

**MEANING-MAKING: A KEY PEDAGOGICAL
PARADIGM FOR SCHOOLING IN THE THIRD
MILLENNIUM**

Submitted by

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Statement of Sources

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. It comprises 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.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me and that any help I have received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged.

.....
Joanne. T. Hack

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the need for schools to provide a method for young people to come to terms with the complexity of their changing world as they seek to make meaning for themselves. It begins by tracing the theoretical foundations for an increased focus on meaning in Australian schooling and its establishment as a stated pedagogical principle in federal and state policies, syllabi and Catholic Church documentation on education.

It analyses the literatures of the future direction of schooling, youth spirituality and the foundation documentation on Catholic education. It proposes that there is a degree of overlap in these literatures and the common discourse and the emerging paradigm addresses the need for students to develop a sense of personal meaning.

The thesis provides an historical overview of schooling in terms of the societal contexts and the educational and philosophical assumptions that underpin the curriculum and pedagogical activities. It develops a model that identifies changes in the process of meaning-making and proposes a framework that could help schools become more effective resource agents for students in the development of their meaning-making capacities.

It uses this framework to investigate the key documents of one Catholic system of secondary schools. It identifies the extent to which the system actually puts into action this pedagogical principle through its policy, research material, strategic planning, school culture (charism) and religious education programmes.

Finally the thesis relates the findings of the specific school system to the overall process of secondary schooling within a Catholic context in Australia and proposes some issues for further consideration

Table of Contents

STATEMENT OF SOURCES.....	2
ABSTRACT.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	5
LIST OF FIGURES.....	10
LIST OF TABLES.....	11
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT	12
SOCIOLOGICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT	12
A PEDAGOGICAL PARADIGM	12
THE EDUCATION DEBATE IN AUSTRALIA.....	12
MEANING-MAKING	14
<i>Catholic schools and meaning-making</i>	14
BACKGROUND TO THE RISE OF MEANING-MAKING AS PEDAGOGICAL PARADIGM	15
<i>Changing educational paradigms</i>	15
<i>A new emphasis on meaning-making</i>	16
<i>Recent debate about the purpose of twenty-first century schooling</i>	16
<i>Subsequent debate surrounding the purpose of Catholic schooling</i>	17
THESIS FOCUS	18
SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY	19
CANDIDATE’S RELATIONSHIP TO ISSUE	21
METHODS AND METHODOLOGY	21
<i>Literature review based methodology</i>	21
CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY	22
KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS	22
THESIS STRUCTURE	24
ABBREVIATIONS	26
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY	27
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF METHODOLOGY	27
<i>Process: Stage one</i>	29
<i>Process: Stage two</i>	30
METHODS.....	30
STAGE ONE OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN	31
<i>Literature review</i>	31
<i>Data analysis</i>	32
<i>Discourse</i>	32
<i>Theory building</i>	33
STAGE TWO OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN	34

<i>Case study methodology</i>	34
<i>Boundaries of the case</i>	35
<i>Process of the case study</i>	37
<i>Data analysis: Coding</i>	38
<i>Strengths and weaknesses of case study methodology</i>	40
<i>Strengths and weaknesses of documentary evidence</i>	40
<i>Issues of validity and reliability</i>	42
CONCLUSION	43
CHAPTER THREE: CHANGING PARADIGMS OF EDUCATION	44
INTRODUCTION	44
KEY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE MODEL OF SCHOOLING	45
CHANGES WITHIN SOCIETY	47
<i>Pre-industrial age</i>	47
<i>Industrial age</i>	48
<i>Post-industrial society</i>	49
<i>The challenges faced by post-industrial society</i>	51
<i>Insights for contemporary schooling</i>	52
<i>Developing understandings of childhood</i>	53
<i>Insights for contemporary schooling</i>	57
THE CHANGING NATURE OF SCHOOLING	58
<i>Insights for contemporary schooling</i>	60
<i>Emerging concepts of curriculum</i>	60
<i>Curriculum changes in New South Wales</i>	61
<i>Emerging pedagogy</i>	62
<i>Insights for contemporary schooling</i>	65
CHANGING APPROACHES TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	65
<i>Insights for contemporary schooling</i>	70
SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS	70
CONCLUSION	73
CHAPTER 4: MEANING MAKING: EMERGING UNDERSTANDINGS IN AN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT	75
BACKGROUND	75
PARADIGM SHIFTS IN SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION	77
<i>Terminology and metaphor</i>	78
<i>Re-imagining the role of schooling</i>	79
SCHOOLS: A FOCUS FOR MEANING	81
SPIRITUALITY: A CHANGING FOCUS IN SCHOOLS	85
CURRENT RESEARCH ON YOUTH SPIRITUALITY	87
<i>Major findings</i>	89

CURRENT RESEARCH ON CATHOLIC YOUTH.....	93
<i>Spirituality of hope: A new focus for the twenty-first century</i>	97
INSIGHTS FOR MEANING-MAKING IN SCHOOLS.....	98
<i>Spiritual education</i>	99
CONCLUSION	106
CHAPTER FIVE: MEANING-MAKING A CORE PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION	107
INTRODUCTION	107
THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	107
<i>Catholic identity and the value of a Catholic worldview</i>	109
OTHER INSIGHTS INTO THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	115
THE ROLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PLAYS IN THE SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF STUDENTS	121
THE SHIFTING FOCUS OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	123
<i>The role of personalism and relevance in religious education</i>	124
RE-IMAGING THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.....	128
OTHER PERSPECTIVES	132
CONCLUSION	133
CHAPTER SIX: A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PEDAGOGICAL MODEL	135
INTRODUCTION	135
<i>Building blocks for the model</i>	135
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MEANING-MAKING MODELS.....	137
<i>Foundations</i>	137
A POSSIBLE MODEL	139
WHAT IS ‘MEANINGFUL EDUCATION’?	144
<i>Elements of meaningful education</i>	147
AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: CURRENT AND POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THE MEANING- MAKING CAPACITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE.....	148
<i>The contemporary context of the Australian Catholic secondary school</i>	148
THE CONTRIBUTION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	149
<i>Prayer and worship. The spiritual dimension of a meaningful education</i>	154
<i>Catholic Pedagogy: The art and science of exploring a Catholic worldview</i>	156
<i>The possibilities for religious education to contribute to meaning-making</i>	158
CONCLUSION	159
CHAPTER SEVEN: CASE STUDY OF HOW MEANING-MAKING IS INCORPORATED INTO THE STRATEGIC POLICY AND RESEARCH DOCUMENTATION OF ONE CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY.....	161
INTRODUCTION	161
CONTEXT	161

ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTS	163
<i>Two Perspectives</i>	163
<i>Justification for reviewing the documentation from two perspectives</i>	163
<i>Process of coding</i>	166
THEORETICAL BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL CAPITAL AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY	166
<i>Perspective One</i>	166
THEORETICAL BASIS FOR “MEANING IN LIFE” CODING	167
<i>Perspective Two</i>	167
‘MEANING IN LIFE’ CODING DESCRIPTORS	170
RESULTS OF THE CODING	174
<i>Policy documents</i>	174
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM	178
RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING HOW INDEPENDENT RESEARCH REFLECTS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPIRITUAL CAPITAL	181
RESULTS OF CODING INDEPENDENT RESEARCH USING THE “MEANING IN LIFE” CODES RELATED TO TELEOLOGICAL MEANING	184
<i>To Be</i>	186
<i>To Know</i>	187
<i>To Do</i>	188
FINDINGS	188
CONCLUSION	190
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	191
THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM	191
THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHANGING CONTEXT ON THE DOMINANT EDUCATIONAL MODEL	191
CONTEXT: THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND MEANING	192
CONTEXT: AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	193
AN EMERGING PEDAGOGICAL PARADIGM	195
THE AIMS OF EDUCATION	195
MEANING-MAKING AS A MODEL	197
EMERGING THEMES	199
<i>Resource agent</i>	199
<i>Pedagogical principles</i>	199
<i>Spiritual capital</i>	200
AREAS OF PRIORITY IN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLING	200
<i>Educational philosophy</i>	201
<i>Intentionality</i>	202
<i>Structural change</i>	203
IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	204
RECOMMENDATIONS	205

<i>Meaning-making as a stated aim of Catholic education.....</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Meaning-making as a stated pedagogical principle</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Spiritual capital</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Review of the role that Catholic schooling plays in society</i>	<i>206</i>
<i>Review of the role of religious education.....</i>	<i>206</i>
CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS	206
FURTHER RESEARCH	207
CONCLUSION	208
REFERENCES	209

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. PRE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MODEL OF LEARNING ABOUT MEANING	139
FIGURE 2. A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MODEL OF MEANING-MAKING.....	141
FIGURE 3. LEARNING THE MEANING OF LIFE (CARNEIRO, 2003, p.16).....	168

