change in the school	Important 29%	3.45	1.12
• Being a member of any other student committee	Fairly Important 46%	2.74	0.96
• Being a role model for younger students	Very Important 34%	3.98	1.16
• Representing the school in the community (e.g. sport, music, debating)	Important 34%	3.60	1.24

Note. N = 139. SD is a measure of dispersion, with 67% of results between the mean ± one SD.

Mode: 1: Little Importance 2: Some Importance 3: Fairly Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

[a]Bimodal result

Senior students at SKC identified three main ways to exercise their duty as a student leader: by being a good role model, by supervising behaviour of younger students on public transport, and by upholding the reputation of the school.

Being a good role model was important to many senior students at SKC. One Year 12 student wrote: "I want to set a role model for younger students and to assist my peers". Another saw himself as "someone who can set an example for younger students by behaving appropriately and participating fully in College life". Another boy observed: "I offer a good example of what it means to be a Year 12 Kevinian. And what it means to love your College". In Question One the idea of "being a role model for younger students" registered the highest mean (3.89) with a mode of "very important" (5). During discussion in the Year 12 focus group interview (20 August, 2002) it was noted: "Sometimes small things count. If you're sitting on a train, you have your Year 12 tie on, you wear it properly, you have your blazer on, it's more likely other students will follow you".

Senior students at SKC also saw their leadership role as supervising the behaviour and dress code of other students from the College, in particular younger students, and especially on public transport. Comments included, "tell younger students to tidy their uniform if needed", "ask others to neaten up their uniform", "have the responsibility to tell others to behave more appropriately or to tell them to fix their uniform correctly", "insist that the younger students are behaving on trains and wearing their uniform correctly", and "make sure students on the train act in a well mannered way and that their dress code is up to scratch". It was acknowledged during the student leaders focus group interview (August 15, 2002) that disciplinary action "can cause

awkwardness" but the comment was: "If something has to be done, something has to be done", and this "whether a student is even your mate".

Senior students at SKC also identified upholding the reputation of the College as a valuable leadership role. As one Year 12 student explained:

> The reputation of the school is most important. To be Year 12 the public perceive and generalise the school from us. I offer a good reputation in public and hopefully an academic reputation.

Linked with this idea to "promote / maintain the image / reputation of the school" was expressed the notion of creating "a sense of pride in the College". A senior student remarked, "You have to have pride in our school and the uniform". One Year 12 boy believed that what he brought to his leadership was a "good student who is not afraid to take pride in his school". Students also commented that, as a senior leader, they would "recommend the school to family friends who have kids", and "promote the College as a good place to send boys".

The idea of service emerged as an important part of the SKC students' understanding of Year 12 leadership. Various individuals commented on "giving my time to school extra-curricular activities", "helping those who are struggling", turning up and supporting "other sports teams on a weekend", as well as "attending school functions and events like Open Day and Head of the River". In particular, a number of senior students highlighted "helping out with activities in my tutor group" along with "picking up rubbish" as ways they exercised leadership. At the student leaders' focus group interview (August 15, 2002) various students stressed the importance of leadership being "for others, not yourself". As one student leader observed: "we've

tried to make the College experience something better than it was before, not necessarily for ourselves, but for other people".

A large number of Year 12 students at SKC saw greater involvement with younger students as a worthwhile method of exercising leadership. As one senior student stated:

> I talk to the younger students, whether it is just for a few minutes at lunchtime or on the train on the way home. They really look up to us and it's nice to have a chat with them, and see how they're going.

Another senior boy commented, "sometimes I go with my friend who is a Prefect to his Prep class for a chance to interact with younger students". Another Year 12 student pointed out how he believed it important to "try to develop and sustain relationships with younger students". Statements such as "I tend to look after little kids on the train a bit more", "talk and engage with younger students", "look out for the younger students", "give advice to younger students", encapsulate how many students envisaged this element of their leadership. Furthermore, it was pointed out in the student leaders' focus group interview (August 15, 2002):

> Every leader has a class junior to us from Prep to Year 8 and from that we maintain connections throughout the different levels of the school. It's a way of promoting pastoral care. If they need help they don't necessarily come to a teacher but they can come to a senior student.

Students also mentioned the personal skills that they believed they brought to their leadership role at St Kevin's. One student noted his "strong sense of respect for the school and the courage to act upon that respect". Another student referred to his "courage to step out on a limb if necessary, perseverance to see things through, determination to succeed in initiatives, enthusiastic participation". While another student remarked: "I feel I have, first and foremost, an enthusiasm for life at school, as

well as a desire to work to make school life better for others, and a love of working with others to effect such changes". Other students alluded to such skills as "honesty and courage", "independent thought", "spontaneous wit", "willingness to listen", "encouragement, support, initiative", and "discipline", as ways they upheld the student leadership at SKC.

5.7.2 Opportunity

Eighty-one percent of the Year 12 students surveyed at SKC (113 students) believed that all senior students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in some capacity at their school. These students advanced three reasons for this: the right and responsibility as "the oldest and wisest students", advantages derived from a greater leadership base, and personal benefits.

A number of senior students saw leadership as "a privilege that should be recognised when students reach the top of the school". One student remarked, "I believe that because Year 12 is the most senior year at St Kevin's all of us should have some aspect of leadership in College life". Reasons advanced centred on being "the most experienced and mature, most known students of the school", "the oldest and hopefully the most responsible", and "younger students look up to them". However, leadership also entails responsibilities. As expressed by one senior boy: "After being in the school for six years and holding the highest ranking year level all have gained the experience that should enable us to provide leadership to younger members of the College".

There was also a sense amongst some senior students at SKC that student leadership "can't be left to a few individuals like Prefects and Officers". While acknowledging the need for "a select group" one Year 12 student suggested, "others should have a chance to exercise leadership". It was also remarked that "just because people are not perfect role models in every aspect of life, does not mean they do not have much to contribute". Further comments drew attention to the fact that leadership involvement "makes students feel a part of something and you have everyone working together to achieve a common goal", that " it would create a greater sense of community and belonging", and that "it gives students the feeling that they are able to give back to the school".

Students at SKC also highlighted various benefits associated with leadership experiences, in particular "skills to use in later life". One senior student observed:

> School is all about learning and preparing one for the future and for society. Therefore, every person should be given the chance to lead, to enable them to learn and gain experience of some leadership qualities.

Another Year 12 student remarked, "St Kevin's is trying to mould us into Renaissance Men and leadership is an important part of being a well-rounded person". It was also noted: "All Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership because being a leader in any form is a character building exercise that promotes confidence and will assist in later life". Students also saw leadership experience as "a very positive development aid", "essential for personal development", and "a vital skill to have".

Question Three on the survey questionnaire invited senior students to indicate how they personally exercised leadership at their College. Twelve statements were provided. Ninety-one percent of senior students surveyed (126 students) at SKC

indicated that being a current Year 12 student was one way they exercised leadership; nine percent (thirteen students) also commented "I do not believe I exercise leadership". Figure 5.8 illustrates how Year 12 students at SKC saw their own leadership experiences.
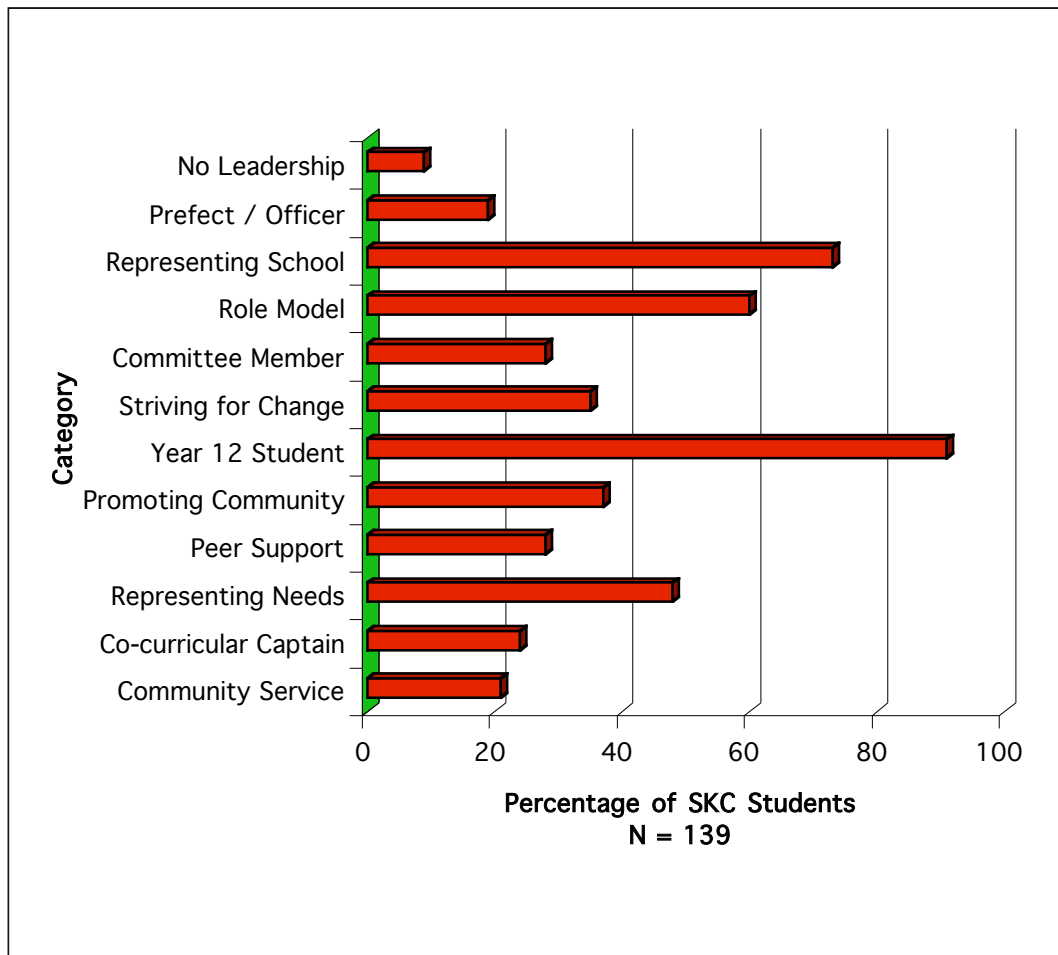

Figure 5.8. Ways senior students at SKC personally exercise leadership.

5.7.3 Support

Senior students at SKC indicated two main ways Year 12 students are prepared for leadership. Firstly, students highlighted the three-day leadership camp for the twenty-five elected Prefects and Officers. This occurs in December prior to students taking up their appointment. Secondly, there are those leadership opportunities offered

in earlier years at SKC. Many students referred to the various outdoor education and camping programs provided by the College. In particular, the Outdoor Activities Program (OAP) Leadership Course conducted at the end of the year for selected Year 10 students who, during their Year 11, assist with the Years 5, 6, and 7 camps, was singled out for comment. Other College activities, namely the "Big Brother" Program, membership on House Committees, SRC membership, involvement in tutor groups, participation in sport, and the example set by previous Year 12 students, were all advanced as worthwhile ways to prepare for leadership responsibilities in Year 12.

It was mentioned in both student focus group interviews that students felt greatly encouraged in their leadership by senior members of staff. The student leaders also acknowledged the support of many "non Prefects and Officers" who have grown into "fantastic leaders" over the year and "become good servants of St Kevin's". The student leaders stated that they derived "great support" from these people. This sense of support and rapport was similarly mentioned in the other focus group: "The Prefects get behind you if you want to show leadership".

Question Five on the student survey questionnaire asked students how Year 12 leadership is encouraged at the school. Students could nominate any or all of the eight statements provided. Figure 5.9 indicates the degree to which those SKC senior students surveyed believed each statement was pertinent to the way their College is presently promoting senior leadership. "Recognition through exclusive Year 12 apparel", "the school runs activities to prepare elected Year 12 students to lead", and "the school providing leadership opportunities for its senior students", appeared the most prominent methods.
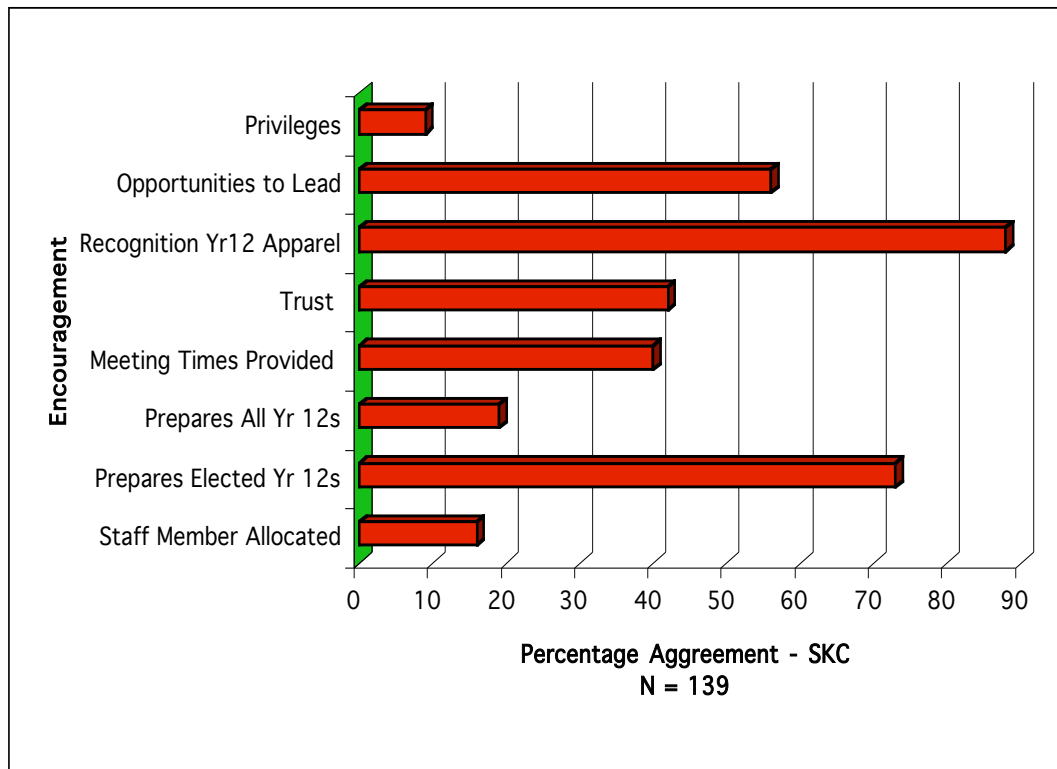
Figure 5.9. Ways senior student leadership is encouraged at SKC

5.7.4 Benefits

Senior students at SKC identified four main benefits associated with involvement in leadership activities: preparation for their future, personal development, improved relational skills, and the opportunity to help others.

Various students highlighted the fact that leadership opportunities at school "get you ready for future roles in your career", offer "skills that can be implemented through the rest of your life", and provide "experience for jobs when you have to be a leader in the workplace". Students noted the value of leadership for personal growth, indicating that leadership opportunities develop "greater confidence", "maturity", "sense of pride", "sense of accomplishment", "satisfaction", "recognition", "communication skills", "a

boost to self-esteem", "strong character", and the "ability to exercise full potential as a leader".