List of Tables

TABLE 1. CEAS POLICY DOCUMENTS EXAMINED IN THE CASE STUDY	37
TABLE 2. KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRE-INDUSTRIAL ERA.....	71
TABLE 3. KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INDUSTRIAL ERA	72
TABLE 4. KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ERA	73
TABLE 5. CATEGORIES OF CEAS DOCUMENTS.....	163
TABLE 6. SPIRITUAL CAPITAL CODES	167
TABLE 7. MEANING IN LIFE: TO BE	170
TABLE 8. MEANING IN LIFE: TO KNOW	171
TABLE 9. MEANING IN LIFE: TO DO.....	172
TABLE 10. MEANING IN LIFE: TO LIVE TOGETHER	173
TABLE 11. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION POLICY MAKES TO SPIRITUAL CAPITAL	175
TABLE 12. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION POLICY MAKES TO THE “MEANING IN LIFE” CODES CONCERNED WITH TELEOLOGICAL MEANING	176
TABLE 13: RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION POLICY MAKES TO THE “MEANING IN LIFE CODES” CONCERNED WITH THE “FOUR PILLARS OF 21 ST CENTURY LEARNING”.	177
TABLE 14. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM MAKES TO SPIRITUAL CAPITAL	178
TABLE 15. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME MAKES TO THE “MEANING IN LIFE” CODES CONCERNED WITH TELEOLOGICAL MEANING.....	179
TABLE 16. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM E MAKES TO THE “MEANING IN LIFE” CODES CONCERNED WITH THE “FOUR PILLARS OF 21 ST CENTURY LEARNING”	181
TABLE 17. RESULTS OF THE CODING INDICATING THE CONTRIBUTION THAT INDEPENDENT RESEARCH MAKES TO SPIRITUAL CAPITAL.....	182
TABLE 18. TELEOLOGICAL MEANING IN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH	184
TABLE 19. RESULTS OF THE CODING OF INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FOR “MEANING IN LIFE” CONCERNED WITH THE “FOUR PILLARS OF 21 ST CENTURY LEARNING”.....	185

Chapter One: Introduction and scope of the project

Sociological, educational and philosophical context

Since its inception, compulsory school education in the Western world has endeavoured to prepare students for both life and the world of work. School education systems have reflected and adapted to the social mores, meanings, values and aspirations of the communities in which they are situated. In different historical periods the prevailing economic and social conditions have affected society's conception of the purposes and processes of schooling (Beare, 2001, Loader, 2007). This thesis explores these changes and raises questions about emerging concepts.

A pedagogical paradigm

The overall patterns of key ideas and the pedagogical paradigms out of which schools operate have changed over time. A pedagogical paradigm is a conceptual framework that encompasses the approach adopted for both the teaching and learning activities which take place within a school environment. These approaches can incorporate various constructs including the necessary process to achieve aims, the expectations of the learner and the methods through which the teacher and learner interact.

The place of children in society, the role of the teacher, the access to education and the available technologies have all impacted on the pedagogical approach adopted in a particular time period (Beare, 2001, Lepani, 2001). This thesis analyses the significant changes from pre-industrial times to the industrial age and further changes from that time to the present contemporary technological age.

The education debate in Australia

The turn of the millennium was a time for both questioning the past and predicting the future. This process reflected the natural processes that occur in many fields of human endeavour at the conclusion of one era and the beginning of another (Hack, 2004a) and provided the stimulus for this thesis. The search for clarity in the future

direction of schooling still remains an elusive quest which is indicated both by writings in the field of education and by the media.

In the Australian context rapid social, economic and technological changes, as well as concerns about the wellbeing of young people stimulated wide-ranging debate about the future of schooling. The issues that form the basis of this debate are diverse and include the discussion about the appropriateness of the pedagogies, values education¹, outcomes based education, assessment and reporting, and a possible common national senior syllabus and final examination structure (DEST, 2005a,b; Doherty, 2005; Master, 2006; Shultz, 2006a,b; Welch, 2006; Donnelly, 2007; Loader, 2007). The continuing Australian debate is largely about finding the most appropriate pedagogical purposes and processes for twenty-first century learning. This debate has continued throughout the life of this thesis and the developing ideas are consequently embedded in it. The media has documented the arguments over the future of schooling.

One of the contemporary, theoretical and practical discussions about school-based education has focused on the spiritual and moral development of young people and the role schools play in this process (British Education Reform Act, 1988, cited in Rossiter 1995; MCEETYA, 1999; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1999; Australian College of Education, 2001; Board of Studies, 1999; 2002; Hill, 2004; DEST, 2005a, Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Kunzman, 2006). While schools have always played a part in the spiritual and moral development of students this role has generally been an assumed one rather than a clearly articulated position. The contribution schools have made in the moral and spiritual development of their students has often occurred as a by-product of school culture, the hidden curriculum, or, in religiously affiliated schools, has been in the domain of the religious education programmes. Some discussion has focussed on the viability of specifically designed academic and pastoral programmes that help young people develop values, morals and a spirituality that ultimately assist them to construct a

¹ National Values Framework: The underpinning vision for improved values education in Australian schools is that all Australian schools will promote values education in an ongoing, planned and systematic way by (a) examining, in consultation with their community, the school's mission/ethos; (b) developing student civic and social skills and building resilience; and (c) ensuring values are incorporated into teaching programmes across the key learning areas. (Values Education Study, 2003, p.11).

personal meaning-making system (Hill, 2004; DEST, 2005a; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Kunzman, 2006; Loader, 2007). This thesis is exploring a more cohesive pedagogical approach that can address both these questions and provide a foundation for school-based education in the twenty-first century.

Meaning-making

Increasingly in the literature on the *Futures of Schooling* attention is being given to fundamental personal development aims that are concerned with the young person's well being and not merely related to future employment and national economic development. As a consequence an emerging aim of secondary education is the development of students' *meaning-making capacities* (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Kunzman, 2006; Loader, 2007).

Meaning is the innate capacity of human beings to reflect on the human condition and the life questions posed by all people. It includes the ability of people to incorporate everyday events, both personal and global, into their lives. It implies the ability of people to discern their relationships with the "other".

It is possible that pedagogical principles related to meaning-making may develop into an influential paradigm that affects the future developments of Australian schooling. This meaning-making paradigm may develop along side other key paradigms related to technology, employment related competencies, the national economy and other paradigms that are yet to emerge. This thesis explores this possibility in the context of contemporary writing.

Catholic schools and meaning-making

Catholic schooling, and in particular its commitment to religious education have long been specifically concerned with issues of meaning. These concerns have included the notion of handing on the Catholic faith, sponsoring Church membership and promoting young peoples' personal spirituality. In an increasingly secularised culture experiencing the decline in the formalised religious practice of young Catholics, consideration has been given anew to the value of religious education and its role in enhancing the spiritual life of young people, whether or not this leads ultimately to formal Church membership. While religious education in

Catholic schools has always been concerned with making a contribution to the young person's ability to find spiritual meaning, in recent times, there has been a new emphasis on assisting young people in their search for meaning or meaning-making.

This thesis investigates how meaning-making appears to be emerging as a new paradigm for Australian Catholic schools in the twenty-first century. This is against the backdrop of the different conceptions of the nature and purposes of schooling that have dominated educational thinking in previous centuries. It also explores the extent to which the notion of meaning-making is being incorporated into the theory and practice of Catholic school-based religious education.

Background to the rise of meaning-making as pedagogical paradigm

Changing educational paradigms

This thesis considers the historical relationships between schooling, society and culture. It asks questions about this new millennium. Young people today live in a complex global world. They are affected by the benefits and the costs of globalisation, mass production and post-modernism. The thesis investigates the possibility that young people acquire and construct meaning differently to earlier generations.

There are many reasons for a renewed focus on how schools can help students construct meaning. Most of these reasons are a by-product of a society in flux. Post-modernity has brought into question the philosophical underpinnings of western society. This move from the modernist belief in scientific proof and rationalism to a society that questions all things has led to a loss of confidence in the traditional sources of knowledge, truth and meaning such as governments, systems and religions. In terms of the political landscape in western society this period of flux has been accompanied by the rise of economic rationalism, an individualised society and emphasis on the creation of personal wealth.

A new emphasis on meaning-making

The rapid rate of change in western society has brought with it social and health implications for our society. It is repeatedly reported that there are increased rates of disillusionment, depression, suicide and relationship breakdown in Australian society (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005; Stanley, Richardson & Prior, 2005; Salt, 2006; Mackay, 2007). All these factors have led society to question how to make meaning in a world that is in a constant state of change and how best to provide young people with the skills and resources to construct personal meaning-making systems at a time when meaning is largely contested.

Much of this writing is in its infancy because, while schools have always supported young people in this domain, it has been a by-product of the educational process rather than a specific stated aim of the educational endeavour. As the theoretical base for meaning-making is still being formalised there is still some imprecision in the use of the term. As well as these imprecise descriptors a number of different terms are used to describe the process by which humans discern meaning. These include wisdom, truth, *horizons of meaning*, *construction of meaning*, meaning-making capacities, *human flourishing*, *conceptions of the good* and *ethical behaviour* (Alexander, 2000; Wright, 2004; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Kunzman, 2006). Sometimes there is a vagueness about the parameters of these terminologies but there is a surety that human beings have the capacity to discern meaning and that there are events and processes that can both enhance or diminish this capacity. Some terms that are used in the theory such as wisdom, truth and ethical behaviours imply that the educator has the right answers. On the other hand terms such as horizons of meaning, human flourishing and conceptions of the good are more compatible with the view that meaning-making is about providing students with knowledge and skills that become tools in helping them to find and construct wisdom, truth and values for themselves (de Ruyter, 2002a; Wright, 2004; Kunzman, 2006).

Recent debate about the purpose of twenty-first century schooling

More than at any other point in history the individual is responsible for determining what provides a sense of meaning and purpose. While this gives the individual greater freedom it also places on the individual greater responsibility. Though the

capacity to make meaning is innate, some human beings are more attuned and have developed the reflective capacity to discern meaning more easily than others. In an era where a lack of meaning and purpose is seen to be the cause of increased levels of dislocation, depression and suicide, significant educational theorists have considered what role the school can and should play in supporting the development of the meaning-making capacities of young people. (Beare, 2001; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Kunzman, 2006; Loader, 2007)

Education in Australia, and more specifically in New South Wales, is not immune to these complex forces. With reference to schooling in New South Wales at this time, all K-10 syllabi² (Board of Studies, 2002) have been reviewed in terms of structure, content, relevance and assessment procedures and are in various stages of implementation. The links between primary and secondary curriculum are being strengthened and a process of “across the curriculum development” in areas such as literacy, numeracy, technology and Australian values is expected. This necessitates a clear understanding of the pedagogy underpinning the practice. It is the aim of this thesis to explore links between the shifts in theory and the ensuing pedagogical practices and to investigate the pedagogical principles that will flow from current social and economic shifts.

Subsequent debate surrounding the purpose of Catholic schooling

The churches, one of the traditional sources of knowledge, truth and meaning have also fared badly during this period, as recent Australian research has shown that churches have less influence on the lives of individuals of every age demographic than in previous eras (Mason, Webber, Singleton & Hughes, 2006). As well as the decreasing influence on the lives of Australians, churches have to deal with the challenges that radical fundamentalism in all religions poses to the credibility and trust that religions are afforded in our society (Amis, 2006; Lohery, 2006). Flowing from this diminishing influence in our society has been the increased calls for the separation of church and state on key social issues (Frame, 2006).

² The Board of Studies is a government appointed statutory authority responsible for the administration of accreditation and curriculum for public and private schools in the state of New South Wales. K-10 are the compulsory years of schooling in New South Wales Schools. K refers to kindergarten; students are approximately five years of age when they enter kindergarten. 10 refers to Year 10. Students are approximately sixteen years of age when they complete Year 10. Students who successfully complete Year 10 receive a credential called the School Certificate.

Similarly, the purpose of Catholic schools is still being debated. These debates focus on issues such as the number of students enrolled who are not Catholic, the effectiveness of the relationship between the local Catholic school and the parish, the effectiveness of Catholic schools in producing students who in adulthood become long term committed Catholics and the effectiveness of a religious education programmes in relation to its ability to produce students who know and assent to the Church's key theological and moral beliefs (Fisher, 2006; Holohan, 2006; Pell, 2006).

Another major issue for Catholic education is to ensure that school-based religious education programme meet the spiritual needs of children and adolescents. This particular issue is the subject of much discussion, as is evidenced by the number of research papers being written in this area (Coles, 1992; Hay, Nye & Murphy, 1996; Hay & Nye, 1998; Rossiter, 1998b; Congregation of Catholic Education, 1999; Haldane, 1999; O'Murchu, 1999; Crawford, 2000; Tacey, 2000; Wallace, 2000; Engebretson, 2001b; de Souza, 2003, 2004 a, b). These articles reflect the range of understandings of adolescent spirituality. Most of this research stays within specific frameworks or addresses specific questions whereas this thesis presents a theoretical model for learning that integrates these diverse yet related fields.

Thesis focus

The aim of this thesis is to establish the extent to which meaning-making provides a pedagogical possibility for Catholic secondary schooling in the third millennium. To achieve this, the thesis investigates the following issues:

(1) It explores the relationships between the historical context and the pedagogical paradigms for schooling. The discussion of these relationships flows from the analysis of the social, economic and educational context of the pre- industrial (agrarian), industrial and post-industrial eras in Western society. The analysis of these eras focuses on how changes in social and economic factors frame and direct pedagogical approaches to schooling.

(2) It investigates the emerging focus in the various literatures as to how secondary school students construct meaning. The discussion of how young people in secondary schools make meaning takes place in a number of allied fields related to education. This thesis identifies, describes and evaluates the language related to meaning-making as presented in the following fields of literature:

- (a) the futures of schooling
- (b) youth spirituality
- (c) Catholic schooling and religious education

(3) From this theoretical basis, this thesis creates a pedagogical model that emerges from the convergence of the literatures. This model describes the contemporary role that schools play in supporting the development of meaning-making capacities in individual students.

(4) This model is then used as the basis of the analysis of selected documents of one metropolitan Catholic Educational Authority. The purpose of the analysis in this case study is to evaluate how intentional Catholic schools are in their support of the meaning-making capacities of secondary students and to test and evaluate the effectiveness of this model for tracing the implementation of pedagogical principles in the documentation and practice of educational authorities.

Scope of this research study

This thesis uses an extended literature review to identify areas of convergence surrounding the issues of meaning, spirituality and in particular Catholic schooling and religious education. It explores these fields to find possible evidence in the language of a changing educational paradigm. During the time period of 1996–2008, there has been a significant increase in the quantity of writing by theorists in different fields about the nature, purpose and future of schooling, spirituality and religious education. This thesis draws on the following themes in the literature:

- The effect of globalisation and post-modernism on society, schooling, religious institutions and conceptions of spirituality. (Postman, 1996; Bottery, 2000; Beare, 2001; Conroy & Davis, 2002; de Ruyter, 2002b, Bottery 2006; Friedman, 2006).

- The dominance of individualism and consumerism in western liberal societies (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997; Eckersley, 2005; Angelico, 2006; Bottery, 2006).
- The effects of the fear of global terrorism, religious fundamentalism and climate change (Shultz, 2006 a, b; Lohery, 2006; Martin 2006; Friedman, 2006; Mackay, 2007).
- The disaffection of young people with the current organisation of schooling generally and curriculum delivery specifically (Ryan, 1998a, Shepard, 2000, Australian College of Education, 2001, Vinson, 2002; Groundwater-Smith, Mitchell & Mockler, 2007; Loader, 2007).
- The changing educational needs and learning styles of young people (Ellyard, 1998, 2004; Malone, 1998, 1999, 2000; Robertson, 2001; Gardner, 2002; Vinson, 2002; Groundwater-Smith et al, 2007; Loader, 2007).
- The call by young people for relevant and meaningful educational experiences in both generalist education and religious education (Crawford & Rossiter, 1996; de Souza, 2000; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Gilchrist, 2006; Groundwater-Smith et al, 2007; Loader, 2007; Malone, 2007).
- The disaffection of young people with traditional religious institutions and formal religious adherence (NCLS, 2001; Gilchrist 2006; Mason et al, 2006).
- The change of focus for young people away from religious identity and adherence to the development of a personal individual spirituality (O'Murchu, 1998, 1999; Tacey, 2000, 2003; Zohar & Marshall, 2000; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Mason et al, 2006).
- The broader social contribution that Church based schools make to local communities through the development of social and spiritual capital in individuals and communities (Angelico, 2006; Caldwell, 2007).

This range of issues highlights the particular role of this thesis in identifying the possible emerging paradigms as reflected in the language used across the various fields.

At times there is ambiguity across these discourses as theorists grapple with complex contemporary issues, rapid social change and emerging theoretical frameworks. One of the foci of this thesis is an examination of the literature of the past ten years to glean the contemporary and emerging nature of the changing

educational paradigm and the implications this has for the current conception of schooling in general and for classroom pedagogical processes in Catholic schools in particular.

This thesis investigates the stated expectations of the institutional Church about outcomes of Catholic schooling. It uses an extended literature review to develop a theoretical model that may offer a new way to consider the role and purpose of the Catholic secondary school which responds to the needs of today's youth.

Candidate's relationship to issue

The candidate has been a teacher in Catholic schools for over twenty years, and has taught religious education at secondary level in many contexts. The candidate in 2001 was a member of the research team involved in the *Education and Search for Meaning Project*³ which provided access to current discussions in the field.

Currently the candidate is employed as an Education Officer by the *Catholic Educational Authority* which is the focus of the case study. This gives the candidate access to the documentation analysed and an appreciation of the context of this Authority. It does however require the analysis of material in an objective manner to prevent the appearance of bias.

Methods and Methodology

Literature review based methodology

The key methodology used in this thesis is an extended literature review which analyses the common themes in the literatures dealing with future directions in schooling and pedagogy, contemporary youth spirituality and Catholic schooling.

The thesis summarises the features of contemporary trends in school-based education in order to find evidence of changing language which historically has been the first indication of a paradigm shift. This research establishes parameters for a number of significant concepts and terms that are indicators of this shift. These terms include, the *construction of meaning* (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006), meaning-

³ Two papers, *Meaningful Education: Catchery or Paradigm shift?* (2004a) and *Personal meaning: An emerging pedagogical principle in religious education* (2004b) were published as a result of the researcher's doctoral studies and her involvement in the *Education and Search for Meaning Project*. Some of this work has been incorporated into this thesis.

making capacities, *the “journey within and journey without”* (Carneiro, 2003) and *meaningful education* (de Ruyter, 2002). The literature review identifies a paradigm shift in schooling by exploring the key indicators of previous paradigms of school-based education. At the completion of the literature review the thesis uses the data to develop a pedagogical meaning-making model.

Case study methodology

This thesis also uses a document case study methodology. It examines the documents of the selected Educational Authority as the data for analysis. It draws on the framework (Ozga, 2000) by which policy documents may be both read and analysed. The case study involves the reading and analysis of key educational documents to identify the “story” they tell about the place and importance of the meaning-making construct in the narrative of the documents.

Key concepts and terms

This thesis uses a range of terms that are often used ambiguously or with a lack of clarity. The following list sets out the interpretation the researcher is using and acknowledges the sources from which these meanings have been drawn.

Meaning: a construction or interpretation of one’s experience based on a heuristic framework constructed from one’s aims and values (de Ruyter, 2002a, p.36).

Meaningfulness: connecting new ideas with ideas already stored in long-term memory (McInerney & McInerney, 2002, p.527).

Meaning-making capacities: the ability of individuals to both reflect on past experiences and then to plan for future actions and experiences. These reflections draw on the cultural meanings, traditional beliefs and values of a society (Adapted from Jarvis, 2006, p.81 and Crawford & Rossiter 2006, p.54).

Meaningful Education: education that assists children to find meaning in life (de Ruyter, 2002a, p.34).

Paradigm: the major theoretical construct or the sets of belief that underpin a field (Crotty, 1998, p.35).

Paradigm shift: The concept of a paradigm shift was developed by the scientist Thomas Kuhn (1922-96) and applied to the major theoretical constructs that underpinned science. A paradigm shift is the process that occurs when findings cannot be explained within the existing paradigm. When this occurs a new way of viewing reality is called for (Hack, 2004a).