There was a strong sense amongst the senior students at SKC that leadership was a significant factor in fostering relational skills. One senior student wrote: "It has helped me to be conscious of people's feelings and to recognise problems before they happen". Another student noted: "It has made me look more openly towards all people. I have gained good people skills". Another senior boy stated: "It has helped me understand the workings of others and how to better interact with different styles of people". Other comments focused on "increased experience interacting with junior students and staff", "it has made me more understanding of others' thoughts", "a more tolerant person", "more enthusiastic about working in teams", and "makes you listen to people".

Associated with increased people skills was an apparent desire to improve the school and, in the process, do something for others. Various students wrote: "I really just hope I can help out the younger year levels. Of course, it would give me a lot of pride if I saw I was helping". "The greatest benefits are the knowledge that you are doing the right thing and helping others and being able to talk to and work with lots of different people". "Gain a higher self-esteem, at the same time knowing I am contributing in some way back to the school". "It has convinced me to do more for my school and believe that this is a school where everyone can feel a welcome member". Ideas such as "helping the school community" and a desire to "change the school for the better" were also common responses. Furthermore, this sense of the other as a form of benefit, was also strong in the student leaders focus group discussion (August 15, 2002):

There are two benefits: personal gain and gain, if you like, for the whole concept of others – the compassion, the understanding for others, the ability to converse with others and support them when they're in need and understand their point of view so you don't just take your approach.

Question four on the student survey questionnaire invited students to indicate the enjoyable / positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12. Seven statements were offered. Figure 5.10 illustrates how the students from SKC ranked the "enjoyable / positive factor" of each statement. Five of the statements rated over fifty percent, the
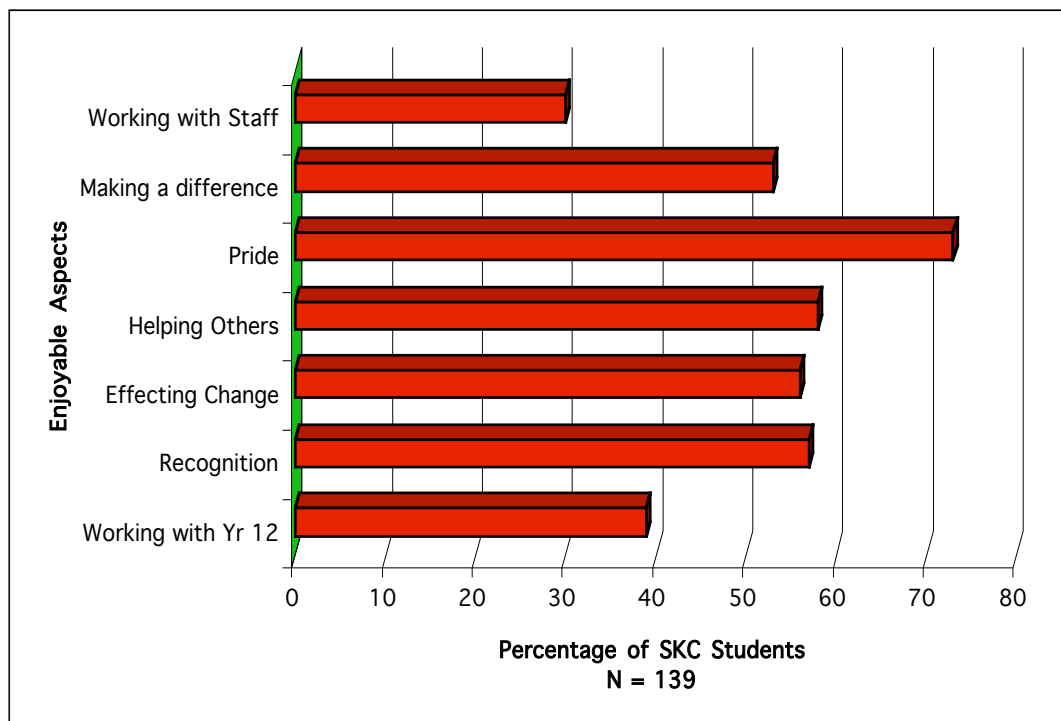

Figure 5.10. Student Perceptions: enjoyable / positive aspects of leadership at SKC

highest being "having a sense of pride in yourself" (73%). The other four were: "having a sense of recognition", "being able to effect change", "helping other students", and "making a difference in the school".

5.7.5 Concerns

Four concerns associated with senior leadership emerged from the data. These were: the commitment in time, the impact of peer pressure, setting an example "all the time", and the potential isolation of elected leaders.

Students recognized that leadership demanded time and that it was important to "balance leadership commitments with academic and sport commitments". Comments referred to "keeping up with the workload alongside leadership", "trying to juggle leadership activities with schoolwork", and "having the skill to allocate time to all commitments".

Peer pressure appeared a definite test for some senior students. One student wrote of the difficulty of "standing up to your mates when they are doing something wrong". Another student remarked on the challenge of "exerting authority in a friendly manner yet making sure all is carried out". Another senior student noted that what "you may do will not be appreciated by everyone". He observed: "Students can be very critical of leaders". Other statements referred to "making hard decisions for the better of the school", "making the right decision when there's pressure involved", and "getting the respect of your peers who may feel a bit angry at the fact that you're a leader if they are not". Such sentiments were also reflected in the student leaders focus group interview. One student leader stated: "I didn't think leadership would be as hard as it has been this year; I have found it quite challenging"; another student leader remarked: "Leadership takes a lot of guts to do it well. It involves doing what your position requires you to do".

Furthermore, a number of senior students highlighted the pressure associated with having to behave responsibly "100% of the time".   As one student noted, being a senior leader meant, "becoming public property – always having to exemplify the ideals of the College". Students commented on not doing "anything wrong yourself", "being a leader every minute of the day", "acting maturely on all occasions", and "being in the public eye – if I make one step out of line I know about it for weeks".

Discussion within the Year 12 focus group interview (August 20, 2002) also raised the point that "we don't really see what they (Prefects and Officers) do". It was remarked, "the only way to find out was to be friends with a mate who is an elected leader". Students believed there was a "need to open the doors a bit more to the public".   In this respect these students felt that the elected leaders "are sort of isolated from us", "we don't know what's going on", "we might feel a sense of closeness and be able to help more if we knew".

5.8 Comparisons

5.8.1 School Understanding and Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership at SKC

Various connections exist between the school understanding of senior student leadership (key informant staff interview, document search) and how senior students at the College perceive Year 12 leadership (survey questionnaire, focus group interviews). Role modelling by senior students, the positive influence of senior students on younger students, and a belief in leadership as service, were seen from the school perspective as key facets of a student leader. Similarly, many students indicated the notion of service, along with involvement with younger students, as important elements of their

leadership. Moreover, sixty percent of students surveyed (84 students) indicated that they personally exercised leadership by being a role model (Figure 5.8). Other links centred on the way students are prepared for leadership and student benefits associated with leadership involvement. Table 5.6 summarises and contrasts school understanding of senior student leadership with student perceptions of senior student leadership.

5.8.2 Leadership of Elected Leaders and of Students not elected to Formal Office

Three comparisons can be made between the leadership of Year 12 students elected to the Student Leadership Team, and that of senior students not elected to this position. These comparisons centre on role, preparation, and mentoring.

Firstly, the leadership role of senior students who are not Prefects or Officers consists primarily in being a role model for younger students and participating in school sponsored activities (key informant staff interview, Year 12 non-elected leaders focus group interview). Elected leaders also do these things, as well as specific duties associated with their position, such as class visitation and public transport supervision (key informant staff member). Moreover, leadership participation is high with 91% of all students surveyed believing they exercised some form of leadership at the College.

Secondly, elected Year 12 student leaders are specifically prepared for their responsibilities via a three-day leadership camp (key informant staff interview). In contrast, 19% of senior students surveyed believed that the school ran activities to prepare all Year 12 students to lead (Figure 5.3). This preparation would seem to mainly of lectures "to the whole Year 12 body about roles and responsibilities", usually by the Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster.

Table 5.6

School Understanding and Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership – SKC:

Summary and Contrast

School Understanding of Senior Student Leadership	Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership

1. Role
• Correct example – role modelling
• Commitment to duties
• Leadership at College functions
• Influence on younger students
	1. Role
	• Duty
	  - Role model
	  - Supervision of younger students
	  - Upholding the reputation of the school
	• Service
	• Working with younger students
	• Personal skills

2. Style (Part A)
• Notion of service
• Courage in the face of injustice / adversity
• Leadership has a cost in
  - Time
  - Energy
  - Emotion
  - It is for the service of others
	2. Opportunity
	• 81% - all should have the chance to lead
	  - Oldest and wisest
	  - Greater leadership base
	  - ersonal benefits
	• 91% believed they exercised leadership
	  - Being a Year 12 student (91%)
	  - Representing the school (73%)
	  - Being a role model (60%)

3. Preparation
• 3-day camp for Prefects and Officers
• Opportunities in earlier years
• Example provided by senior students
 	
4. Mentoring
• Headmaster meets with Prefects / Officers
• Appraisal of Prefects / Officers
• Mentoring of general body of Year 12 students   seen as the responsibility of House Heads
	3. Support
	• Preparation
	  - 3-day camp for Prefects and Officers
	  - Opportunities in earlier years, e.g. OAP leaders course in Year 10
	  - Encouraged by senior staff
	  - Recognition through Year 12 apparel
	  - Opportunities to lead

5. Benefits • Personal growth • Outreach to the wider community • "For the rest of their lives"	**4. Benefits** • Preparation for the future • Personal development • Fostering of relational skills • A sense of pride in self (73%) • Satisfaction in helping others (58%)
2. Style (Part B) – Concerns • Leadership has a cost in time, energy, emotion • That students do take up their responsibility as leaders	**5. Concerns** • Commitment in time • Impact of peer pressure • Setting an example "all the time" • Possible isolation of elected leaders

Thirdly, the Headmaster at SKC meets with the College Captain and two Deputy Captains every week, the Prefect body every week, and the Prefect and Officer body every second week (key informant staff interview). Elected student leaders judged they received good support from senior staff (focus group interview). Students in the Year 12 focus group (non-elected students) also believed that "staff were very supportive". However, only a small number of students (16%) overall believed that the school provided a staff member to work with the general body of senior students in leadership activities (Figure 5.9).

5.9 Case Study Three: Guilford Young College Hobart Campus (GYC) – School Understanding

5.6.1 Theme One: Role

Senior student leadership at Guilford Young College centres on involvement and participation (*Handbook,* 2002). The main ways students can exercise this commitment is through being elected to the Student Leadership Team, participating in student led committees, or being a tutor representative (*Guilford Young College*, 2002; Key informant staff interview).

Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002), the key informant staff member, indicated that there are sixteen Year 12 leaders elected at the Hobart Campus with a minimum of six from any one gender. He noted that during the leadership camp held at the end of the year, these sixteen students elect two from their number, a boy and girl, to be the Campus Leaders. Mr Darcy explained that GYC does not have College Captains. Rather, because the school exists on two campuses, GYC elects "Campus Leaders – a boy and a girl" at each location.

At the Hobart Campus of GYC the Student Leadership Team has two main roles.   Firstly, each student leader is appointed to be a liaison person with two tutor groups on the campus.   This involves student leaders attending these tutor groups regularly to receive ideas and to communicate initiatives (*Guilford Young College,* 2002).

Secondly, members of the Student Leadership Team are expected to support the student committees. In the 2001 College Magazine, *Lux Nostra*, Clifford (2001), the student coordinator, remarked: "The Student Leadership Team …was intent on encouraging leadership amongst the wider school community through the development of Student Committees" (p. 32). She noted that the Student Leadership Team and the Committees "worked together to provide as much voice and entertainment for the students as possible" (p. 32). Clifford also commented on the fact that 2001 was "the first time an executive was formed to run each committee" and this "proved to be a great success" (p. 32). An executive usually includes an elected President, a Vice-president and a member of the Student Leadership Team – all students in Year 12. Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002) explained that the student leader's role in the executive was a supportive one: "The ideal is that no student leader is President …we're trying to be collegial, and so the student leader is a representative of the Student Leadership Team on the committee".

All students at GYC are invited to membership of the committees. The exact number of committees can vary from year to year according to the plans of the leaders. In 2002 committees at the Hobart Campus include: Amnesty, Big Lunch, Communications, Charities, Health & Environment, Pastoral Care, Sports, St Vincent

de Paul, Supporters, Eddie Rice Camps, and Community Arts (*Guilford Young College*, 2002, p. 5). Committees set their own agenda for operation and meeting structure with each reporting back to the Student Leadership Team via an elected student leader who is a member of the committee. The initiatives of the committees are ratified by the Student Leadership Team and, if necessary, approved by the Dean. This link is illustrated in Figure 5.11. During the final term in Tasmania, the committee members elect a new president from amongst the Year 11 students, ensuring continuity into the following year. Each committee also invites a staff member to join the committee. The College acknowledges active committee membership as "a striking way to demonstrate commitment and contribution to the College and a generosity to society as a whole" (*Guilford Young College*, 2002, p. 3).
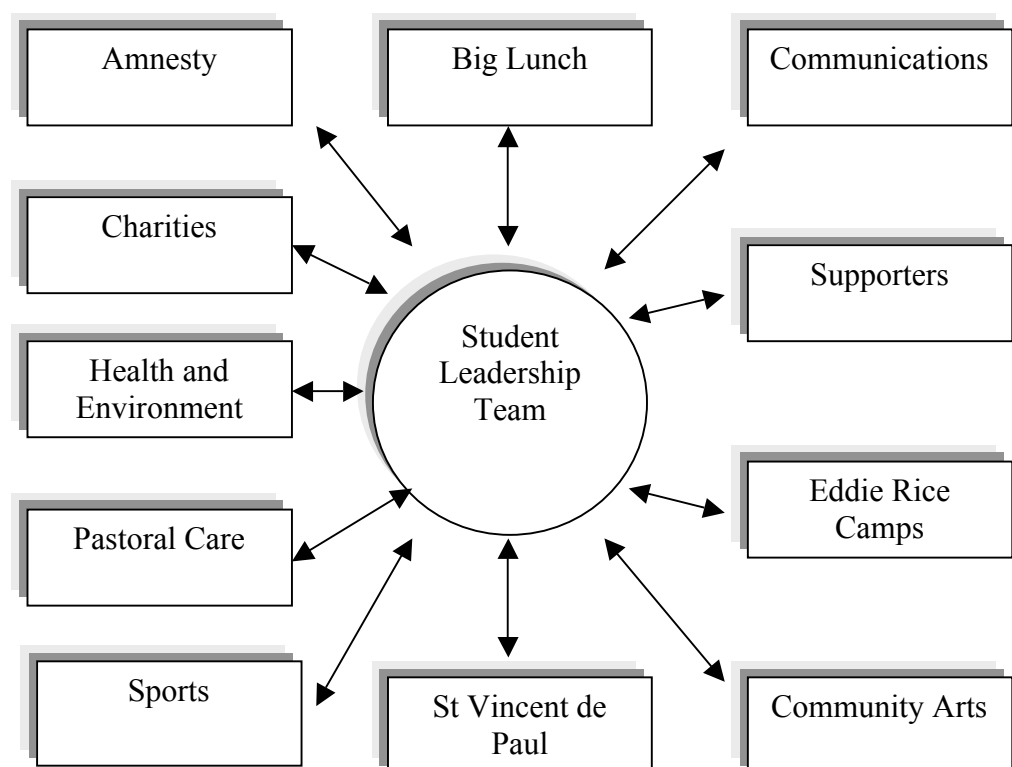
Figure 5.11. Student committees at GYC in 2002

Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002) also highlighted the importance of a Year 12 student appointed to the position of tutor representative in each tutor group: "The idea of each tutor rep is that you pick someone who is a trustworthy, reliable Year 12". He described this Year 12 student as "a bit of a motivator, they know the environment, so they can be an information person for the Year 11s". Mr Darcy saw one of the key roles of the tutor representative as "running some of the common time tutor activities". He also noted that this position "widens the leadership base".