Pedagogical principles: general laws or substantive hypotheses about teaching and learning which inform the processes of devising pedagogical procedures or pedagogical strategies, which, in turn, determine how pupils will experience, engage with and respond to the content (Grimmitt, 2000a, p.18).

Pedagogy: often defined as the art and science of teaching. It is also used in a number of other contexts. It is used to describe the skills of teachers (Senge et al, 2000; Education Queensland, 2001; Vinson, 2002; Grimmitt, 2000a), the activity of the classroom (Senge et al, 2000; Vinson, 2002) the theoretical aims of a specific context of education (Duminuco, 1999), a term associated with systemic educational reform (Educational Queensland, 2000) or lastly, a term that is associated with political and societal reform (Freire, 2000). This thesis draws on a number of these understandings of the term and the contextual use of the term will indicate the emphasis that is placed on the term in each circumstance.

Religious education: an umbrella term that covers all aspects of student learning about religion, as well as the process of becoming more religious (Ryan & Malone, 1996, p.7).

Classroom religion programme: the programme of teaching and learning in school classrooms designed to achieve the aims of the diocesan curriculum guidelines for religious education (Adapted from Ryan, 2006, p.9).

Social capital: a term devised by economists to describe the impact that connected groups of human beings working together have on themselves and the broader community (Angelico, 2006).

Spiritual capital: the strength of moral purpose and the degree of coherence between values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning (Caldwell, 2007, p.55).

Thesis Structure

Chapter One: Introduction and scope of the project.

This chapter has outlined the social and educational context from which the thesis has emerged. It presents an analysis of the data from a very wide literature review in a structured thematic way. The chapter also outlined the method for the thesis and set out the key concepts and terms.

Chapter Two: Methods and methodology.

The function of this chapter is to outline the two stages of this research and the qualitative approach that underpins the methodology. It provides a philosophical basis for the approach taken. Lastly, the chapter describes the scope and nature of the documentary case study that will be undertaken.

Chapter Three: Changing educational paradigms.

The chapter traces the changes in society and in schooling that have been associated with the pre-industrial age, the industrial age and the post-industrial age. This chapter establishes that each era has had a different paradigm of school-based education. This analysis traces the subtle shifts occurring within the current educational paradigm to identify the clear relationship between changing economic and social contexts and educational paradigms.

Chapter Four: The construction of meaning: What role do schools play?

The fourth chapter describes and analyses both the theoretical discussion and the research on how students specifically construct meaning-making systems and the role that schools can play in the development of these meaning-making capacities.

Chapter Five: Meaning-making: A core pedagogical principle in Catholic education. The focus of this chapter is the examination of the Catholic Church's documents on the nature of the Catholic school and the role of religious education in Catholic schools to determine the key pedagogical principles of Catholic education and the place of meaning-making within Catholic educational theory.

Chapter Six: A model for conceiving the construction of meaning in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Six uses the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) to develop and present a model to promote meaning-making capacities in the twenty-first century within a Catholic school context. It integrates and draws on the paradigm developed in Chapter Three and the conceptual frameworks of meaning-making in Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter Seven: Case Study of a Catholic Educational Authority.

This chapter uses case study methodology to examine the policies, research documents, and the diocesan religious education programme to evaluate how one Catholic Educational Authority envisions its contributions to the meaning-making capacities of the secondary students in its care.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and recommendations.

This chapter summarises the findings of the thesis and makes recommendations concerning how the pedagogical principle of meaning-making can be more effectively incorporated into the theoretical underpinnings of Catholic education in Australia.

Abbreviations

CEAS	Catholic Educational Authority Sydney
CEC	Catholic Education Commission
CEO	Catholic Education Office
CSO	Catholic Schools Office
DET	Department of Education and Training
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
ICLT	Information Communication and Learning Technologies
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NCEC	National Catholic Education Commission
RE	Religious Education
REC	Religious Education Co-ordinator

Chapter Two: Methodology

As outlined in Chapter One, this chapter identifies the theoretical perspectives that underpin the methodology employed in this research. It describes the overall methodology and sets out the processes for each stage of the research and clearly delineates the two stages of the research design. The first stage includes three sections:

- the literature review,
- the analysis of a paradigm shift in school-based education, and
- the development of a model that describes the relationship between the role of the school and the development of meaning-making capacities in the individual.

The second stage of the process is a case study that applies the model developed in stage one. The chapter provides a philosophical basis for the methodology chosen and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken.

Theoretical perspectives of methodology

The overall approach to this thesis is that of qualitative research as this is an appropriate methodology for the interpretation of meaning both in general and within a specific educational context. Quantitative research, by its nature is concerned with the proof of causal links between phenomena. It tends to be positivist in nature and uses scientific methods. In a thesis that is examining the nature of meaning it is appropriate to use interpretative research methods which are qualitative because interpretative research and researchers:

begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. Theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be ‘grounded’ on data generated by the research act (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in Cohen, Manion and Morris, 2000, p 23).

Theoretical perspectives, according to Crotty (1998) are the theoretical beliefs that underpin any methodology. This research takes an interpretative theoretical approach. An interpretivist approach “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world” (Crotty, 1998, p.67). Crotty identifies three historical streams in interpretivism. These are *hermeneutics*, *symbolic interactionalism* and *phenomenology* (p.71). Both symbolic interactionalism and phenomenology interpret the role of culture as the site of the

construction and interpretation of human interaction, but the two methods interpret the role of culture in different ways. Symbolic interactionism, particularly in the work of George Mead (1934), perceived that humans are shaped and formed by the communities and cultures to which they belong. Phenomenology focuses on objects and our experience of objects and where meaning is found in objects and or relationships between objects. While both these perspectives are valuable in the analysis of social life this thesis focuses on the documents that record the intention and the effectiveness of school programmes that address meaning. Therefore hermeneutics, which is a perspective that focuses on the role of language, is the most appropriate theoretical perspective to consider in this study.

Hermeneutics looks at the role of language in the construction of human understanding of interactions and reflects on how human interactions impact on language. The foundation of hermeneutics is in the historical and cultural interpretation of biblical texts, but in the modern context hermeneutics involves:

recapturing the meanings of interacting with others, recovering and reconstructing the intentions of the other actors in a situation. Such an enterprise involves the analysis of meaning in a social context (Held, 1980 in Cohen et al, 2000, p.29).

Originally this interpretation and construction of meaning was only applied to written communication, but the work of Dilthey (1833-1911) widened this application of interpretation to the whole lived experience which includes language, literature, behaviour, art, religion, law or in other words, all cultural institutions or structures (Crotty, 1998, p.95).

This research takes a hermeneutical perspective as this is consistent with a constructivist understanding of meaning-making. It is also an appropriate theoretical perspective for this research, as the method of data collection to be used incorporates the techniques of an extended literature review and documentary analysis. The interpretation of the data collected by these techniques is analysed for common themes and understandings, the interpretations of the participants and the influences of external bodies. The most appropriate way to analyse this data is through the use of hermeneutics.

This thesis also incorporates the use of social critical theory. Bernstein (1974) identified that one of the flaws of interpretive methodologies as a means of analysis, was that these methods focus on the interpretation of the interactions between individuals but ignore the context of the power of the external structural forces that shaped the behaviour and events surrounding the individuals (Cohen et al, 2000, p.27). Because qualitative research, which includes a hermeneutical perspective does not take into account the context of power-based relationships the result of this type of interpretation could be flawed or biased.

Social critical theory seeks to analyse and critique the powerful social structures that influence and distort the interpretations of human interactions. The thesis therefore incorporates, social critical perspectives because the decisions about schooling are made within pre-existing understandings of the nature and function of schools. These pre-existing understandings are influenced by social, political and economic factors, which are both local and global. The decisions that are made in Catholic education are also further influenced by the beliefs and structure of the Catholic Church in its local and global context. The literature review explores this content and its influence.

The case study section of this thesis focuses on one Catholic Educational Authority located in a major Australian city. This Educational Authority is influenced by the policy and funding of Federal and State governments, the wishes of the Bishop of the diocese and the policies of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Councils both State and National. The decisions of these influential bodies are based on pre-existing structures and beliefs surrounding school-based education in a Catholic context. Social critical theory seeks to acknowledge both the power and pre-conceptions of these over-arching bodies in policy and administration of Catholic schools. These perspectives are taken into account in any interpretation of the literature and data collected from the case study that form the basis of this research.

Process: Stage one

Stage one of this research identifies the indicators of the emergence of a paradigm shift in school-based education through the use of an extended literature review. This review summarises and analyses the key themes in the literature related to the

future directions of schooling, youth spirituality and Catholic education. The methodology used to establish the themes is that of a modified *systematic literature review*. The process involves the classifying of major themes that emerge from the literature and uses the process of groundwork, data analysis and theory building, all of which are described in more detail in the research design section of this chapter. The thesis develops the parameters for defining the terms construction of meaning, meaning-making capacities and meaningful education, which are used in different contexts to describe the methods and procedures that help young people develop a personal meaning-making system.

Using the major themes and terminology established in the extended literature review a pedagogical meaning-making model is developed. This model addresses the themes established in the literature review and considers the question of how Catholic secondary schools can be a resource to address the aims of the society, the state, the Church, the school and the individual learner in relation to meaning. This model combines the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) to formulate a new understanding of how meaning-making can be addressed in a pedagogical way within a Catholic secondary school context. This model is used as the framework to undertake aspects of the ensuing case study.

Process: Stage two

Stage two of the thesis examines and analyses selected documents from a Catholic Educational Authority in New South Wales. The purpose of this examination is to determine whether a method can be developed to assess the extent to which a Catholic Educational Authority can and does contribute deliberately or accidentally to the meaning-making capacities of students who attend secondary schools in its jurisdiction. This analysis uses elements of a documentary case study methodology using selected documents provided by the Authority.

Methods

As stated in Chapter One the research will be conducted in two separate but interrelated stages. The methods used in these two phases ensure that the data collected is representative of the situation it is investigating and ensures the validity of both stages of the research. The research design thus falls into two distinct stages.

Stage one of the research design

Literature review

This thesis uses the methodology of systematic literature review, which is a qualitative methodology used by the medical and health community (Clarke, 2002, p.3). This method involves the gathering, classifying and analysing of the significant material on a particular health care issue. In the field of health care the analysis of the material is statistical and is therefore quantitative in nature. This thesis will modify the method to use its theoretical approach in a qualitative context. The theoretical basis of the method uses a three-step process. The process is summarised as follows:

Lewis and Grimes (1999) suggest a three-phased model to explore variations in the assumptions of alternative paradigms and addresses emerging themes and resultant theories. The three phases are:

- groundwork (collection of journal articles etc)
- data analyses (classification of the of the articles according to 'paradigm lenses')
- theory building.

(Lewis & Grimes (1999) cited in Clarke, 2002, p.4).

The literature review used in this thesis identifies the overlap in the areas of the future directions in schooling and pedagogical theory, youth spirituality and contemporary Catholic education. Prior to the analysis of this material the thesis establishes the link between changes in economic and social circumstances in Western society and the resulting paradigm shifts in the models of schooling. This link is made through the description and analysis of the economic, social and educational circumstances of the three key historical eras of modern western society. The extended literature review then focuses on the overlap in the three nominated discourses. This is centred on how young people develop their meaning-making capacities and the emergence of a paradigm shift in education that relates to the implementation of a developing pedagogical principle of meaning-making.

Groundwork provides the theoretical foundation to make claims in the theory building section of the methodology. This thesis uses analysis of three key historical eras to establish whether a paradigm shift is happening in school-based education. The conceptual frameworks of previous paradigms of education are examined as a basis of comparison with emerging frameworks in education.

Chapter Three of this thesis traces the historical developments in school-based education in three different socio-political eras. These eras are the pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial eras. The purpose of education in these eras is examined in their socio-cultural contexts. The basis of the analysis of these eras is the focus on the following areas:

- the nature of society;
- the understanding of childhood and the role of children;
- the model of education and specifically school-based education;
- the model of school-based curriculum; and
- the model of religious education.

This analysis establishes the clear relationship between the social and cultural context, rapid social change and the model of schooling. This relationship underpins the theoretical model developed in Chapter Six.

Data analysis

The next step in this methodology is to create a *paradigm lens* as a framework to analyse the literature of the three fields, to identify the indicators that the model of schooling is changing and that a paradigm shift is occurring in school-based education. The thesis then proceeds to highlight the commonalities in the sub-fields and draws these commonalities together under the term meaningful education. As the new schooling paradigm is still emerging the literature reviewed is contemporary and focuses on the period of 1998-2008. As the methodology uses an extended literature review the material analysed is textual and is drawn from books, journal articles, conference papers and material accessed via the Internet.

Discourse

Matheson and Matheson (2000) raise the issue of the importance of discourse in education and how it is pivotal in understanding contemporary issues in educational theory. Each of the theoretical areas that impacts on meaning-making in an educational context is incorporated into the extended literature review. The review focuses on particular frameworks and specific vocabularies that are particular to each theoretical field and the terminology related to it that defines the discourse. Randolph (1996) states, “that the words and the terms used in that discipline ‘unlock’ the discourse of the discipline (1996, p.1).” Randolph describes how writers in specific fields use words and terminology to define their fields. Logically, if a researcher can track when educational scholars discard terms and

take up new ones, the paradigm shift within a discourse can be traced and identified. The method by which this tracking can be undertaken is through the combination of a systematic literature review and discourse analysis.

Theory building

As the thesis uses the theoretical framework of systematic literature review in a qualitative context, the last stage in the methodology is to develop theory from the literature. From the extended literature review a theory is developed as to how schools can be resource agents for young people in their quest to enhance and develop their meaning-making capacities.

Martin defines theory building as:

the comparison of coded text segments by the means of interpretive analysis in order to develop a complex network of general concepts, categories or types (Martin, 1995, p.366 in Cohen et al, 2000, p. 298).

This definition relates generally to the use of sophisticated computer programmes as the method by which interpretive analysis and network models are generated.

However this is not the only way by which theory can be formulated in this methodology. Cohen et al stated, “theory derives from the data - it is grounded in the data and emerges from it” (2000, p.150). Cohen et al go on to look at the work of a number social science theorists who have described the process of theory building or generation. Most of the theories cited conform to, or have slight modifications to the one that follows:

- Step 1: A rough definition and explanation of the particular phenomenon is developed.
 - Step 2: This definition and explanation is examined in the light of the data is being collected during the research.
 - Step 3: If the definition and/or explanation that has been generated need modification in the light of the new data then this is undertaken.
 - Step 4: A deliberate attempt is made to find cases that may not fit into the definition or explanation.
 - Step 5: The process of redefinition and reformulation is repeated until the explanation is reached that embraces all the data and until a generalised relationship has been established, which will also embrace negative cases.
- (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 in Cohen et al, 2000, p.151).

Theory in this thesis is developed from the extended literature review undertaken in Chapters Three, Four and Five. Theory building in an educational context is complex, as it has to take into account the impact of social and economic factors on

the educational enterprise. Fullan (2003) has highlighted this difficulty by emphasising the need to understand “complexity theory” formerly known as chaos theory to fully understand any change in education.

You cannot get to new horizons without grasping the essence of complexity theory. The trick is to learn to become a tad more comfortable with the awful mystery of complex systems, to do fewer things to aggravate what is already a centrifugal problem, resist controlling the uncontrollable, and to learn to use key complexity concepts to design and guide more powerful learning systems (Fullan, 2003, p.21).

This theory is encapsulated in a pedagogical meaning-making model. This model addresses the themes established in the literature review and considers the question of how Catholic secondary schools can be a resource to address the aims of the society, the state, the church, the school and the individual learner in relation to meaning. The final model combines the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) in conjunction with Caldwell’s (2007) descriptors of *spiritual capital* to form the paradigm lens used for the coding of the documents that are the focus of the case study.

Stage two of the research design

Case study methodology

This thesis uses a document case study methodology. It uses the documents of the educational authority as the data for analysis. Ozga (2000) describes a framework by which policy documents may be read and analysed.

I think it is also useful to think about policy texts as carrying particular narratives; that is, they tell a story about what is possible or desirable to achieve through education policy. They are thus able to be read as any narrative is read; they may be scrutinized for their portrayal of character and plot, for their use of particular forms of language in order to produce impressions or responses; they may have an authorial ‘voice’ or seek to convey the impression of multiple viewpoints (Ozga, 2000, p.95).

The case study involves the reading and analysis of key educational documents to identify the “story” they tell about the place and importance of the construct of meaning-making in the narrative of the documents.

The question that is investigated through the use of case study methodology is how does a particular Catholic Educational Authority contribute to the meaning-making capacities of young people? The Catholic Educational Authority, which is the focus

of this study, is based in the northern suburbs of Sydney and extends to a regional area in close proximity to Sydney. The diocese of which it is a part is just over twenty years old making it one of the newest Catholic Educational Authorities in New South Wales. This case study tests the applicability of the theory that has been incorporated into a model against the work of an Australian Catholic Educational Authority.

Boundaries of the case

Merriam (1998) describes a qualitative case study, as “an intensive holistic description and analysis of a single instance around which there are boundaries” (p.27). The ways in which this study fulfils this criterion are described below. Catholic Education or Catholic Schools Offices are the names given to Catholic educational authorities that implement and administer the policies of the Catholic Church in regards to schooling (K-12). These organisations are relatively new structures founded in the 1970s and are a by-product of *State Aid*⁴ and the preference of successive federal governments to deal with large governing bodies to distribute funds, rather than to deal with individual schools. So as well as having a policy function these organisations are responsible on behalf of the Church at a diocesan level for the distribution of funding from the state and federal governments and for ensuring that the schools within the system comply with government policy that is linked to accepting these grants.

In the state of New South Wales in 2005 there were five hundred and fifty eight Catholic schools administered by eleven diocesan-based educational authorities. These authorities are overseen by the Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales. So one of the boundaries of the case study is this organisational structure. The diocesan structure is a function of the organisational structures of the Catholic Church described in Canon law and the organisation of educational funding in Australia, which is mandated in the Australian Constitution.

The description of the role, function and effectiveness of Catholic educational authorities through research into these organisations is also in its infancy. Much of the recent research undertaken into Catholic educational authorities has mainly

⁴ Financial support provided to schools in addition to school fees by State and Federal Australian governments.

focused on the areas of history and effectiveness. In the area of history most of the research has focused on the foundational stories of these organisations and has in general been documented through organisationally funded histories (Lutterall, 1997; CEO Sydney, 2007). These histories have mainly focused on the personalities and events of the foundation of these organisations and the subsequent reflections of the key participants in the history.

Some research has also been completed on the effectiveness of these Catholic educational authorities. This research has included external performance reviews that have focused on the success of strategic goals (Gamble, 2004). Other research and subsequent articles have focused on the effectiveness of the leaders within these organisations. These include principals (D’Orsa & D’Orsa, 1997; Cannon, 2005), assistant principals and religious education co-ordinators (Hyde, 2006; Fleming, 2002; Crotty, 2002, 2006).

There has been some research (Bracken, 2004; Turkington, 2004) into the effectiveness of policies, particular programmes or the extent to which these systems adapt, re-act and deal with contemporary educational trends. This particular case study focuses on the policy and reporting documents of the selected Catholic Educational Authority as the basis for the *thick description*. The focus of this description is the extent to which the pedagogical principle of meaning-making is incorporated into policy and the lived experience of the Catholic secondary schools administered by the Authority.