5.6.2 Style

There are five factors underlying the philosophy of student leadership at GYC. These are:

- A desire to move away from the 'elitist' dimension of the Prefect model.
- Recognition of the fact that GYC only has senior secondary students and that therefore, leaders will be operating with their peers and need to provide leadership from 'within'.
- The collaborative model of leadership and ministry is seen as integral to the mission of a Catholic school.
- A wish to maximise the leadership opportunities at the College and to overcome the change where, had the six network colleges all continued to Year 12, there would have been 'prefect' or 'student leader' opportunities for perhaps 70-80 students.
- A strategy to give Year 11 students the opportunity to effectively move themselves into a position of leadership and service before facing student leader elections for Year 12. (Guilford Young College, 2002, p. 1)

These five factors shape a style of student leadership at GYC that is servant orientated (Mohr, 2001, p. 1), advances the idea of elected student leaders as "first among equals" (Mr Darcy, key informant staff interview), and encourages wide involvement in student leadership through the committee system (*Guilford Young College*, 2002). Mohr (2001), Dean of the Hobart Campus, identified people like Mother Theresa or Ghandi as "perfect examples of what is required" (p. 6) of leaders at

GYC. He stressed that these were people who exemplified "total service to others" (p. 6). Mohr pointed out that the overall intent of leadership "is to empower others and increase participation in the life of the community in order to create a better community for all" (p. 4). He noted that, at GYC, 'the proper exercise of leadership will seek to eliminate institutional injustice and barriers to student involvement, and will at times challenge excesses if it is not to the good of all" (p. 4). In the key informant interview, Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002) described the elected student leaders as "role models", who not only organised but also empowered the people around them, to organise:

> A lot of great things happen around the place that aren't from student leaders: fundraising committees, sport committees, the big lunch committee, karaoke, band playing, and all these sorts of things. But you can't say that the student leaders don't do anything. They're making sure that all this happens …as a team.

It is the goal of the committee system at GYC to allow "wider involvement in leadership" (*Guilford Young College,* p. 3) by engaging those Year 12 students who have missed out on election to the position of student leader or chose not to seek election, and those Year 11 students willing to be involved in committee membership.

Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002) also noted a few concerns with the student leadership structure at GYC. He commented that at present there was no role description for the student leaders. Furthermore, the Year 11 students tended "to follow on from the Year 12s of their year", and while this was generally a good thing, it could be "a bit limiting". He believed there was also a need to develop a mission statement for the student leaders which linked the leadership theory (style) with practical implications of this philosophy.

5.6.3 Preparation

At GYC the preparation of senior students for leadership occurs in two stages. There is the initial voting procedure. As evidenced by the memo "Timeline for student leadership in 2002" (Mohr, 2001) a Year 11 assembly is held in early August at which time the Dean speaks about the GYC model of leadership. This is followed by discussion in tutor groups. A set of "discussion questions" and notes about servant leadership are provided so that students "will be able to give careful consideration to the type of person they elect" (Mohr, 2001, p. 2). The "discussion questions" are set out below:

- What are some of the difficulties you have noticed this year which student leaders have had to confront?
- What qualities help a leader fulfil this task?
- What is consensus? How do you facilitate consensus decision-making?
- For the good of the College and the majority of students could you support a decision which went against your friends?
- What qualities are needed to do this?
- What do you want from a student leader?
- Give an example of each of the 6 basic elements of a servant leader.
- What are some of the values you expect from your student leaders?
- Why should leaders be the "creators of change"? (Mohr, p. 3)

Nominations follow the discussions. All nominees have an interview with the Dean and the Pastoral Care Coordinator. Elections occur in late September and the student leaders are announced in early October.

The second stage involves specific preparation for the elected leaders. The 2002 elected student leaders from both campuses attended a two-day leadership camp in November 2001. At this camp sessions concentrated on collaborative ministry, community building, the GYC model of student leadership, addressing fears and confidence building, expressing spirituality, working as a team, and a reflection ("Timeline for Student Leadership Camp", 2001). Students then attended a leadership

seminar the following day where the focus was on goals for the coming year, evaluating the year just finished, and the development of meeting skills.

5.6.4 Mentoring

The contact person and mentor for the Student Leadership Team at GYC is the Pastoral Care Coordinator. During the key informant staff interview, Mr Darcy (May 17, 2002) explained that the Pastoral Care Coordinator meets formally with the student leaders every Monday at the lunch break. The agenda for Monday 30 September 2002 was as follows:

1. Prayer – Student

2. Attendance

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

4. Quiz Night

5. Friday – 2003 Student Leaders election

6. Year 12 Assembly this week

7. Ideas for lunchtime – last week of the year

8. Justice Awareness Week – 17-25 October

A student chairs each meeting and a student takes minutes. Mr Darcy noted that student leaders are also free to "drop in for a chat" during other times of the week. He pointed out that, as a mentor, the Pastoral Care Coordinator's responsibilities involved being "a guide, a bit of an ear to bounce things off, a relationship advisor".

Adult support for the committees takes the form of a staff member invited to join a committee by that committee. That person's role is "one of quiet advice rather than leadership" (*Guilford Young College,* 2002, p. 2). The teacher is an adult presence,

tends to overview the committee, and can help the students with meetings skills (Mr Darcy, May 17, 2002).

5.6.5 Benefits

The College administration has discerned five outcomes from the "student committee" leadership model as practised at GYC. Community building has been enhanced through a committee structure that allows students to become actively involved with students who have come from other schools. The College has benefited from the initiatives of the committees in areas as "health, a student newspaper, a tutorial program, improved student facilities, lunchtime activities, social sporting rosters and alternative meals days" (*Guilford Young College*, 2002, p. 3). Leadership development has been promoted, as projects undertaken by a committee require skills of planning, management, negotiation and communication. College spirit has been improved through increased numbers of students actively contributing to the life of the College. Moreover, the committee system has allowed for wider involvement in leadership by interested students who may have missed out on formal positions of leadership (*Guilford Young College*).

5.10 Case Study Three: Guilford Young College – Student Perceptions

5.10.1 Role

Year 12 responses to the student survey questionnaire and the two focus group interviews indicated four main elements, which describe the role of senior student leadership at Guilford Young College (GYC). These elements can be broadly classified as duty, service, personal skills and involvement. As with Catholic Ladies College and St Kevin's College, these four elements are interrelated. One hundred and thirty-seven

students answered the survey questionnaire, with sixteen of these students also taking part in the focus group interviews, eight in each focus group.

Survey Question One examined ways senior students exercise leadership. Students were given twelve statements about student leadership and required to rank each statement from 1 (little importance) to 5 (very important). The following four statements obtained a mean of over 3.50: being a role model for younger students (4.04), representing the needs of other students (3.88), striving to promote community within the school (3.62), and representing the school in the Community (3.61) The first of these statements also recorded a mode of 5 (very important) while the other three registered a mode of 4 (important). Eight of the twelve statements obtained a mean above three, suggesting that Year 12 students at GYC generally saw these activities as significant components of senior student leadership. Table 5.8 presents a statistical summary for each statement within Question One, incorporating mode, mean, and standard deviation.

Student responses to the survey questionnaire as a whole indicated that many senior students at GYC saw duty as a significant element in their role of leadership. When asked what they had to offer their school as a Year 12 leader a common reply was: "a good example" or "a good role model". Examples included: "I strive to be a role model in all the school-based activities that I undertake", " I try to be a good example as a leader for the younger students", and " I try to set an example and to help others". In Question One the idea of "being a role model for younger students" registered the highest mean (4.04), with a mode of "very important" (5). Students at GYC also identified "behaving correctly and dressing properly", promoting "a positive

Table 5.7

Statements about Student Leadership – GYC: Mode, Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mode %	Mean	Standard Deviation
• Being a member of a student group involved in community service	Fairly Important 31%	3.00	1.18
• Being an SRC / College Prefect	Fairly Important 32%	2.55	1.13
• Being a co-curricular captain (e.g. sporting, music, debating)	Some Importance 34%	2.60	1.13
• Representing the needs of other students	Important 40%	3.88	1.03
• Being in a peer support group (or its equivalent) with younger students	Important 27%	3.08	1.27
• Striving to promote community within the school	Important 31%	3.62	1.20
• Being a current Year 12 student	Very Important 29%	3.45	1.34
• Being a College Captain / Deputy Captain	Some Importance 34%	2.51	1.27
• Striving to bring about change in the school	Important 31%	3.40	1.20
• Being a member of any other student committee	Fairly Important 29%	2.97	1.10
• Being a role model for younger students	Very Important 44%	4.04	1.09
• Representing the school in the community (e.g. sport, music, debating)	Important 36%	3.61	1.04

Note. N = 137. SD is a measure of dispersion, with 67% of results between the mean ± one SD.

Mode: 1: Little Importance 2: Some Importance 3: Fairly Important 4: Important 5: Very Important

image of school", "representing the school in the wider community", "wearing the uniform with pride", and "being responsible" as appropriate duties of a Year 12 leader.

The idea of service emerged as an important part of students' understanding of Year 12 leadership. One GYC student wrote: "I am a happy person who is welcoming to all. I have good communication skills and I love organising community events and

building on school spirit". Another Year 12 student remarked, "I try to help people around the school if they are lost or left out". Another student stated: "As an athlete I assist developing athletes by encouraging them to participate in sport. I also help people organise their time appropriately so they don't get bogged down". The ability to "support anyone when needed", offer "friendship", show "concern for the well-being of other students", "listen to other people's troubles", "talk to people if they look upset", "volunteer for button selling days", exemplified various ways senior students at GYC believed they could exercise leadership. A number of students also indicated that "picking up rubbish" voluntarily at school was something they do as a Year 12 leader. Furthermore, students rated the statement "representing the needs of others" in Question One strongly, with a mean of 3.88 and a mode of 4 (important).   A notion of service was also evident in the student leaders' focus group interview (October 2, 2002), where students talked about "contributing to the school". In particular, being of service to their fellow students was important to them: "We provide an option for people to come to if they've got problems. If they don't feel comfortable going to see a teacher, then they can come to us and we can bring it up".

Various senior students at GYC expressed their understanding of leadership in terms of personal skills they had to offer as a Year 12 student. Comments centred on "a good positive attitude", "spirit, guidance, good humour", "help, advice, motivation", "confidence" as a senior student, "pride in the school and school spirit", being "a mature person" with "a sense of humour and good leadership skills", "commitment, enthusiasm", and "the will to make the school a better place". One student observed: "I am a mature, enthusiastic person who contributes a lot if I'm passionate about the cause.

I'm not afraid to speak my mind and I'm not one to shy away from an argument if it's necessary". Another student remarked:

> I have good spirit, perseverance and affability. I believe strongly in things and try not to let myself be beaten by something. But I don't believe in winning at all costs. Sometimes losing is part of the fun.

A third student wrote of her "ability to motivate, organise and set realistic goals and strive to achieve them". She believed she could "work with people with similar ideals towards a common goal".

Student responses also highlighted involvement in various school organisations, in particular the school committees and sporting teams, as another means of exercising leadership at GYC. One senior student wrote:

> Committees are not a compulsory part of being at this school, but a large percentage of the students (including me) are happy to be part of a committee. Sport is also not compulsory, but it is a huge part of this school.

Other students commented similarly: "I am in Amnesty International as vice-president", "the committees I'm in, e.g. St Vincent de Paul", "joined the school newspaper committee", "I felt I wanted to be in a couple of committees to make a difference", "join committees, sporting teams, participate in fundraising for charities and fun activities run by the committees".   One student remarked: "I volunteer on several committees and am president of another – I believe the social well being of a school lies in the capable and enthusiastic personalities within it, so I strive to contribute". Supporting the school "through committing to College sport over state and club commitment", trying to "get people excited about school activities, such as our mixed netball roster", being involved in "peer counselling", debating, and playing netball for the school, were other ways Year 12 students at GYC believed they exercised their leadership.

5.10.2 Opportunity

Eighty-seven percent of Year 12 students surveyed at GYC (119 students) believed that all senior students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in some capacity at their school. Three reasons were advanced: the right as a Year 12 student, as a way of contributing to the school, and as a means of personal development.

Senior students who perceived leadership as a Year 12 privilege identified two main reasons: "all students should have the right to be a leader", and students "should be given the choice". One Year 12 student observed: "everyone deserves a chance to feel they can contribute something and have an impact on the school in some way, whether big or small – leadership does this". Another senior student stated: "I think that because students are in Year 12 they have a senior role in the school. They should all be able to develop leadership through their position as students in Year 12". A third student wrote:

> Everyone should get the opportunity to exercise leadership because it should be an equal opportunity for all. It allows students to show good qualities and by having more leadership opportunities the more good qualities will have a helpful effect on the school. Not everybody would like to be in a leadership role, but it's only fair to give them the opportunity to do so.

Further comments noted: "everybody has equal rights", "all students in Year 12 should at least be encouraged to be a leader", "everyone deserves a go", "everyone should work together", and "if only some have opportunities, it leaves people out".

Year 12 students at GYC also saw senior student leadership as a way of contributing to the school. One senior student referred to leadership as "an active method of promoting the values of the school and helping to make it a better place". It was also observed that the Year 12s "are often the view which society has of a school,

so therefore they play an important role as leaders". Another student believed that students should have the opportunity to lead since "all students, no matter how quiet or shy, can have great ideas for the school, but often they don't voice them". A third Year 12 student noted:

> Every person, whether they are a prefect or not, has gifts and talents. Allowing people to share these talents makes them feel involved and worth something. This contributes to a stronger, healthier community, which, I think, is one of the main factors of leadership. The more talents we have the more chance we have of making a difference.

The positive influence of senior leadership on younger students was mentioned: "As a senior member of the school it is important to give a good example of responsibility to younger students so that they will follow the same principles in future". Furthermore, one Year 12 student wrote: "I think Year 12 students should take on a role of responsibility in contributing to the school community and setting a good example by treating people, and objects, with respect, obeying school rules and behaving appropriately". The importance of representing the school was also raised in the Year 12 focus group interview (October 2, 2002): "Representing the school, that's pushed at a lot in being part of the school community. It's part of the school spirit – there's a real school spirit at GYC".

Students at GYC also argued that leadership experiences formed "an important part of someone's self-development". They noted: "leaders go further in life", "leadership brings out the best in people", "it teaches students responsibility", "builds valuable skills for the workplace", "helps build confidence and self-esteem", and "gives the courage to come out of the shell". One student remarked: "All Year 12s need to exercise leadership otherwise they will be under a rock for the rest of their lives and be afraid to come out". Another student argued that not only is leadership "an important

and worthy life skill", but "we develop this skill in our years at school and Year 12 is the last chance to show this skill amongst 'friends' and in 'safe' conditions".

Question Three on the student survey questionnaire invited senior students to indicate how they personally exercised leadership at their College. Twelve statements were provided. Eight-eight percent of GYC senior students surveyed (120 students) indicated that being a current Year 12 student was one way they exercised leadership; nine percent (thirteen students) also commented "I do not believe I exercise leadership". Figure 5.12 illustrates how Year 12 students at GYC saw their own leadership experience.
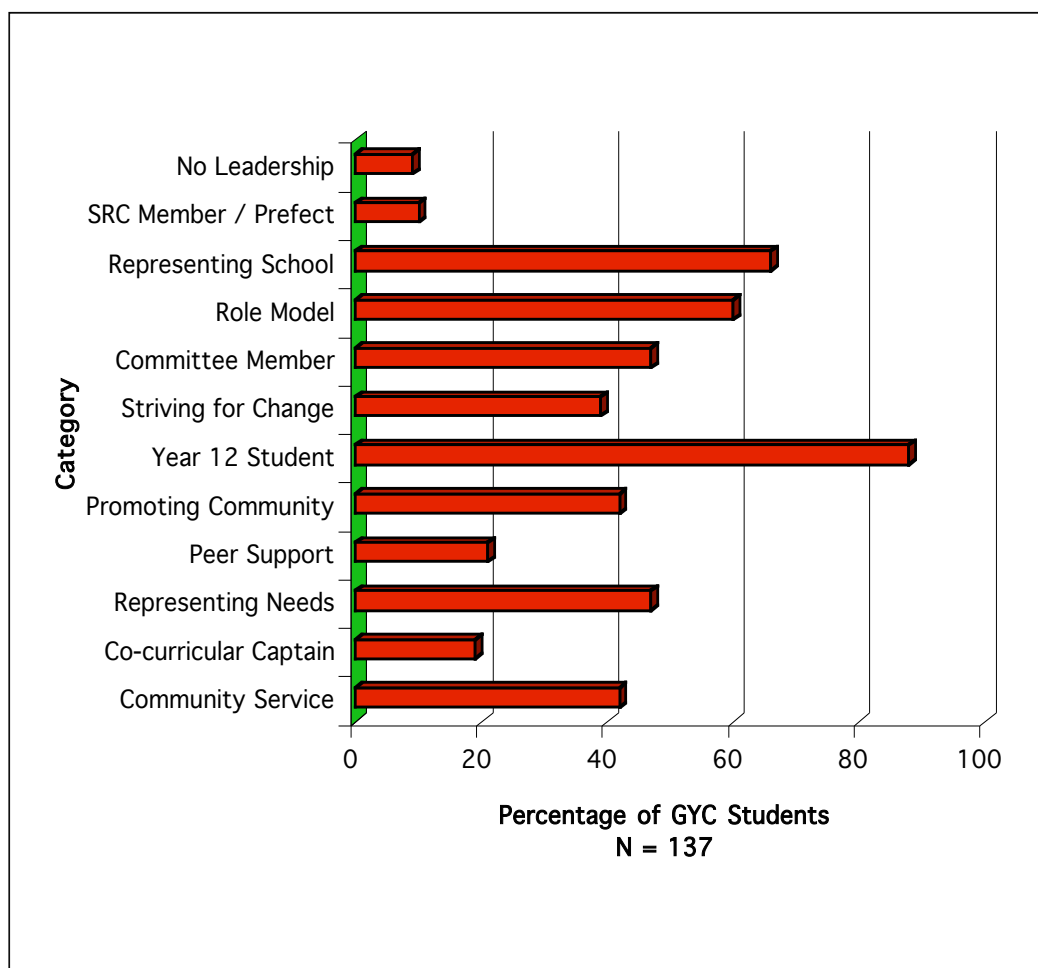

Figure 5.12. Ways senior students at GYC personally exercise leadership.

5.10.3 Support

Responses to the survey questionnaire indicated four key ways students believed they are prepared at GYC for senior leadership. The elected student leaders attend a training camp where 'they are taken through a series of leadership workshops". The general body of Year 12 students are encouraged "by staff and higher authorities" through "lectures on responsibility", "guest speakers", "meetings with staff", and "being treated as adults". In addition it was noted that watching and working with the previous Year 12 students, and then taking on their roles was a valuable means of training to be a senior leader. As one student wrote: "I think the quality and capacity of Year 12 leaders is something that comes to you through being a Year 11 and seeing what Year 12s are all about". Students also pointed to Year 11 involvement in the various school committees and sporting teams as a valuable and practical opportunity to prepare for senior leadership. For instance, it was noted in the Year 12 student focus group interview (October 2, 2002) that working in committees meant, "you meet more people", "branch out" and "you're involved".

Students at GYC indicated one other avenue of leadership preparation – through leadership opportunities prior to attending GYC. In particular, student responses highlighted leadership experiences in Year 10: "Being a Year 10 peer support leader and captaining several sporting teams has helped me learn how to lead and assist others"; "In my previous high school we were always represented as the leaders of the school in Year 10, and had a lot of opportunities in leading groups of younger students at various activities." GYC has no direct control over this method of preparing students for senior leadership. However, it is of note, given the strength of student belief in its

value, and the fact that staff at GYC are aware of its impact ("Guilford Young College", 2002)

Question Five on the student survey questionnaire asked students how Year 12 leadership is encouraged at the school. Students were given eight statements and could nominate any or all of the statements. Figure 5.13 indicates the degree to which those GYC senior students surveyed believed each statement was pertinent to the way the College presently promoting senior leadership. Organising activities to prepare elected Year 12 students to lead, recognition through exclusive Year 12 apparel, the school providing leadership opportunities for its senior students, and the school trusting Year 12 students in their leadership, appeared the most relevant methods.
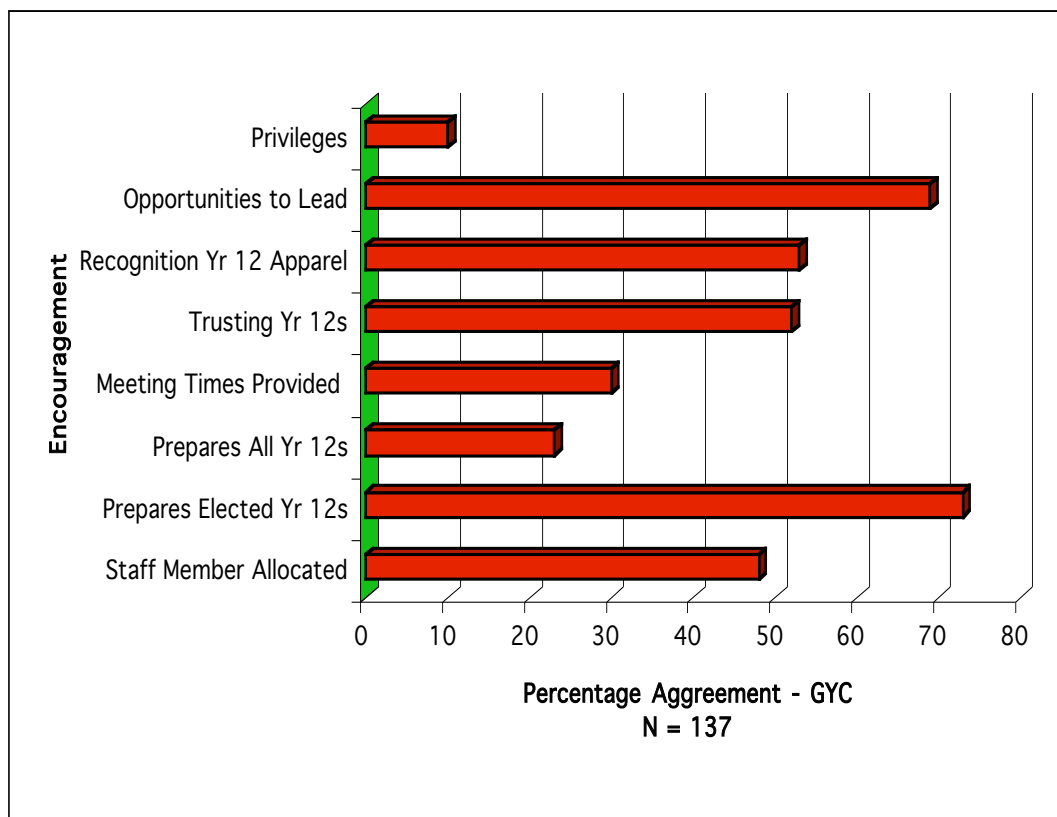

Figure 5.13. Ways senior student leadership is encouraged at GYC

5.10.4 Benefits

Senior students at GYC identified four main benefits associated with involvement in leadership activities: preparation for their future, personal development, improved relational skills, and the opportunity to help others.

A number of students saw the benefits of leadership in terms of "developing skills for the future" and making "it easier to get a job and do well in life". One student wrote that leadership "prepares you for work, as the responsibilities you have as a leader are similar to the responsibilities you have at work". Another student commented: " As I want to join the police force I feel that I will value my leadership skills greatly since I will need to exercise leadership in the community and know how to act appropriately in certain situation". A third student wrote that leadership promotes "confidence, tolerance, and patience, all good qualities that are going to assist me later in life". There were references to leadership helping "you in whatever path you take after school", of being "beneficial to my CV", and enhancing "confidence when leaving school".

There was a strong response amongst students at GYC that leadership opportunities enhanced personal development. In particular, students highlighted such issues as "boosting confidence", "recognition", "a sense of pride", "learning new skills", "growth", "satisfaction" "self-worth", "respect", "feeling positive about yourself" and "allowing us to mature in preparation for adulthood". One student wrote of leadership as "benefiting my personal development and growth at another level not taught at in the school". Another senior student remarked: "Being a leader gives me a

strong sense of self and it feels good to attempt to exercise leadership". A third Year 12 student stated:

> My sense of responsibility and the need for commitment has improved. This has reflected into my relationships with peers and other people around me – family, teachers. These experiences have matured me further into an adult.

Another student commented: "Leadership has shown me more of myself than I would have thought and sometimes more than I would have liked, and continues to reach me". Similarly, another student observed that leadership "is a chance for all to excel in what they may do best or to find better qualities and abilities about yourself that you never knew you had before".

Students at GYC also pointed to improved people skills as a direct benefit of being a leader in Year 12. Comments focused on the "enjoyment" of "being part of a social group", learning "to accept others", better skills "with dealing with people", getting "to know staff members and students better", "working with people", "listening to others", "relating to people better", and being "a more effective team member". One senior student observed: "I am better at dealing with people – both one-to-one, and in large groups. I am more confident presenting to a large group of people". Another student remarked that leadership had "made me able to deal with people better, helped me to delegate responsibility, and gave me the opportunity to speak". Yet another student wrote: "I have learnt now to step back and look at how I have been acting in reference to other people's views. More often than not I find I've overstepped the boundaries".

The opportunity to 'help others" was also seen by students at GYC as a benefit to be derived from being a Year 12 leader. It was noted that such an opportunity "gives

you a feeling of self-satisfaction, the feeling that you are able to help others and your school community". Other comments centred on "feeling good about helping others", "the satisfaction that I've made someone feel good about themselves", being able "to help people back on the right track if they need it", "made me more considerate of others", "showing people that I care", and "it's always good to help and encourage others". One student remarked that leadership had "turned me away from being self-centred, instead realising that other people need help and guidance, and perhaps I can help". Another student observed:

> Leadership is not just about designated leaders being labelled school captain, school leader, or committee leader. Everyone has a chance in Year 12 to lead their peers into a better and happier situation, whether the impact be big or little.

Question four on the student survey questionnaire invited students to indicate the enjoyable / positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12. Seven statements were offered. Figure 5.14 illustrates how the students from GYC ranked the "enjoyable /
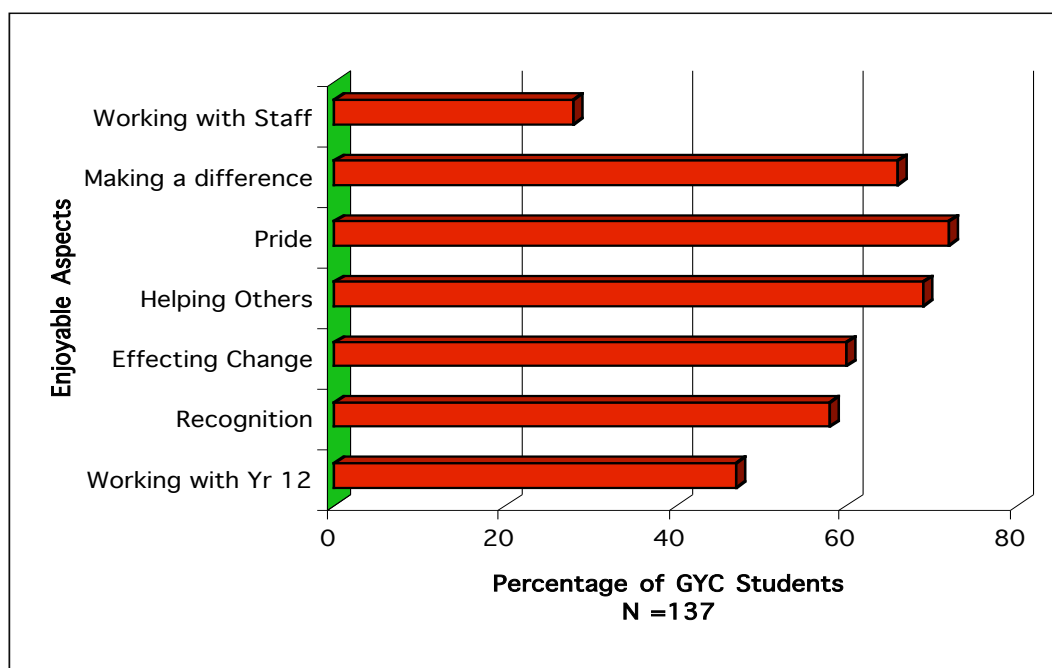
Figure 5.14. Student Perceptions: enjoyable / positive aspects of leadership at GYC

positive factor" of each statement. Five of the statements rated over fifty percent, the highest being: "having a sense of pride in yourself" (72%). The other four were: being recognised as a leader, being able to effect change, helping other students, and making a difference in the school.

5.10.5 Concerns

Senior students at GYC identified four "challenges of being a leader in Year 12". They raised a concern linked with "being responsible at all times". Comments included "a lot of pressure being the role model", "constantly expected to be on our best behaviour and set examples for other students", and "the pressure to uphold an image and "be the face of the school". Students also commented on the challenge of "balancing leadership activities with regular schoolwork". One student noted: "The added responsibilities and the heavier workload make things difficult". Another student warned: "Don't get involved with more responsibility than you can handle – you still have to tackle schoolwork". Another student commented: "It's not easy; don't expect to get all the good things: rewards, recognition, time off school without the bad: stress, pressure, burn out".