Merriam (1998) highlights the fact that “the bounded system or case might be selected because it is an instance of some concern issue or hypothesis” (p.28). This research focuses on the extent to which one particular Catholic Educational Authority can or does provide educational opportunity and resources for young people to develop meaning-making capacities. As stated in the context section of Chapter One, the role that schools can play in developing the meaning-making capacities of young people is an emerging concern of the Australian government (MCEETYA, 1999; DEST, 2005a), the Church (Australian Bishops Conference, 1998; Hoge, Dinges, Johnson & Gonzales, 2001; Smith & Lundquist-Denton, 2005) and educational research (de Ruyter, 2002a, Crawford & Rossiter 2006; Mason et

al, 2006; Hughes, 2007a). This previous research has focused on theory and foundational statements. The research in this thesis has a basis in this theory, creates its own theory and tests this theory out in a real life context.

Lastly Merriam (1998) notes that in a case study “by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case) the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (p.29). This case study seeks to investigate intentionality and the effectiveness of centralised policy in prioritising an emerging pedagogical principle. This case study:

- quantifies and evaluates the intentionality of the Authority in the area of meaning-making; and
- evaluates whether meaning-making activities that occur in schools administered by the Authority happen intentionally and flow out of the policy and strategic planning of the Authority; or are a by-product of the “hidden curriculum”, or part of the cultural context of the Catholic school.

Process of the case study

The case study methodology used for this thesis is restricted to the analysis of the documentary evidence of the chosen Authority. It focuses on the elements of the Authority that are concerned with the administration of secondary schools. To achieve the aim of the case study, a selection of the major documentation of the Catholic educational authority is analysed to evaluate how the system contributes to the meaning-making capacities of secondary school students in its care. To do this a small sample of documents are sourced from the Catholic Educational Authority Sydney that will be known for the rest of the thesis as CEAS. The documents have been chosen from the three key areas of policy, religious education and commissioned research. The documents to be examined are listed below.

Table 1. CEAS Policy documents examined in the case study

Policy	CEAS Strategic Plan covering 2005-2006.
	CEAS Annual Reports 2005-2006.
	CEAS policies related to the pastoral care of secondary students.
Religious Education	CEAS Religious Education foundational section of the curriculum.
Commissioned Research	The research reports commissioned by the CEAS on the faith development of secondary students in the diocese.

Data analysis: Coding

Coding is the method by which the documents of the case study are analysed.

Codes can be described as the:

tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes are usually attached to “chunks” of varying size-words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one (e.g. metaphor) (Miles & Huberman in Coffey, & Atkinson, 1996, p.28).

In discourse analysis there is not a prescriptive method by which the researcher should code. The purpose of coding is to enable the researcher to systematically deal with vast quantities of data and to develop “categories of interest” (Gill, 2000, in Bauer & Gaskell, 2000 p.179) which may eventually develop into themes within the discourse. Gill stated that there is a process to relate phases within the coding process. This process starts with a search for a pattern in the data and the second and more important phase is the formation of hypotheses about aspects of the discourse and checking these hypotheses against the data. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) are clearer in the distinction they make between quantitative coding and qualitative coding. Quantitative coding is used to reduce the data so it is manageable and so that statistics can be produced about certain phenomena. Qualitative coding, is used not just to make data manageable, but (a) to notice and trace new phenomena; (b) to collect examples of these phenomena; and (c) to analyse the phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.29). In the development of categories for data analysis, the aim is “to construct categories or themes that capture some recurring pattern that cuts across the data” (Merriam, 1998, p.179). Merriam suggests five guidelines for the effective development of categories, utilising the constant comparative method of data analysis. Categories should be:

- reflect the purpose of the research;
- exhaustive;
- mutually exclusive;
- sensitising; and
- conceptually congruent (Merriam, 1998, pp.183-184).

The documents are coded from two perspectives. The first is from the perspective of *spiritual capital* and the second is from the *meaning in life* perspective. The *Spiritual Capital Codes* are based on the work of Caldwell (2007) and measure the “coherence between values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning” (Caldwell,

2007, p.55). While this terminology has emanated from the field of economics and was developed to quantify the economic contribution of Churches and social welfare agencies to society, Caldwell has modified the term in an educational context to describe the human, communal and spiritual contributions that schools make to the lives of individuals and the communities. This researcher has further developed the human, communal and spiritual interpretation of Caldwell's indicators of spiritual capital by including elements of the *Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* (Miller, 2006) in the descriptions of these indicators which are included in Chapter Seven of this thesis. The documents are thus coded to trace the contribution that the CEAS makes to the development of elements of a Catholic identity and the capacity of secondary students in the schools administered by the authority to contribute to the spiritual capital of the school as indicated by the chosen documents.

The Meaning in Life codes are derived from the pedagogical meaning-making model used in phase one that combines the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003). This model was chosen as the theoretical basis of the coding of the documents in the case study as it draws on the theoretical foundation covered in the literature review. Carneiro's matrix is an independently published construct that is not influenced by the interpretation of the author of the thesis. Some aspects of the matrix are slightly modified in light of Merriam's (1998) view that codes should reflect the purpose of the research and should be mutually exclusive. The thesis shows the results of applying this coding to the documentation and the emerging trends from the analysis of the coding that transfer the "coded data into meaningful data" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 47).

The coding of the documents uses the software programme *Atlis Ti*. One of the reasons for choosing to use this package was that Atlas Ti has the capacity to represent codes non-hierarchically, which is unique among the common software packages used for this style of analysis. A second factor in the choice was the capacity of the programme to represent relationships using the graphic organiser and the capacity the researcher has to work within the graphic organiser to manipulate codes and build theory in a way that is similar to the mind-mapping software *Inspiration*.

Strengths and weaknesses of case study methodology

As with any research method, case studies have strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths of case study methodology include the fact that case studies allow generalisations from the individual instance to a whole system. They pay attention to the subtlety and complexity of the individual instance. Case studies are also a “step to action” (Cohen et al, 2000, p. 184). They begin in the real world of action and contribute development of the theory and practice for that world. The insights that are developed through the investigation of a case may be directly interpreted and put to use for self-development, or provide feedback to an institution for formative evaluation and to support educational policy making (Cohen et al, 2000, p. 184).

Case studies do not have to quantify the frequency of occurrences and can replace the sterility of quantitative data with the quality and intensity of thick description. This process allows for the separation of the *significant few* illustrations of behaviour from the *insignificant many* instances of behaviour. “Significance rather than frequency is a hallmark of case studies, offering the researcher an insight into the real dynamics of situations and of people” (Cohen et al, 2000, p.185). One of the drawbacks of case studies is that the results may not be generalised except where other readers or researchers see their application. Case studies can be open to the claim that they are prone to problems of observer bias, so all reasonable steps are taken to address reflexivity.

Strengths and weaknesses of documentary evidence

In qualitative research individual interviews and focus group research is often used to evaluate the work of organisations and the implementation and effectiveness of educational programs. These methods focus on personal experience and give a particular slice of experience through the eyes of one person. Documentary evidence provides a slice of experience as documented by a collective group. The strength of documentary evidence over interview is that a document goes through a number of stages before publication. The published documents of a system of schools records the stated intention of this system and goes through a number of committee reviews before its publication. The strategic plans of an educational organisation incorporate the collective hopes and intentions of the organisation, and

are representative of the intentions of the sub-groups of the organisation and therefore are not the by-products of one person's vision.

This research focuses on Catholic schools which are one of the educational arms of the Church. The Roman Catholic Church is a church of documents. The Church outlines its beliefs and policy in Catechisms, Pastoral Letters, Professions of Faith, Decrees, Instructions, Declarations, Encyclicals, Apostolic Epistles, Apostolic Exhortations and Apostolic Constitutions. There is a tradition within the Church to examine the documents of the Church to uncover shifts in the theological stance and intent of the Church. This research builds on this tradition and has chosen to limit itself to documentary evidence.

The Annual Report of CEAS summarises and reports the work of the CEAS Board and its sub-committees. These reports document the success of strategic planning of the organisation. These summaries of the annual work of the organisation by nature have to be evidence based and therefore have more status than the reflections of individual participants in a programme. In summary the advantages of documentary evidence are that it:

- describes the intentionality of the system and of the school,
- is evidence based,
- is committee reviewed, and
- describes the collective experience of the system rather than individual experience.

Documentary material has been chosen as it provides an accurate statement of the intentionality of the organisation because of its relationship to the aims of this research.

Some of the disadvantages of documentary evidence are that it can be clinical in nature and can lack the thick descriptions that interview and focus groups can provide. Another drawback of documentary evidence is that because documents are public in nature, politically sensitive issues can be omitted or modified to protect the organisation. Lastly the researcher needs to carefully examine and interpret documents to take into account the political and social context and the power relationships that they may reflect.

A case study that focuses on documentary evidence stands half way between the starkness of numeric description favoured by quantitative case studies and the thick description based on the reflections of individual participants that are provided by case studies based on personal interviews and focus groups. A case study purely focused on the evaluation of documents is based in evidence and provides a thicker description than that found in quantitative methods and is not bound by pure numeric description.

Issues of validity and reliability

Ensuring the validity of data is an integral part of the research process. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) stated that when a study can prove that it has internal validity it simultaneously proves that it has reliability (p.324). Hitchcock and Hughes go on to state that there is no ultimate assurance of validity as it involves interpretation on the part of the researcher, so there are only notions of validity. Hitchcock suggests one of the ways to increase the internal validity of a case study is through using the strategy of triangulation.

Triangulation can be defined “as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of human behaviour (Cohen et al, 2000, p.112).