A third concern related to certain students' misgivings over what they saw as the "popularity contest" aspect of election to formal office. One senior student noted: "Being a leader is about honesty and commitment, not some popularity contest". Another student remarked: "Some people abuse leadership, it's more a popularity contest on who can be a leader of particular things". A third Year 12 student suggested: "Leadership should be spread out more equally – the loud and / or popular people always get their way". Another senior student wrote: "I wish we'd all get the

opportunity to run something instead of a 'leader' prefect heading it all. They <u>always</u> do, even if they obviously can't do it and the non-leader can". Other comments on leadership noted: "It's overrated, one-sided and rates only for the popular students regardless of their ability to complete a task", "sometimes leadership can be very elitist and the school is over run by people who are elected to lead students", "don't allow all the popular and 'pretty' people gain all the leadership positions", and "leaders are not supposed to walk around thinking that they are better than others, making others feel inadequate". Moreover, one student commented in the Year 12 focus group interview (October 2, 2002): "If you don't have the smarts or you're not fit and play sport, then they don't recognise you. You're just another fish in the sea".

The final concern focused around student perceptions of how effective the elected student leaders were. In the Year 12 focus group interview (October 2, 2002) one student stated of the elected leaders:

> Leadership does happen, but only like one or two of them. Some of them don't do anything. Like the head boy and girl just hold the assemblies, and that's all we really see and hear them do.

Another student observed, "all the student leaders are friends and they sit in the same group and don't do anything". A third student commented: "Maybe the leaders do a lot that we don't see but it makes us think that they don't do anything". This issue was also raised in the elected student leaders focus group interview (October 2, 2002). One of the student leaders remarked: "A lot of students come up to me and say, 'you leaders really haven't done much'". The response of the elected leaders to this was that other students "don't see behind the scenes", "they don't come to our meetings and see how much work we do", they "don't realise we sometimes hit a roadblock and we can't go any further". The student leaders also believed that many students "don't want to get

involved in the organising process" but were "quick to criticise after an event has happened, rather than before when they had a chance to contribute". One student leader raised the issue of the leaver's top as a case in point. She commented that there was much discussion, most of it critical, "after we got them made". One consequence of such situations was a feeling of frustration and isolation.

5.11 Comparisons

5.11.1 School Understanding with Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership at GYC

Various links exist between the school understanding of senior student leadership (key informant staff interview, document search) and how senior students at GYC perceive Year 12 leadership (survey questionnaire, focus group interviews). From the school perspective, role modeling by senior students, participation in student led committees, and the idea of leadership as servant oriented, were seen as key elements of student leadership. Similarly, many students highlighted the notion of service, and being a role model, as important aspects of their leadership. Moreover, sixty percent of students surveyed (82 students) indicated that they personally exercised leadership by being a role model (Figure 5.11). Other points of association between school and senior student understanding of Year 12 leadership centred on how elected senior students were prepared for leadership along with benefits associated with leadership involvement. Table 5. 8 summarises and contrasts school understanding of senior student leadership with student perceptions of senior student leadership.

Table 5.8

School Understanding and Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership – GYC:

Summary and Contrast

School Understanding of Senior Student Leadership	Student Self-Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership

1. Role
• Student Leadership Team
  - Liaise with tutor group
  - Support Student Committee
• Participation in student led committees
• Tutor Representative
	1. Role
	• Duty
	  - Role Model
	  - Being Responsible
	  - Positive image of the school
	• Service
	• Personal Skills
	• Involvement – committees

2. Style
• Servant Oriented
• Role Model
• Empowerment and Involvement
	2. Opportunity
	• 87% - Yes
	  - Right of a Yr 12 student
	  - Give back to the school
	  - Personal Development
	• 88% - exercise leadership
	  - Yr 12 student (88%)
	  - Represent school (66%)
	  - Role model (60%)

3. Preparation
• All Students
  - Voting procedure for elected leaders
• Elected Leaders
  - 2-day leaders camp
  - 1-day seminar
 	
4. Mentoring
• Elected student leaders
  - Pastoral Care Coordinator
• Committees
  -    Staff Member
	3. Support
	• Preparation
	  - Leaders camp
	  - Encouraged by staff
	  - School Committees
	  - Observe previous Yr 12 students
	  - Opportunities to lead
	  - Leadership prior to GYC

5. Benefits
• Community Building
• Committees
  - Initiatives
  - Leadership Development
  - College Spirit
  - Wider Involvement
	4. Benefits
	• Preparation for the future
	• Personal Development
	• Improved relational skills
	• Opportunity to help others
	• A sense of pride in self (72%)
	• Satisfaction in helping others (69%)

2. Style - Concerns • Practical implications of school ethos • No role description for student leaders • Need to build a mission statement • Yr 12 modeling of leadership	**5. Concerns** • Being responsible all the time • Balancing commitments • "Popularity contest" • Isolation of elected students

5.11.2 Leadership of Elected Leaders and of Students not elected to Formal Office

Three comparisons can be made between the leadership of Year 12 students elected to the Student Leadership Team, and that of senior students not elected to this position. These comparisons centre on role, preparation, and mentoring.

Firstly, the leadership role of senior students not elected to the Student Leadership Team consists of being a role model, a possible appointment as a tutor representative, and participation in student lead committees. Committee involvement can be either as president, or vice-president, or as a committee member. Students on the Leadership Team are also expected to be role models. Furthermore, there is the requirement that each elected leader be a liaison person for the Student Leadership Team and a student committee of their choice. Leadership participation is high, with 88% of all students surveyed indicating that they exercised some form of leadership at GYC. However, there is evidence to suggest some disagreement amongst the students as to how effectively the elected student leaders carry out their role.

Secondly, students elected to the Student Leadership Team are specifically prepared for their leadership via a two-day leadership camp and a one-day seminar (key informant staff interview). In contrast, 23% of students surveyed believed that the school ran activities to prepare all Year 12 students to lead (Figure 5.12). This preparation would appear to consist mainly of involvement in "the election of student leaders" (Mohr, 2001; Student survey questionnaire).

Thirdly, the Pastoral Care Coordinator meets with the Student Leadership Team every week (key informant staff interview). Elsewhere within the school, each Student

Committee has a staff member who provides "quiet advice" ("Guilford Young College", 2002, p. 2), and tutor representatives work with tutor teachers (key informant staff interview). In Question Five of the Student Survey Questionnaire nearly 50% of students surveyed (Figure 5.12) believed that GYC allocates a staff member to work with Year 12 students in leadership activities.

5.12 Cross-Case Analysis

Nine issues, which are common across all three case study schools, emerge from this research into student perceptions of Year 12 student leadership:

1. Leadership involves duty

2. Leadership involves service

3. Leadership should be available to all Year 12 students

4. Elected student leaders receive school support

5. Leadership helps in preparing for the future

` 6. Leadership aids in personal development

7. Leadership cultivates and improves relational skills

8. Leadership fosters a sense of pride in oneself

9. Leadership generates pressure

Various students from each of the three schools saw part of their leadership role as an exercise in duty. In particular, students focused on the need to act responsibly, set a good example and be a role model. The notion of service also featured prominently as a key component in the role of a senior student leader. There was a clear understanding from student responses across all three schools that leadership required a person to be other-centred, and many students noted that they actively helped and supported other

people as part of their leadership. Students from all three schools (62% at CLC; 58 % at SKC; 69% at GYC) also acknowledged the sense of satisfaction in helping others as an enjoyable element of their leadership.

There was also a strong belief amongst the majority of senior students surveyed in the three schools (89% at CLC; 81% at SKC; 87% at GYC) that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise school leadership in some capacity. Two common reasons were advanced. Firstly, Year 12 students believed that, as they were the oldest and wisest, it was their right and privilege. Secondly, students highlighted various personal and relational benefits associated with leadership involvement. Furthermore, a high proportion of students surveyed (93% at CLC; 91% at SKC; 88% at GYC), indicated that they believe that they exercise leadership in their school.

Student responses from the three schools also indicated that elected student leaders received school support. This support took the form of preparation via a leadership camp, staff assistance during the year, and the provision of opportunities to lead. This type of support was not as readily available for other Year 12 students. In addition, students from all three schools indicated the value of leadership opportunities in previous years as an important source of preparation for leadership in Year 12.

There was a common understanding from students at all three schools regarding the types of benefit associated with leadership participation. For instance, students believed that leadership opportunities at school helped prepare people for the future, usually by developing skills useful for the workplace. There was a strong conviction that leadership opportunities enhanced personal development in such ways as boosting

confidence and self-esteem, promoting maturity, and helping people realise their potential as a leader. Students also noted that leadership experiences were important for improving relational skills, primarily through the opportunity of working with other people on leadership tasks. In addition, when students were asked to nominate the most enjoyable and positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12, experiencing a sense of pride in oneself emerged as the highest category in each school (CLC – 68%; SKC – 73%; GYC – 72%).

Students in the three case study schools also indicated that increased pressure was a concern of senior student leadership. Two main forms of pressure were indicated. The first centred on effectively balancing commitments, in particular leadership responsibilities, with schoolwork. The second related to the pressure of being a role model and setting an example "all the time".

In addition to the nine issues listed above, four further considerations surfaced which featured links across two of the three case study schools:

1. Year 12 leadership involves greater interaction with younger students

2. Leadership involves representing your school in the community

3. Student leadership can be a popularity contest

4. Student leaders can become isolated from their peers

Year 12 students at CLC and SKC saw greater involvement with younger students as a worthwhile and valuable way of exercising leadership. There was special reference at both schools to developing relationships with the younger students, interacting with them and giving advice. The very young drew especial attention. Year

7 was singled out by the Year 12 students at CLC via their "buddy" system, while the student leaders at SKC engaged in regular class visitation from Preparatory to Year 8. The Year 12 students at GYC would not have this opportunity.

Representing one's school in the wider community featured as one way senior students at SKC (73% of students surveyed) and GYC (66% of students surveyed) believed they were able to exercise leadership.

There was a concern evident at both CLC and GYC that some students perceived senior student leadership to be little more than a popularity vote and that only the "pretty" people were elected. However, as one student at CLC pointed out, it is important to identify the reasons why a person might be popular. Students at SKC and GYC also raised the issue that elected student leaders can become isolated from their peers. There was evidence, voiced in the non-elected at SKC and GYC, of a failure to appreciate that student leaders were striving to fulfil their mandate and personal commitments. Coupled with this was an apparent lack of structure or process for elected leaders to inform the rest of the student body of the "road-blocks" they met, and of their personal struggles as they faced their need to be just a Year 12 student and their duty to do the appropriate thing and face unpopularity, even criticism. One consequence of such isolation was a belief by some students that elected leaders were ineffective and "don't do anything". Table 5.9 details student perceptions regarding senior student leadership at all three schools.

Table 5. 9

Student Perceptions of Senior Student Leadership: CLC, SKC, GYC

Catholic Ladies' College	St Kevin's College	Guilford Young College
Role	**Role**	**Role**
• Duty	• Duty	• Duty
- Responsible	- Role model	- Role model
- Pride in the school	- Supervision of students	- Being responsible
- Setting a good example	- Reputation of school	- Positive image of school
• Service	• Service	• Service
• Position and Experience	• Personal skills	• Personal skills
• Younger student interaction	• Younger student interaction	• Involvement - committees
Opportunity	**Opportunity**	**Opportunity**
• 89% - Yes	• 81% - Yes	• 87% - Yes
- Right of a Yr 12 student	- Oldest and wisest	- Right of a Yr 12 student
- Give back to the school	- Greater leadership base	- Give back to the school
- Personal benefits	- Personal benefits	- Personal development
• 93% exercise leadership	• 91% exercise leadership	• 88% exercise leadership
- Yr 12 student (93%)	- Yr 12 student (91%)	- Yr 12 student (88%)
- Role model (61%)	- Represent school (73%)	- Represent school (66%)
	- Role model (60%)	- Role model (60%)
Support	**Support**	**Support**
• Preparation	• Preparation	• Preparation
- Past leadership	- 3-day Leaders camp	- Leaders camp
- Support from staff	- Past leadership	- Encouraged by staff
- Recognition	- Encouraged by senior staff	- School committees
- Opportunities to lead	- Recognition	- Observe previous Yr12s
- Yr 12 privileges	- Opportunities to lead	- Opportunities to lead
		- Leadership prior GYC
Benefits	**Benefits**	**Benefits**
• Preparation for the future	• Preparation for the future	• Preparation for the future
• Personal development	• Personal development	• Personal development
• Improved people skills	• Fostering of relational skills	• Improved relational skills
• A sense of Pride (68%)	• Satisfaction in helping others	• Opportunity to help others
• Helping others (62%)	• A sense of Pride (73%)	• A sense of Pride (72%)
	• Helping others (58%)	• Helping others (69%)
Concerns	**Concerns**	**Concerns**
• Pressure of responsibility	• Impact of peer pressure	•Being responsible all the time
• Balancing commitments	• Commitment in time	• Balancing commitments
• Expectations as a role model	• Setting example all the time	• Pressure as a role model
• Motives for 'the badge'	• Isolation of elected leaders	• "Popularity contest"
• Student-teacher relationship		• Isolation of elected leaders

5.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, individual case analysis of the three targeted schools was used to present the initial findings of the research. This was followed by a cross-case analysis in which specific issues associated with Year 12 student leadership were highlighted and discussed. These issues, together with the theory and research outlined in Chapter 3, provided the basis to answer the research questions, to make concluding remarks, and to consider some implications for the profession in Chapter 6.

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CHAPTER 6

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Purpose of the Research

As stated in chapter 5 the purpose of the study was to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from the three targeted schools in order to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body. Underpinning this purpose is the notion that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in their school setting, not only for the benefits and learnings students can gain from such leadership, but also for that which the students can contribute to their school community.

6.2 Design of the Research

The methodological structure underlying this research was collective case study. The "snapshot" (Rose, 1991, p. 194) case studies of three Catholic secondary colleges, Catholic Ladies College, Eltham, St Kevin's College, Toorak, and Guilford Young College, Hobart, were researched in order to better understand the phenomenon of senior student leadership.

Data collection methods used in each of the three case study schools included:

a) a document search focusing on senior student leadership;

b) an interview with a key informant staff member;

c) a survey questionnaire to all Year 12 students about student leadership issues;

d) two focus group interviews with up to nine Year 12 students in each group.

In each of the three case study schools the key informant interview took place with a teacher purposely selected because of that person's work and connection with Year 12 students in leadership. This interview, along with the relevant document search, provided the background information about each school's understanding of senior student leadership. Student experiences and self-perceptions of leadership were educed by a student survey questionnaire and two focus group interviews. The student survey questionnaire was "group administered" (Austin & Crowell, 1984, p. 229) to Year 12 students at the three schools both for convenience and to maximise response rate. The Year 12 student focus group interviews were based on "homogeneous samples" (Patton, 1990, p. 173). That is, one focus group comprised elected student leaders, while the other contained students not elected to formal office. All students who participated in the focus groups were volunteers.

Data analysis involved applying a "general analytic strategy" (Yin, 1994, p. 102) based on the theoretical propositions leading to the study. These propositions are that all Year 12 students are called to some form of leadership within a school and schools should strive to build a leadership culture inclusive of all their Year 12 students. The propositions, in turn, reflect a set of research questions (Figure 4.1). A process of "layering themes" (Creswell, 2002, p. 273) was then applied to enhance sophistication and complexity. This method employs the idea of major and minor themes in that themes are organised into layers from basic elementary themes to more sophisticated ones (Creswell, 2002). Data involving school understanding of senior student leadership were subjected to a four-layer analysis (Figure 4.2). Similarly, a four-tier system of theme layering was used with data on student self-perceptions and experiences of leadership (Figure 4.3).

6.3 Research Questions Answered

The research question was threefold: What are the school experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students in each of the three schools about the role, and purpose, of senior student leadership? How do these experiences and self-perceptions compare with the understandings of senior student leadership as expressed by the respective schools? What are the implications for developing an appreciation of Year 12 student leadership, which encourage every senior student to be a leader?

In the light of the review of the literature the research question was divided into a series of sub questions:

1. What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?

2. What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership and how is this understanding articulated?

3. How are Year 12 students prepared, supported, and encouraged to exercise leadership?

4. What are Year 12 students called to do in their role as leaders?

5. What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?

6. What are the concerns of Year 12 students, and of their schools, about the involvement of Year 12 students in leadership?

7. How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to participate in and to exercise leadership?

Given these seven questions, symbolic interactionism proved to be an appropriate theoretical perspective to underscore this research. Methodologically, symbolic interactionism directs researchers to take, to the best of their ability, the standpoint of those studied (Crotty, 1998). The purpose of the study was to review the leadership experiences and self-perceptions of all Year 12 students from the three targeted schools in order to highlight ways leadership might be better promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body. Question 1 asked for student opinions about Year 12 student leadership, while Questions 3,4,5,6 and 7, incorporated student attitudes. Moreover, Crotty suggested that an interaction is symbolic because it occurs by means of "symbolic symbols" (p. 75) such as language. The Year 12 focus group interviews, as well as the survey questionnaire, enabled senior students to express their perceptions, feelings and attitudes about Year 12 leadership. Similarly, a symbolic interactionist approach provided the researcher with a means of appreciating the school understanding of Year 12 leadership as indicated specifically in Question 2, and also reflected in Questions 3,4,5,6 and 7.

Each of these seven questions is now addressed in relation to the three case study schools: Catholic Ladies College, Eltham (CLC), St Kevin's College, Toorak (SKC), and Guilford Young College, Hobart (GYC).

6.3.1 What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?

There was a firm belief amongst Year 12 students from the three case study schools that senior student leadership entailed duty. Students believed they exercised duty by being a role model, setting a good example, and acting responsibly according to their principles. Duty also involved promoting a positive image of the school, taking

pride in one's school, and enhancing the school's reputation. At one school senior students saw duty in terms of the supervision of younger students.

The idea of service emerged in all three schools as an important facet of students' understanding of Year 12 leadership.   Helping and supporting others, making others happy, providing compassion and care, were all ways students believed they served as leaders in their school. Students also saw giving time to extra-curricular activities, supporting sports teams and helping out in tutor groups as valuable ways of exercising their leadership. There was a strong sense amongst students of the Christian notion that leadership is "for others, not yourself". Voluntarily picking up rubbish and keeping the common room clean were also advanced by senior students as ways they might serve as leaders.

Year 12 students at CLC and SKC highlighted greater involvement with younger students as a worthwhile method of exercising leadership.   Involvement took the form of talking with the younger students, providing advice or as formal interaction such as class visitation. The overall aim was to make the younger students feel welcome and comfortable. At GYC, where the only younger students were Year 11 students, Year 12 responses tended to highlight involvement in school organisations, in particular school committees and sporting teams, as a means of exercising leadership.

There was a strong sense amongst senior students from the three schools that every Year 12 student should have the opportunity to be involved in leadership. Three main reasons were given. Firstly, it was seen as the right of Year 12 students since they were the "oldest and wisest" in the school. Secondly, it was a way for Year 12 students

to give something back to the school. Thirdly, students identified various advantages associated with leadership activities, in particular, personal benefits such as increased self-esteem, confidence, and maturity.

6.3.2 What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership?

School understanding of senior student leadership focused predominantly on students elected to formal leadership positions. Both CLC and SKC have detailed written role descriptions for their student leaders that outline specific duties, both with respect to the school and for the student body. At GYC, one result of the key informant staff interview was the drafting of a thirteen-point role description for the 2003 student leaders. Schools also acknowledged that leadership made demands on students, that leadership had a cost in terms of energy and time, and that leadership may not always be visible and hence not always appreciated. The general body of Year 12 students was expected to exercise leadership through involvement in school activities and by acting as role models.

6.3.3 How are Year 12 students prepared, supported, and encouraged to exercise leadership?

Elected student leaders at all three case study schools were specifically prepared for their leadership role. In the case of SKC and GYC this preparation involved a school-based overnight camp in November. SKC makes extensive use of previous College leaders in the running of their program, while GYC draws upon the expertise of the school staff. CLC, on the other hand, sends its College Captain and Vice Captain on a leadership weekend in February with student leaders from other Victorian Catholic schools. The other senior student leaders at CLC participated in a leadership day in March. At present, within the case study schools there appears little organised

leadership preparation for Year 12 students not elected to formal office. In addition, students at all three schools saw past leadership experiences in earlier years as a valuable preparation for leadership in Year 12.

In each case study school, elected student leaders were supported through a mentor system involving members of staff. At CLC the Year 12 Coordinator works with the Student Representative Council (Figure 5.1), while another teacher takes responsibility for the Student Executive Council (Figure 5.2). The Headmaster meets each week with the College Captain and two Deputy Captains at SKC, and attends the Prefects and Officers meetings (Figure 5.7). At GYC the Pastoral Care Coordinator is responsible for the elected student leaders while interested staff attend the various student run committees (Figure 5.11). No formal mentoring system appeared to operate for the general body of Year 12 students in the case study schools.

Senior students from all three schools felt encouraged in their leadership by having opportunities to lead and via recognition through distinctive Year 12 apparel.

6.3.4 What are Year 12 students called to do in their role as leaders?

At each of the three case study schools Year 12 students are called to exercise their leadership role in a spirit of service. For instance, all students at CLC are encouraged to use their talents "for the benefit of not just themselves but the whole community" (*Leadership Handbook,* 2002, p. 3). Moreover, among the suggested qualities needed by those willing to take up leadership positions are: developing the habit of always doing more than is required, having a willingness to share, and being generous to others with time and possessions (*Leadership Handbook*).

A notion of service to the school community, along with the idea of courage in the face of injustice and adversity, form the key elements which underpin the school philosophy of leadership at SKC, and which dictate the style of leadership expected of senior students. Commenting in the College periodical (*Omnia,* 2001) on senior student leadership, the Headmaster, Br Wilding (2001), stated: "The leadership that the college asks for is one that requires integrity and good values. It has its cost in time, energy and emotion. Essentially, it is for the service of others" (p. 1). In similar manner, Dean of the Hobart Campus at GYC, Mr Mohr (2001), identified people like Mother Theresa and Ghandi as "perfect examples of what is required" (p. 6) of student leaders. He stressed that these were people who exemplified "total service to others" (p. 6). Mohr (2001) pointed out that the overall intent of leadership "is to empower others and increase participation in the life of the community in order to create a better community for all" (p. 4).

A specific notion of service as part of leadership was evident in responses by Year 12 students from all three schools. Moreover, the students' sense of duty within leadership (CLC, SKC, GYC), their willingness to be role models (CLC, SKC, GYC), their involvement with younger students (CLC, SKC), or participation in student run committees (GYC), their preparedness to represent the school (SKC, GYC), and their desire to give something back to the school (CLC, GYC), all underscore an understanding of leadership which is service oriented. Such an approach highlights the broader notion of service which comes down to a primary view of the worth of a person, and sit squarely with the fundamental philosophies of leadership as articulated by each of the case study schools.

6.3.5 What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?

The schools indicated a sense of involvement and fulfilment (CLC), personal growth and outreach to the community (SKC), and community building (GYC) as the chief advantages of senior student involvement in leadership. The Year 12 students in the case study schools produced a more comprehensive list. They identified three benefits, common to each school, which they believed stemmed from involvement in leadership activities. These were: personal development and growth through leadership opportunities; preparation for the future through skill development and experience; and the fostering of interpersonal skills such as increased tolerance, the ability to listen, a greater awareness of people's feelings, and the capacity to work as a team member. Furthermore, students singled out "having a sense of pride in yourself" as the most enjoyable and positive factor of senior student leadership (CLC – 68%, SKC – 73%, GYC – 72%). Students also identified the opportunity and the satisfaction of helping others as important benefits of student leadership.

6.3.6 What are the concerns, of Year 12 students, and of their schools, about the involvement of Year 12 students in leadership?

Students at all three schools identified concerns associated with their role as leaders, in particular the stress of taking on added responsibility, the need to balance leadership commitments with schoolwork, and the constant pressure of being a role model and exercising leadership "all the time". Similar concerns were raised by the schools (Key informant staff interviews), specifically, the danger of students becoming over-committed, the need for students to deal with the demands of schoolwork and leadership, and the requirement of students to meet their responsibilities as leaders. In two of the case study schools students highlighted the risk of elected student leaders

becoming isolated from their peers. This isolation appeared to be the result of a lack of any formal means by which elected student leaders might inform their peers of projects they were undertaking, or of challenges and roadblocks they faced as leaders. Students also mentioned some misgiving about the motives of some who aspired to elected leadership positions. In particular there was the concern that elections were little more than the result of popularity contests in which the loud or popular people got their way.

6.3.7 How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to participate in leadership?

One way to provide all Year 12 students with opportunities to participate in leadership is for a school to develop and maintain a philosophy of student leadership that (a) distinguishes different levels of leadership participation at the senior level, (b) invites and encourages all Year 12 students to commit to at least one level of that leadership, and (c) publicly acknowledges senior student leadership throughout the school community. Such a philosophy recognises the inclusive, invitational nature of senior student leadership along with the need for a school to actively and continually support that leadership.

For instance, in the three case study schools the first and the most recognisable level of senior student leadership involved those students elected to formal office – Year 12 students of the Student Representative Council and Student Executive Council (CLC), College Captain, College Deputy Captains, Prefects and Officers (SKC), and the Student Leaders (GYC). Then there were Year 12 students who held leadership positions in various student committees, senior sporting teams, co-curricular activities, or who acted as homeroom / tutor representatives. Thirdly, there was the general body of Year 12 students. These students were either invited to exercise leadership, or

believed they did exercise leadership (a) as role models, (b) as active participants in student committees, sporting teams, and other school activities, (c) as people with a responsibility to younger students, and (d) who, as a year level, were seen as the public face of the school to the wider community. It is these students who wear distinctive Year 12 apparel as part of their College uniform, who access certain privileges by virtue of their status as senior students, who experience a sense of pride in their leadership and also bring a special responsibility to their school community.

6.4 Conclusions

Hopefully, this research has made some contribution to scholarly debate on student leadership. Particular findings in this study, for instance, replicate previous research on student leadership. A notion of leadership as service was prevalent in each of the three case study schools' understanding of leadership, and this understanding found strong expression in the leadership style and actions of the Year 12 students. All three case study schools are Catholic and service is a key facet of the vision of leadership within Catholic schools (McLaughlin, 1997; Jolley, 1997, Grace, 1996). Within the literature on student leadership there is a strong emphasis on student leadership being centred on service and ministry (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Hawkes, 1999; Moore, 1999; Moen, 1997; Willmett, 1997; East, 1994). The research also indicated that each of the three schools provides training for their elected senior student leaders, although not for the general body of Year 12 students, and assigns teaching staff to work with student leaders. Literature on student leadership has stressed the value of leadership training for students (Chapman & Aspin, 2001, Mardon, 1999; Goldman & Newman, 1998) along with the importance of providing an adult mentor (Gray, 2002; Moen, 1997, Gordon, 1994; Hart, 1992) to work with these students.

The research highlighted a number of benefits relating to senior student involvement in leadership. One such benefit, articulated by year 12 students from all three schools, was the idea that leadership participation enhanced personal development through increased confidence and self-esteem. This finding has links with the literature where researchers such as Gordon (1994) and Lavery (1999) have also noted similar effects on student leaders. Carey (1994) commented that students involved in leadership activities can have their lives enriched, and Appleton (2002) observed the positive feelings that students can experience when involved in leadership activities.

Some concerns and challenges associated with student leadership were identified in the research. One concern, raised by senior students in two of the case study schools, was that student leaders could become isolated from their fellow students. This is a concern also prevalent in the literature. Carey (1994), for instance, wrote of the danger that student leaders, because they are unsure of, or unable to enact, their role as leaders, may become "ostracised by their peers" (p. 16). Similarly, Willmett (1997) highlighted concerns that the leadership process did not "disempower students at a young age by setting them apart" (p. 28). The major concern raised in the research focused on isolation, as a direct result of poor channels of communication.

The research also offers scholarship certain findings that do not appear to be readily addressed in the literature. In particular this inquiry presents a notion of Year 12 student leadership which extends beyond the election of certain students to formal positions of responsibility. A significant proportion of senior students surveyed in the three case study schools (CLC – 89%; SKC – 81%; GYC – 87%) believed that all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to lead. An even larger proportion of senior

students (CLC – 93%; SKC – 91%; GYC – 88%) believed they actually exercised leadership. The principal means by which these senior students perceived that they exercised this leadership was by adopting a positive image of their school, acting as role models, setting good examples, interacting with younger students, and by representing their school in the wider community. These Year 12 students were able to list a range of benefits associated with such involvement: preparation for the future, improved relational skills, a sense of pride, a sense of recognition, and a variety of individual benefits associated with personal growth. In addition, students identified concerns and difficulties connected with senior student leadership, notably the need to balance commitments, and the pressure of being role models.

Such factors form a compelling argument for considering the possibility of inclusive senior student leadership. Not only did many senior students in the three case study schools believe they were able to exercise leadership in a positive and worthwhile manner, they also showed a willingness and an enthusiasm to do so. A spirit of service appeared to underpin their leadership. While students judged they received a range of benefits because of their involvement in leadership activities, many students also saw leadership as a way of giving something back to the school. Furthermore, a considerable number of these Year 12 students perceived they exercised leadership without any formal school training (CLC – 80%; SKC – 81%; GYC – 77%).

This research then, suggests a number of ways in which to actively involve all Year 12 students in leadership activities:

(a) affirming the role of senior students elected to formal office and acknowledging that this role may vary somewhat from school to school.

(b) recognising the importance of Year 12 students holding leadership positions on committees, sporting teams and other co-curricular activities.

(c) promoting the membership of various committees, sporting teams and other co-curricular activities to all Year 12 students.

(d) encouraging senior students to be role models for younger students.

(e) acknowledging the importance and place of the Year 12 homeroom or tutor representative.