Validity in this thesis is established through data triangulating, using data from three separate but related sources. The original themes of the literature which are the source of the pedagogical meaning-making model are based in educational theory. The second source of the data is based on the documentation of an educational system, which is coded for its contribution to the development of spiritual capital which is community focused. Lastly these same documents are coded to evaluate the contribution the CEAS makes to the individual’s capacity to make meaning in life.

This data triangulation can be summarised in the following way:

1. Theoretical base (Extended Literature review and ensuing meaning-making model).
2. Analysis of the system’s contribution to spiritual capital.
3. Analysis of the system’s contribution to the development of personalised meaning.

This allows for three different views on how Catholic secondary schools can contribute to the development of meaning-making capacities of their students, which is an active response of schools and school systems to the emerging theory.

Conclusion

In the analysis of the methodology and in the underlying perspectives, this chapter has given the context in which the research question will be addressed. It has also established the phases in which the data will be collected and organised and the framework of how the sub-questions will be responded to. The chapter has provided the theoretical basis to the research design and established the validity of the data obtained and the interpretation provided. The extended literature review that follows in Chapters Three, Four and Five will follow the research design described in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Changing paradigms of education

Introduction

This chapter establishes a framework to describe the historical evolution of school-based education. It traces and analyses the historical and economic factors that have led to significant change in the way western society is organised and structured. These societal shifts have in turn, challenged and changed the theoretical assumptions about the aims and functions of school-based education and have led to resulting shifts in pedagogical practices.

According to Kuhn, a paradigm is a major theoretical construct or the set of beliefs that underpin a field (Crotty, 1998, p.35). Therefore any set of understandings or beliefs that form the current paradigm within the educational context are a product of, or are influenced by, the historical, cultural and economic situation out of which they have emerged. Beare (2001) identified three major historical periods that have influenced the development of school-based education. These periods are the pre-industrial age, the industrial age and the post-industrial age. Each of these periods reflects the economic framework, social context and style of education appropriate to the era.

At the conclusion of the chapter a schema summarises the differences in these three time periods to provide a basis for the analysis of the current educational climate from both sociological and educational perspectives. This analysis traces the subtle shifts occurring within the current educational paradigm.

Each of these historical eras covers a diverse and lengthy period of western development. Each historical period is considered from the perspectives of the nature of society, the perceptions about childhood and the role and educational approach adopted within society at that time. As religious education is central to the conception of Catholic schooling, the mode of religious education in each era is also examined.

A large section of this chapter addresses the role of education within western society. This analysis will specifically examine the role that secondary schools play within this context. A focus of this analysis is the educational and philosophical assumptions that underpin the curriculum, the process of implementation of the curriculum and the pedagogical activities that flow from these assumptions. The chapter finally examines the paradigm shifts that have historically occurred within religious education.

The analysis of religious education is undertaken because religious education is an essential dimension of every Catholic school. The Vatican document, *The Catholic School* (1977) justified the Church commitment to Catholic schools:

She establishes her own schools because she considers them as a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man (sic), since the school is a centre in which a specific concept of the world, of man (sic), and of history is developed and conveyed (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, No. 8).

In establishing schools the Church fosters the formation of its students by “a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life” (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, No. 37). In schools the main method for bringing faith into contact with the students’ culture is through religious education. Therefore the analysis of historical shifts in religious education is crucial to understanding the changing nature of the Catholic school. The tracking of these shifts in religious education will focus specifically on the theoretical constructs of religious education that have emerged and developed during the nominated historical eras.

Key social and economic factors that influence the model of schooling

This section of the Chapter explores the underlying factors that impact on the model of schooling. These factors include social structure, the dominant economic model and the understanding and place of childhood. Following the analysis of social and economic factors that have framed the key historical eras of Western society, the final section of the chapter focuses on the related distinguishing features of the model of schooling that is a by product of each historical era.

As the majority of the twenty-first century social, economic and formal education systems in Australia have traditionally been directly or indirectly influenced by Great Britain, Europe and more recently the United States of America, this summary will limit its focus to the educational paradigms that are a function of these western societies.

Any system of education is influenced by a number of key forces in the society. The first of these is concerned with how the society should be structured. This view affects the leadership of a society, how the society is organised and the place of class lines, and ultimately how the society is governed. These perceptions of the social construct of a society not only affect the educational opportunities individuals have in different historical eras but also how schools are designed, organised and administered to reflect these underlying social beliefs and mores. This analysis of schooling within different social structures will also specifically examine how childhood is perceived in different eras and how the functions and forms of schooling adapt to the changing role and status of the child in society.

Another important factor that influences a particular paradigm of education is the philosophical view that a society adopts with regard to knowledge and learning. Views of knowledge and learning have flow-on effects impacting on the relationships between rights and responsibilities, the individual and the state and the provision of opportunities to access the resources provided by the state that support the acquisition and creation of knowledge.

The last key societal force that impacts on a particular paradigm of education is the dominant economic model of the era. Economics not only has a direct relationship with the wealth and prosperity of a society but also affects the opportunities of different social classes. Economics can also indirectly affect the aims of education through the re-direction of resources to either support or contest teleological or instrumentalist models of schooling.

As many educationalists, sociologists and social commentators have written a great deal in this area, this analysis could be a thesis in itself. In the light of this, and for the purpose of clarity and coherence the development of this chapter has its primary

focus on the work of Beare (2001) who analysed societal forces on the model of schooling; Bessant, Sercombe & Watts (1998) who described the social forces that impacted on the development of the concept of adolescence; Hamilton (1990) who historically traced curriculum theory; Lepani (2001) who predicted some societal trends that impact on schooling; Marthaler (1990) and Postman (1994), who described the historical emergence of childhood and its possible disappearance; Senge et al (2000) who focussed on school and curriculum design; and Kalantzis, Cope & Harvey (2003) who explored the place of schooling in contemporary society. The work of these theorists has been synthesised to form the analysis of each historical era.

At the conclusion of the discussion on each of the key factors that contributes to the educational paradigm, a statement of insights will be listed. These insights will draw on the historical research undertaken to make conclusions and draw conceptual links to the current model and to possible future conceptions of schooling. These insights will be used in subsequent Chapters to make a case that the current model of schooling needs to adapt and change to meet the educational, emotional, spiritual and meaning-making needs of twenty- first century learners. Society is the first of these factors to be considered.

Changes within society

Pre-industrial age

In the pre-industrial age or the agrarian society people lived on the land or in country towns. People were generally localised in their social and commercial dealings for geographical reasons and because of a lack of transportation. During this time there were few large cities and the cities that did exist were developed for military, commercial or political reasons. The major influences on these communities were the seasons, the weather and the cultivation and harvest of the land. Other significant influences on the members of these societies was religious practice and the indigenous spirituality of the area. The influence of religion on the political, social and educational structures of these societies was particularly apparent. Generally in the pre-industrial age the society was organised along class lines with monarchs and nobility having status and privilege while the majority of

the people in the society were employed in pastoral and agricultural industries (Beare, 2001, p.26). Due to geographic isolation and limited forms of both mass communication and transportation, most people were inward looking, closed to new ideas and conservative in nature. The high mortality of children and adults due to poor health and hygiene, combined with war and a “crime and punishment” theology of redemption, led people to be fatalistic by nature (Lepani, 2001, p. 4).

Industrial age

The coming of the industrial age took place at different times in different societies. In Great Britain it happened in the seventeenth century while in parts of China it has only occurred over the last sixty years. From an Australian perspective the time frame of this period and its effects on our development would be identified as the period from the nineteenth century to the mid to late twentieth century. The industrial age was a period when mass production used specialisation and factory production line assembly to maximise output and profits.

Industrialisation led to the demise of the small town and the creation of cities as workers moved to the centres of industry. While the social focus of the pre-industrial age had been the local community, one result of the industrial age was the demise of the local community as mass migration drew the population away from small towns to the regional cities and suburbs where factories were located and work was to be found. This centralisation of population led to the development of the nation state and centralised forms of government. It also resulted in the creation of bureaucracies to manage the means of production and to guarantee and safeguard the economic needs of the society and its citizens (Beare, 2001, pp.28-29).

According to Bottery (2000), the effect of the creation of the nation state was:

to move – and was intended to move - the focus of norms, values and beliefs beyond the individual and the local community, and fix them, and the concept of citizenship, at the level of the nation state (Bottery, 2000, p.3).

The rise of industrialism and the development of the nation state also contributed to the creation of mass education systems and the beginnings of compulsory education as we know it today. The aims of mass education included the development of the skills that would be needed by industrialised workers and the inculcation of common values. These values, transmitted via educational institutions, would lay

down the foundations for a sense of nationalism and a common direction for the masses. Bottery (2000) summarised the aims of education in the industrial nation at this time as the spread of a dominant culture, the development of political and cultural unity and the propagation of popular ideologies of nationhood (Bottery, p.3). Another feature of society during this period was that the society was structured according to the types of work undertaken by citizens and the income that was generated by this work. This social structure was a shift from a classed society based on nobility to one based on wealth acquired through skills, trade and work. One of the key determiners in wealth creation was access to education.

Post-industrial society

Beare (2001) argued that we are currently living in a post-industrial society where fewer people are employed in factory production, and the vast majority of the western world are employed in service industries and a new workforce has emerged called “knowledge workers”. We live in an age where multi-national companies are at times more economically powerful than nation states and where issues of globalisation and international money markets dominate the local political agendas.

According to Bottery (2000) globalisation has been associated with the spread of western languages, specifically English, the dominance of a free market economic ideology and the spread of a dominant popular culture that has American influence as its foundation. Bottery uses the work of Waters (1995) when stating that globalisation has three forms: economic, political and cultural. The focus of economic globalisation is the development of a global market based on free trade where there is little or no interference by individual nation states or by trading or economic blocks such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the European Union (EU). The focus of political globalisation is the rise of international organisations that have moved into the traditional areas of responsibility of the nation state. These areas include trade, health and education overseen by organisations such as the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), the Organisation for Economic and Community Development (OECD), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The policies

and international agreements of these globalised political organisations often supersede, or are at odds with, the existing laws of the individual nation states.