(f) realising students can exercise leadership by representing the school in the wider community, particularly as the public face of the college.

(g) appreciating that senior leadership involves exercising responsibility to younger students, as well as caring for one's peers.

Linked to these issues is the need for schools to actively build a culture of Year 12 leadership. It is recommended that the entire Year 12 body be publicly acknowledged as leaders within the school community and that their general leadership responsibilities are visibly recognised. All Year 12 students will require some form of leadership training – not just the elected leaders. Such training could involve activities on a Year 12 orientation / leadership day where the elected student leaders act as peer "teachers". A follow-up time during the year is strongly recommended. In addition, the general body of Year 12 students will need to be mentored in leadership. This will necessitate particular teaching staff such as level co-ordinators, house heads, homeroom teachers, and tutor teachers supporting Year 12 students in very practical ways. This may well require that these staff receive specific training in ways to empower students. To effectively build a culture of leadership at senior student level, schools need to allocate appropriate personnel and financial resources.

It is also essential that the leadership, which schools require of their senior students, is meaningful to the students and of value to the school community. A high proportion of students surveyed in the three case study schools (CLC – 93%; SKC – 91%; GYC – 88%) believed they were exercising leadership. Such high proportions might well suggest that the leadership the schools expected of their senior students did have meaning for the Year 12 students, and was seen as valuable within the school communities. The leadership principles exercised by the Year 12 students were firmly embedded in a spirit of service. Moreover, each of the schools involved in this research is Catholic. A notion of service in leadership is congruent, both with the underlying principles of Catholic school leadership (McLaughlin, 1997; Jolley, 1997; Grace, 1996), and also with the principles of Christian leadership (Neidhart, 1998; Treston, 1994; Whitehead & Whitehead, 1993; Edwards, 1987).

In addition, the research suggests it is important that Year 12 students are recognised as senior students, and hence identified as designated leaders. A common means of effecting such distinction is through exclusive Year 12 apparel. An additional advantage of senior students wearing exclusive apparel is that it encourages the Year 12 body to develop a corporate sense of identity, and hence, a corporate sense of leadership. This research also indicates that there may be value in Year 12 students accessing certain privileges by virtue of the fact that they are the senior class and have responsibilities as senior leaders of the school. Such actions and support may contribute to Year 12 students developing a sense of pride in themselves and in their school.

The notion of inclusive senior student leadership, moreover, has the capacity to address concerns associated with vision, transformational leadership, and shared values

which, as mentioned in the literature review (Duignan & Bhindi, 1998; McLaughlin, 1997; Burn, 1997, Jolley, 1997; Carey, 1991) lie at the heart of schools' culture and impact upon the very nature of young people's involvement in leadership. Senior student responses to the survey questionnaire (CLC – 89%; SKC – 81%; GYC – 87%) suggest that a significant majority of Year 12 students in the case study schools would be supportive of a vision of inclusive Year 12 leadership, although not without reservations. These reservations concentrate primarily on an understanding that such leadership needs to be invitational, that is, senior students have the right to choose. And secondly, a belief held by some students that not every Year 12 student is suited to leadership. However, a vision of senior student leadership which encourages various levels of participation might deal with these two issues. Senior students would then be able to choose their level of leadership involvement, either as candidates for an elected position, through involvement in committees, work groups and sporting teams, as models for younger students, as senior student representatives of the school, or as non-leaders.

There is potential for inclusive Year 12 leadership to be transformational – at least in the three schools involved in this study. The school understanding of senior student leadership in these three schools was that of service. The manner in which Year 12 students tended to exercise that leadership was based on "leadership is for others". In addition, there was the relational component of the students' practice of leadership (involvement in committees, interaction with younger students, development of relational skills, mentoring by staff). Yet, transformational leadership goes beyond even this. As Tuohy (1999) explained, "transformation discovers power through people. The transformational leader empowers others" (p. 174). Thus followers find

new meaning and new purpose in themselves. And it is this new power which enables people "to transcend the ordinary routines of work and achieve extraordinary results" (Tuohy, 1999, p. 174). In such a way, Beare, Caldwell, and Millikan (1997) argued that transformational leadership "is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents" (p. 28). Inclusive senior student leadership is a way for schools to empower their Year 12 students and invite them to be transformational in their leadership with their peers, with the younger students of the school, and perhaps with members of staff.

Finally, there is a capacity for value sharing within a vision of leadership that incorporates all Year 12 students. Wright (1999) stressed that leadership is "fundamentally about nurturing a better quality of humanity" (p. 26). Hawkes (1999) pointed out that the task of school leadership is "to bring about within the school community a desire to know the good, desire the good, and do the good" (p. 24). Senior student leadership in the three case study schools certainly appeared to reflect this kind of outlook. Moreover, inclusive Year 12 leadership which has, as its basis, the need to bring about the good of humanity, will require senior students to share values congruent with such an enterprise. Such values might well include those which Sofield and Kuhn (1995) present in their model for Christian leaders: compassion, integrity, ability to listen, being straight-forward, authenticity, being responsive, empowerment, being inclusive, forgiveness, and being generative.

6.5 Implications for the Profession

This research into inclusive Year 12 student leadership has recommendations for the following individuals and groups:

(a) the teaching profession, in particular, principals, teachers and universities;

(b) governing bodies, such as government education authorities and Catholic and other system authorities;

(c) parents and employers

(d) other researchers

To principals, who wish to engender a more inclusive culture of senior student leadership within their schools, this research suggests possible ways such a culture can be built and nurtured. In particular, the research indicates that the principal has a definite function in any development of this leadership which involves proclaiming a vision of student leadership within the school community, appointing good people as mentors, and personally working with the College leaders. Principals, who take a positive interest in senior student leadership, send a powerful message about its place and importance to the College community.

The study has relevance for teachers as it highlights their key role in preparing, supporting and encouraging Year 12 students in leadership. As each Year 12 group begins its final year, a unique set of persons confronts the school. Allowing for some "osmosis" of leadership values, it is wise for any school to accept that a new situation challenges the staff. In this regard, teachers working with senior students need to be aware of their opportunity to encourage leadership in all students. A viable culture of inclusive Year 12 student leadership requires both teacher support and expertise to prosper. If there is to be a natural climate of leadership in Year 12 then it is important that leadership experiences occur in younger age groups. Teachers need to introduce

students at the younger levels to leadership, and positively encourage students to embrace opportunities that occur.

The research also has implications for the tertiary sector. Universities have a responsibility for teacher formation, and part of a university's curriculum in teacher education may need to focus on ways teachers can actively prepare and encourage students to participate in leadership. Moreover, preparing teachers for such a role reflects a broader concept of educational leadership, one which acknowledges the leadership capabilities of teachers and their role in "articulating a positive future for students" (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002, p. 4). That is, teaching is a profession for leaders who are fired by the aim of renewing society through the living out of the ideals actively taught to the young. This concept of teacher as a leader – one who inspires and challenges youth to have clear goals to aim at – requires its genesis during teacher formation at university, if not earlier.

Furthermore, given the positive factors associated with inclusive senior student leadership, and the potential student leadership has in promoting social responsibility, community leadership, active citizenship, and service leadership (Chapman & Aspin, 2001), the research has relevance for policy making and governing bodies, such as governments, and system authorities such as Catholic Education Offices. Not only might governments and system authorities perceive value in promoting leadership in young people, they also have the power of the taxpayer's dollar to support such initiatives. The Student Action Teams Program, set up in Victoria during 1998 as a collaboration between the Victorian Government's Department of Justice and the Department of Education, is a case in point.

The research is also potentially significant for parents and employers. Parents may well be interested in their children accessing advantages associated with leadership activities and are in a unique position to encourage their children to become actively involved in what ever leadership opportunities schools offer. Employers, on the other hand, are beneficiaries of such leadership programs. Students at all three case study schools indicated that they believed leadership opportunities in Year 12 were of value for later employment.

In addition the study has implications for other researchers interested in developing student leadership in Australian schools. For instance, this present study was carried out in three Catholic schools. To broaden results further research could be initiated in different education systems. Moreover, while this study involved a boys' school, a girls' school and a coeducational school, supplementary research could focus on just one of these forms of education. Not only would this be a worthwhile replication study, this approach also has the potential to consider gender issues associated with student leadership. There would also be value in conducting a single case study aimed at exploring student leadership throughout an entire school. Such a study could well examine those school activities in earlier years that influence and define student leadership at the senior level. Furthermore, there is the possibility of follow-up studies exploring how student leadership experiences at Year 12 can affect and shape a person in later life. Moreover, it would be valuable to investigate if, and to what degree, young people perceive leadership experiences at school as meaningful ways to express their autonomy and maturity. Fuller (2002) has observed that many in the present generation "use risk taking, delinquency, aggression and academic failure" (p. 1) to achieve this. Nor would researchers be restricted to the same epistemological

approach or data collection techniques. What is important is to extend the boundaries of our understanding of this valuable facet of student development and learning.

Finally, the study has implications for me as researcher. If this study has left me with one thing it is a lasting impression of Year 12 students at Catholic Ladies College, St Kevin's College, and Guilford Young College, who essentially believe that senior student leadership involves being other-centred, who recognise important benefits associated with leadership experiences, who are conscious that leadership is not easy, and who consider that they do try to exercise some form of leadership. What has excited and refreshed me in this undertaking is the friendliness, honesty, openness, cooperation and hope of the students. It has been a pleasure to listen to the young people during focus group interviews, to watch them interact with each other at this time, and to learn from their insights. I have also enjoyed exploring the student survey questionnaires, not only for the ideas put forward, but also for the candid way these ideas were expressed. It is evident that if one asks young people what they believe about an issue, especially an issue that affects them, they are not hesitant in stating their considered opinions.

Considering the responses by students I find myself asking, firstly, why we would not want to give all senior students training in leadership, and secondly, why we would not then invite them to exercise leadership in their schools? I believe these questions are relevant in Australia today with the present environmental issues, fear of terrorism, threats of war, and concerns about immigration. Australia needs leaders who are transformational, collaborative, and have a vision and exercise values attuned to the Gospel of Jesus. We need leaders imbued with a philosophy of education proposed by

Vatican II that emphasises the dignity of each person irrespective of "race, condition or age" (Declaration on Christian Education, par 1), views the role of the school as developing "right judgement", "cultural heritage", "a sense of values", and preparation "for professional life" (Declaration on Christian Education, par 5), and stresses the "principle of subsidiarity" (Declaration on Christian Education, par 3) so essential to any model of inclusive student leadership. Schools do not have sole responsibility for grooming the leaders of tomorrow – but they are in a unique position to make a major contribution to the way young people understand and practise leadership.   Aristotle once remarked:

> People become virtuous by performing virtuous acts, they become kind
> by doing kind acts, they become brave by doing brave acts (As cited in
> Hawkes, 1999, p. 24)

For our young people to be leaders for tomorrow, they need the opportunity to perform leadership acts today. They also require the guidance which institutions such as schools can so readily provide.

6.6 Addendum

The research has already made some impact. As a result of the study at St Kevin's College, the headmaster has moved to promote the idea of a more inclusive Year 12 student leadership for 2003. When the College Captain and two Deputy Captains addressed the topic of senior student leadership at the Year 11 assembly prior to student voting (17 October, 2002), the headmaster instructed that the opening theme be the place of shared Year 12 leadership at the College. Next he conducted a "Think Tank" (16 November, 2002) involving prefects, officers and other Year 12 students from the class of 2002, the aim being to reflect on how senior student leadership "could be structured better for 2003 and beyond". The initial question posed for discussion

was: "How do we better involve all Year 12s in the leadership of the College?" Recommendations from this meeting included: House Committee positions left open to Year 12 students not in elected leadership positions; Year 12 students to run tutor periods; Open House Forums for Year 12 students; sporting reports opened to the wider Year 12 community; a greater system of awards created for Year 12 students (*Minutes*, "Think Tank" Meeting, 2002). The above recommendations then formed part of the agenda during the Prefect / Officer Leadership Camp (1-3 December, 2002).

6.7 What about us?

As mentioned in the Introduction, the principal motivation behind this inquiry was the occasion in 1997 when I was jarred out of my complacency and smugness by the words: "That was great what you did for the leaders, but what about us?" Often since then, when I have worked with young people in leadership I have thought of that student and her question. Exploring the understandings and self-perceptions of Year 12 students from Catholic Ladies' College, St Kevin's College, and Guilford Young College has been a liberating experience. It has enabled me to glimpse the innate leadership potential in many young people, not just the elected leaders, to record their willingness to exercise leadership in schools, and to note the other-centred way they go about doing this. In addition, it has helped me realise that those of us who work in schools have an important role in the building of a culture of leadership with, and for, senior students, by providing them with opportunities to lead, through encouraging them to lead, and by way of offering support when it is needed.

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Appendix A

Case Study Protocols

Case Study Protocol – Question reframing in the field

Research Question – Part A

What are the school experiences and self-perceptions of Year 12 students in each of the three schools about the role, and the purpose, of senior student leadership?

Research Questions

1. **What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?**

   Student Survey Questionnaire

   Q1. How significant do you believe the following are for exercising senior student leadership?

   Q6. How else might all Year 12 students be encouraged in leadership?

   Q10 What are the key reasons for your involvement in leadership this year at your school?

   Q16. What one thing would you tell the Year 12 students of next year regarding student leadership in Year 12?

   Focus Group Interview

   Q1. What does Year 12 leadership mean at your school?

2. **What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership?**

3. **How are Year 12 students prepared for and encouraged to exercise leadership?**

<u>Student Survey Questionnaire</u>

Q8. In what ways have students been prepared for leadership in Year 12?

Q12 Have leadership opportunities in previous years at school prepared you for leadership in Year 12? (Please explain)

<u>Focus Group Interview</u>

Q4. How have you been supported in your leadership? Improved?

4. **What are Year 12 students called to do as leaders?**

<u>Student Survey Questionnaire</u>

Q3. In what way(s) do <u>you personally</u> exercise leadership as a student at your school?

Q11 What additional things do you do as a Year 12 leader that you are not asked to do?

<u>Focus Group Interview</u>

Q2. How do you exercise leadership at your school?

5. **What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?**

<u>Student Survey Questionnaire</u>

Q4. What are the enjoyable / positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12?

Q13 What benefits for yourself do you see in being a Year 12 leader?

Q14 In what ways has your role as a student leader in Year 12 changed you as a person? (Please list both positive and negative aspects where appropriate)

Q15. Do you feel the changes mentioned in Q14 have better prepared you for

your future? (Please explain)

Focus Group Interview

Q5. What do you believe students gain from their leadership experiences?

6. **What are the concerns associated with Year 12 student involvement in leadership?**

Student Survey Questionnaire

Q7.   What are the challenges of being a leader in Year 12?

Q16. What one thing would you tell the Year 12 students of next year regarding

student leadership in Year 12?

Q17. Are there any other comments you would like to make about Year 12

leadership at your school?

Focus Group Interview

Q6. What are the challenges (downside) of senior student leadership?

7. **How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to participate in and to exercise leadership?**

Student Survey Questionnaire

Q2. Do you believe all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise

leadership in some capacity at your school   YES / NO Why / Why not?

Q5. How is the leadership of Year 12 students encouraged at your school?

Q9. What do you believe you have to offer your school as a Year 12 leader?

Focus Group Interview

Q3. How would you suggest the role of Year 12 leadership could be expanded /

developed / improved at your school?

Case Study Protocol – Question reframing in the field

Research Question – Part B

How do these experiences and self-perceptions compare with the understanding of senior student leadership as expressed by the respective schools?

Research Questions

1. **What do Year 12 students understand by the concept of senior student leadership?**

2. **What do schools understand by the concept of senior student leadership?**

   <u>Key Informant Interview</u>

   Q1. What is your understanding of senior student leadership within your school?

   Q2. What is your interest and involvement with Year 12 student leadership, its

   practice and promotion?

   Q6. What is the purpose of any leadership development program at your school?

   Q7 What Year 12 leadership structure operates in the school?

   <u>Document Search</u>

   School Magazine, Periodicals to Parents, School documentation on student

   leadership.

3. **How are Year 12 students prepared for and encouraged to exercise leadership?**

   <u>Key Informant Interview</u>

   Q3. How does your school promote (prepare, nurture, sustain) leadership in Year

   12 students: (a) Elected student leaders? (b) General body of Year 12

   students?

<u>Document Search</u>

School Periodicals, Minutes of SRC meetings.

4. **What are Year 12 students called to do as leaders?**

<u>Key Informant Interview</u>

Q4. What type of leadership is your school looking for in (a) its elected student

leaders, (b) general body of Year 12 students?

Q5. What evidence do you see of this leadership in (a) the elected student

leaders, (b) general body of Year 12 students?

<u>Document Search</u>

Student Leadership Handbook, Periodicals to Parents.

5. **What are the potential benefits for Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities?**

<u>Key Informant Interview</u>

Q10. What do you see as the potential benefits for the Year 12 students from

being involved in leadership activities or in the leadership structure

currently operating?

Q11 Question based on Document Search.

<u>Document Search</u>

Prospectus, Mission Statement.

6. **What are the concerns associated with Year 12 student involvement in leadership?**

Q9. How does the school evaluate or critique the Year 12 leadership model for

(a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students?

Q8. How do you think the students react to the senior student leadership structure for (a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students within the school and why?

7. How can all Year 12 students be provided with opportunities to participate in and to exercise leadership?

Synthesis of Qs 2, 3, 4, 5.

Data which might fit into various categories:

<u>Key Informant Interview</u>

Q12. Is there anything else you would like to comment about Year 12 student leadership at your school?

Case Study Protocol – Information provided for teachers re Year 12 Student Questionnaire

1. Invite students to be part of the research into Yr 12 student leadership – a leadership that involves all senior students as leaders.

2. Explain exactly what is being asked of students – the filling out of a survey questionnaire in class time. There are no personal details required.

3. Explain student rights: (a) to choose to be involved or not, (b) the survey is totally anonymous. The only person who will read their responses will be the researcher.

4. Involvement of CLC / SKC / GYC students is vital as they are the students who can discuss Year 12 student leadership from the exclusively female / male / coed perspective.

5. Information Letter to students (and parents) – informs students and parents of the aims, purpose and benefits.

6. Consent Form needs to be completed and returned.

7. Parental Form needs to be completed and returned if the student is younger than 18 years of age.

8. Please encourage as many students as possible to take part.   They can make a difference – there is little Australian research into inclusive Yr 12 leadership.

9. Thank you for contributing to this research into a notion of senior student leadership which involves all Year 12 students.

Appendix B

Key Informant Staff Questions

General Introductory Questions

1. What is your understanding of senior student leadership within your school?
2. What is your interest in and involvement with Year 12 student leadership, its practice and promotion?

Specific Questions on Student Leadership at the School

3. How does your school promote (prepare, nurture, sustain) leadership in Year 12 students
   a) Elected student leaders?
   b) General body of Year 12 students?
4. What type of leadership is your school looking for in (a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students?
5. What evidence do you see of this leadership in (a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students?
6. What is the purpose of any leadership development program at your school?
7. What Year 12 leadership structure operates in the school?
8. How do you think the students react to the senior student leadership structure for (a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students within the school and why?
9. How does the school evaluate or critique the Year 12 leadership model for (a) its elected student leaders, (b) the general body of Year 12 students?
10. What do you see as the potential benefits for the Year 12 students from being involved in leadership activities or in the leadership structure currently operating?

Question based on Document Search

11. a) CLC - To educate women to be independent thinkers, leaders in the church and the society of tomorrow. (Philosophy and Aims)
    b) SKC - "We have enjoyed success in creating an environment where loyalty, leadership, individuality and self assurance synthesise to produce young Catholic gentleman of integrity who are able to assume responsible roles in society" (Prospectus)
    c) GYC - "Students and staff strive for a shared leadership which encourages all to use initiative and generosity in their commitment to the College" (Handbook, 2002)
    a) What do you understand by this?
    b) How does this happen?
    c) Is this for all or only some (who?) in your school?

Final open-ended Question

12. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding Year 12 student leadership at your school?

Appendix C

Student Survey Questionnaire

Year 12 Student Questionnaire

The Development of Year 12 Leadership

[Name of School]

The Purpose of the Questionnaire:

To examine ways in which leadership is promoted, developed and nurtured in the entire Year 12 student body.

Instructions

1. Please read the questions carefully.
2. Take your time in answering the questions.
3. Do NOT put your name on this survey.
4. There are no right or wrong answers.
5. Thank you for your involvement.

<u>Scale for Question 1.</u>

Please select and circle for each part of Question 1.

    1 – little importance

    2 – some importance

    3 – fairly important

    4 – important

    5 – very important

1. How significant do you believe the following are for exercising senior student leadership?

    • Being a member of a student group involved in community service   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being an SRC member / College prefect   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being a co-curricular captain (eg. sporting, music, debating)   1 2 3 4 5

    • Representing the needs of other students   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being in a peer support group (or equivalent) with younger students   1 2 3 4 5

    • Striving to promote community within the school   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being a current Year 12 student   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being a College captain / Deputy captain   1 2 3 4 5

    • Striving to bring about change at the school   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being a member of any other student committee   1 2 3 4 5

    • Being a role model for younger students   1 2 3 4 5

    • Representing the school in the community (eg. sport, music debating)1 2 3 4 5

    • Other (please specify)

    _____1 2 3 4 5

    _____1 2 3 4 5

2. Do you believe all Year 12 students should have the opportunity to exercise leadership in some capacity at your school?   **YES / NO** (Please circle)
Why / Why Not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. In what way(s) do <u>you personally</u> exercise leadership as a student at your school? (You may **tick** more than one category)

• Being a member of a student group involved in community service	❑
• Being an SRC member / College prefect	❑
• Being a co-curricular captain (eg. sporting, music, debating)	❑
• Representing the needs of other students	❑
• Being in a peer support group (or its equivalent) with younger students	❑
• Striving to promote community within the school	❑
• Being a current Year 12 student	❑
• Being a College captain / Deputy captain	❑
• Striving to bring about change at the school	❑
• Being a member of any other student committee	❑
• Being a role model for younger students	❑
• Representing the school in the community (eg, sport, music, debating)	❑
• Other (please specify)	❑

_____

OR
• I do not believe I exercise leadership at my school   ❑

4. What are the enjoyable / positive aspects of exercising leadership in Year 12?
      (You may **tick** more than one category)

   • Working with other Year 12 students in leadership activities   ❏

   • Having a sense of recognition   ❏

   • Being able to effect change   ❏

   • Helping other students   ❏

   • Having a sense of pride in yourself   ❏

   • Making a difference in the school   ❏

   • Working with staff on projects and activities   ❏

   • Other (please specify)   ❏

   _____

   _____

5. How is the leadership of Yr 12 students encouraged at your school?
      (You may **tick** more than one category)

   • The school allocates a staff member to work with Year 12 students in

     leadership activities.   ❏

   • The school runs activities to prepare elected Year 12 students to lead.   ❏

   • The school runs activities to prepare all Year 12 students to lead.   ❏

   • Provision of meeting times for Year 12 students.   ❏

   • The school trusts the Year 12s in their leadership.   ❏

   • Recognition through exclusive Year 12 apparel (eg badge, tie, shirt).   ❏

   • The school provides opportunities for its Year 12 students to lead.   ❏

   • Acknowledgment of Year 12 students through privileges. (Specify)   ❏

   _____

   _____

   • Other methods (please specify)   ❏

   _____

   _____

6. How else might all Year 12 students be encouraged in leadership?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What are the challenges of being a leader in Year 12?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. In what ways have students been prepared for leadership in Year 12?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What do you believe you have to offer your school as a Year 12 leader?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What are the key reasons for your involvement in leadership this year at your school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What additional things do you do as a Year 12 leader that you are not asked to do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Have leadership opportunities in previous years at school prepared you for leadership in Year 12? (Please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. What benefits for yourself do you see in being a leader in Year 12?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. In what ways has your role as a leader in Year 12 changed you as a person? (Please list both positive and negative aspects where appropriate.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Do you feel the changes mentioned in Question 14 have better prepared you for your future? (Please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. What one thing would you tell the Year 12 students of next year regarding student leadership in Year 12?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. Are there any other comments you would like to make about Year 12 leadership?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THIS SURVEY

Appendix D

Student Focus Group Interview Questions

ROLE

1. What does Year 12 student leadership mean and involve at your school?

OPPORTUNITY

2. How do you exercise leadership at your school?

3. How would you suggest the role of Year 12 leadership be expanded / developed / improved at your school?

SUPPORT
4. How have you been supported in your leadership? Improved?

BENEFITS
5. What do you believe students gain from their leadership experiences?

CONCERNS
6. What are the challenges (downside) of senior student leadership?

Appendix E

Approval from the Australian Catholic University Human Ethics Committee

Appendix F

Approval from Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne

Appendix G

Approval from Director of Catholic Education in Hobart

Appendix H

Participant Information to Staff Members

TITLE OF PROJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF YEAR 12 STUDENT LEADERSHIP

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR HELGA NEIDHART

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: SHANE LAVERY

NAME OF PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dear Staff Member,

The purpose of my research project is to review the experiences and perceptions of Year 12 students in three Catholic schools in order to make recommendations about how to better promote, develop and nurture leadership for all Year 12 students.

Your involvement in this research would entail participating in an interview with the researcher. There are no possible risks or discomforts. Moreover, it is hoped that the interview should not cause any inconvenience.

The potential benefit to you is that you will have the opportunity to reflect on and discuss critically the role and place of senior student leadership within your school. The potential benefit to society is that developing leadership and providing leadership opportunities for senior students is an important means of preparing young people for the challenges of the future. This study aims to improve on the ways Year 12 students are involved in leadership activities. You should know that there is a strong likelihood that the research results will be published.

You need to be aware that you are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

Confidentiality will be ensured throughout the conduct of the study and in any report or publication.   Staff and schools will not be identified. Anonymity of staff will be safeguarded in that they will not be named. Anonymity of the schools will be protected through the creation of aliases.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor or the Student Researcher.

Supervisor	Student Researcher
Dr Helga Neidhart	Br Shane Lavery
Telephone: 9953 3267	Telephone: 9439 8282
In the School of Educational Leadership	
St Patrick's Campus	
Australian Catholic University	

Appropriate feedback on the results of the study will be made available to the participant on request.

You are advised that the Human Research Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University has approved this study.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Unit

VICTORIA
Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065
Tel: 03 9953 3157
Fax: 03 9953 3305

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will

be informed of the outcome.

    If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the

Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Student

Researcher.

Yours sincerely

Dr Helga Neidhart   Br Shane Lavery
SUPERVISOR   STUDENT RESEARCHER

Appendix I

Participant Information to Students

<u>TITLE OF PROJECT:</u> DEVELOPMENT OF YEAR 12 STUDENT LEADERSHIP

<u>NAME OF SUPERVISOR:</u> DR HELGA NEIDHART

<u>NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:</u> SHANE LAVERY

<u>NAME OF PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED:</u> DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Dear Student,

The purpose of this research project is to review the experiences and perceptions of Year 12 students in three Catholic schools in order to make recommendations about how to better promote, develop and nurture leadership for all Year 12 students.

Your involvement in this research would entail completing a survey questionnaire. There are no possible risks or discomforts. Nor should there be any inconvenience as a result of the time needed to fill in the questionnaire, as your school will arrange class time for this. There is a follow-up student interview later in the year. This will involve up to ten students who are prepared to volunteer to participate in a group interview. This interview will most likely occur in class time.

The potential benefit to you is that you will have both the opportunity to reflect on your gifts as a student leader as well as to consider ways in which you might exercise that leadership in your school. The potential benefit to society is that developing leadership and providing leadership opportunities for senior students is an important

means of preparing young people for the challenges of the future. This study aims to improve on the ways Year 12 students are involved in leadership activities. You should know that there is a strong likelihood the research results will be published.

You need to be aware that you are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

Confidentiality will be ensured throughout the conduct of the study and in any report or publication. Students and schools will not be identified. Anonymity of students will be safeguarded in that names will not appear on the survey questionnaires. Those students who volunteer for the interview will not be identified. Anonymity of the schools will be protected through the creation of aliases.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor or the Student Researcher.

Supervisor	Student Researcher
Dr Helga Neidhart	Br Shane Lavery
Telephone: 9953 3267	Telephone: 9439 8282
In the School of Educational Leadership	
St Patrick's Campus	
Australian Catholic University	

Appropriate feedback on the results of the study will be made available to interested participants on request. You are advised that the Human Research Ethics Committee of Australian Catholic University has approved this study.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Unit

VICTORIA
Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065
Tel: 03 9953 3157
Fax: 03 9953 3305

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Student Researcher.

Yours sincerely

Dr Helga Neidhart   Br Shane Lavery
SUPERVISOR   STUDENT RESEARCHER

Appendix J

Participant Consent Forms

TITLE OF PROJECT: DEVELOPMENT OF YEAR 12 STUDENT LEADERSHIP

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR HELGA NEIDHART

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: BR SHANE LAVERY

I .... *(the participant)* have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw at any time (*or stipulate the deadline by when the participant may withdraw*). I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE ....   DATE ....

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:...

DATE:…………………………………..

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:...

DATE:..............................………….

ASSENT OF PARTICIPANTS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS

I ……………………… understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the project, realising that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: ....
<div align="center">Block Letters</div>

SIGNATURE: ....

DATE: ....………....

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:...

DATE: ....………....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:...

DATE: ....………....

Appendix K

Written Parental Permission

TITLE OF PROJECT: YEAR 12 STUDENT LEADERSHIP

NAMES OF STAFF SUPERVISOR: DR HELGA NEIDHART

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: BR SHANE LAVERY

I .... (*the parent/guardian*) have read (*or, where appropriate*, have had read to me) and understood the information provided in the Letter to the Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child, nominated below, may participate in this activity, realising that I can withdraw my consent at any time. 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 my child in any way.

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN: ....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE ....……

DATE.......................................

NAME OF CHILD ....
(block letters)

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:

…………………………………………………………

DATE:…………………………………..

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER

…………………………………………………………

DATE: ………………………………

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