Lastly cultural globalisation is paradoxical as it is associated with both the homogenisation of cultures and the mixing or amalgamation of cultures (Bottery 2000, pp.7-13). Examples of this amalgamation in the culinary world are the dominance of western fast food outlets such as McDonalds that exist alongside the fusion of Asian and European influences in Modern Australian cuisine. Another example is the spread of Hip Hop music from its urban African American roots to be the music of choice of youth around the world and the development of world music where indigenous music from around the globe is valued in its own right but is also merged with western music to form new entities. The popularity of *youtube*, *itunes*, *facebook* and *myspace* has allowed social networking on an unprecedented international scale and the rapid meshing of cultures and ideas. These are a few examples that are indicators of the growth of a globalised culture that is driven by developments in technology and mass communication in general and more specifically by the power of the World Wide Web. While social commentators and academics have begun to trace the impact of the Internet on Western society, the analysis of its true effects will need to be examined over a much longer period of time.

Another descriptor of a post-industrial western society is the growth of widespread personal wealth and consumption. Hamilton and Denniss (2005) describe in an Australian context, the pursuit of wealth and the consumerism that is associated with it as *affluenza*. These authors characterise affluenza as an “epidemic of over consumption” (p.7) where

People in affluent countries are now even more obsessed with money and material acquisition, and the richer they are the more this seems to be the case (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005, p.5).

Some of the indicators of this over consumption are the size of domestic housing, the growth of personal debt, the percentage of income spent on consumer goods and the average amount of waste created per person. Indicators of the negative impact that over-consumption has on individuals are the average number of hours worked per person, the incidence of depression and the consumption of alcohol and

medication used to induce feelings of wellbeing (Hamilton & Denniss, 2005, pp.100-129). While this excessive consumption is perceived as a function of western society it is also becoming evident in the emerging economies of Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Excessive consumer consumption may be one indicator that a nation state has moved from an industrial based economy to a post-industrial economy.

The challenges faced by post-industrial society

Western society is moving into a new yet unnamed era that is marked by unprecedented change and complexity. This era is being moulded by the effects of a globalised interconnected society where information, communication and entertainment systems have converged. This internationalised technology based world is unstable in nature and established knowledge and practice is constantly being questioned. In this new world, members of western society have ready access to more information than individuals could possibly need and the genesis of new ideas takes primacy over structural frameworks. In a society that has ready access to the World Wide Web children can no longer be protected from confronting, disturbing and at times dangerous information. This requires families and schools to support students in dealing with these issues. No earlier era has needed young people to develop the capacity to critically analyse the information available to them and to possess a highly developed moral and ethical system to help them make wise decisions about the opportunities available to them, to the same extent as this post-industrial society.

The complexity of modern western society places pressures on individuals and their relationships. Marriage and traditional family life is affected by financial pressures, de-regulated working hours, fertility issues, changing views on child rearing and a diversity of views about the life-long nature of marriage. These pressures and the diversity of views about the meaning and purpose of this institution have led to an increased incidence of family breakdown and subsequent effects on the stability of the environments in which children are raised.

As well as interpersonal issues there are other social problems confronting this new age. This age in western society is characterised by individualism and

consumerism. One of the effects of an individualised society is the widening gap between the rich and the poor. This inequality of wealth leads to endemic poverty for the uneducated, the unemployed and for some young people. In communities where poverty dominates there are increased levels of violence, crime, depression, teenage pregnancy and failure to complete schooling. Consumerism in western society has led to individuals working long hours to afford lifestyles that enable the purchasing of designer goods. This pursuit can lead to over-consumption, financial pressures and unrealistic and unrealised expectations.

As well as these personal issues western society faces the challenge of global issues which include global warming, a by-product of industrialisation in western society, and the rapid growth of the emerging economies of India and China. As well as global warming there are the challenges of environmental degradation caused by population growth, industrialisation and the excessive consumption of natural resources. Lastly, there is the global issue of terrorism and war which is a by-product of competing political, economic and religious ideologies, the inequalities in wealth between and within nations and differing views on how the resources of the earth should be used and shared. The tensions surrounding these issues, which in some cases have been growing for decades, have led to global tensions that have manifested themselves in new approaches to violence and war.

Insights for contemporary schooling

A number of identified factors within the economic and social structure in these three key historical periods provide this research with the following insights into the relationships between social and economic context and the model of schooling:

1. Economic forces that impact on western society are far more complex in the post-industrial era. Individual countries have less and less control over their economy, the structure of society and destiny, and are reliant on the politics of international trading groups and the business plans of trans-national companies.
2. Individuals are no longer simply members of their local communities as they have a multiplicity of links to the global community. These links are created through a variety of sources but are dominated by technology and the media.

3. The increased rate of urbanisation and the emergence of super cities has brought a number of social problems, including the destabilisation of rural communities, unemployment, urban poverty, crime, pollution and environmental degradation.
4. The relationships within society are more complex and fluid than in any other time in western history. The centrality of the roles of marriage and traditional family relationships and structure are being challenged.
5. A more complex interdependent society demands that its schooling system help young people deal with the effects of the emerging new world.

These insights into the emerging trends in the structure of contemporary society raise a number of issues and challenges for secondary schooling. One key challenge is a sense of hopelessness as a common response to feeling a lack of control over economic trends, environmental changes and global conflict and a subsequent tendency to live life in the moment rather than investing emotionally in an unknown future. This thesis addresses the need for pedagogy to respond to these societal challenges.

Developing understandings of childhood

The nature of childhood is another aspect of society where the changes in approach over time can be traced and examined and are found to influence the nature and purpose of schooling. The attitude of a society to its youngest members can provide insights into how that society is structured, and the values and decisions of that society on a whole range of issues.

In the pre-industrial era there was no distinctive social separation between childhood and adulthood. In this society, with its high infant and adult mortality rates, the separation of the world of the child and the world of the adult did not exist. Because many children died at birth or in their early years, often parents had a number of children in the knowledge that only a few would survive into adulthood. Even in adulthood life was tenuous and this meant that no one in society was protected from the realities of life and death.

In pre-industrial western society, infancy ended and adulthood began at the age of seven, which was when children generally gained proficiency with verbal language and the age that the Christian society determined as the “age of reason”. There was also no concept of mass education or literacy for the young since children were sent to work when they were physically able to lead productive lives. Prior to the sixteenth century in Europe, age specific children’s clothes, literature and jargon did not exist. When images of childhood were presented in either artwork or literature, children were portrayed as small adults. Socially, children were offered no protections from the adult world. Children participated in the world of work and war and were not shielded from issues of sexuality and death. In the pre-industrial society, shame associated with sexuality was a foreign concept and there was no “secret knowledge” only available to adult members of society (Postman, 1994, pp 16-19).

Bessant et al (1998) traced the development of the concepts of adolescence and youth, commenting that the development of “youth” as a concept did not occur until after the medieval and pre-industrial practices of apprenticeships or service were replaced or diminished in society (Bessant et al, 1998, p.6). So the major life stages in pre-industrial society were infancy (0-7); apprenticeship, where young people lived with their employer; and adulthood, with the establishment of a new household and family.

Bessant et al discussed the impact that the views of the French philosopher Rousseau (1712-1778) had on the nature of childhood and how in turn these ideas influenced the views of the broader population with regard to children and childhood in the eighteenth century. Rousseau wrote the famous text *Emile*. Rousseau had the firm belief that children were fundamentally good and it was a person’s environment that influenced or corrupted them. Rousseau believed that children learned through experience and that the experience of childhood needed to be valued.

Childhood has its ways of seeing, thinking and feeling, which are proper to it. Nothing is less sensible than to want to substitute ours for theirs (90) (Rousseau in Palmer (ed), 2001, p.56).

Rousseau produced a schema of human development known as the “Four Ages of Man”(sic). These stages were the “age of nature” (0-12); the “age of reason or intelligence” (12-15); the “age of force” (15-20); and the “age of wisdom” (20-25). These stages were followed by “the age of happiness,” which lasted for the rest of a person’s life (Palmer, 2001, p.57). These positive views proposed by Rousseau on the nature of children eventually filtered into mainstream thought in the Western industrial world. This shift in mindset about children led the general population to think differently about childhood and eventually affected how children were reared and educated and the social policies that were developed to support children.

Children were thought to be innocent and virtuous until spoiled by the cruelties and distortions of society. Therefore they should be isolated from the adult world, cocooned in a carefree world of childhood, of nature, of play. Influenced by these new ideas, ‘child savers’ and industrial reformers began to agitate for government action to restrict the labour of children in factories and mines (Bessant et al, 1998, p.9).

Postman (1994) believed the development of the concept of childhood was a by product of the development of the printing press when the written word became available to all social classes and literacy skills led to wider access to social status and economic advantage. Postman described how traditionally in agrarian society, infancy ended when the infant had full command of verbal language. With the development of the printing press, the end of childhood shifted to when the child was literate or in command of written language. The mechanism for developing mass literacy, especially in England, was the “elementary” school. The products of these schools were literate adults. As a result the young were no longer perceived to be small adults, but rather were viewed as unformed adults who needed schooling to become literate adults.

In the Protestant view the child is an unformed person who through literacy, education, reason, self control and shame may be made into a civilized adult (Postman, 1994, p.59).

So the concept of childhood which slowly emerged was defined by school attendance (Postman, 1994, pp. 39-41). Once children were assembled regularly in age groups characteristics particular to these age groups were observed and described. Childhood became a more recognised stage in human development. Some of the indicators of the development of childhood were children’s clothing, child specific language, children’s books, toys, learning approaches that were age

specific and the increased focus of parents and the family on the development and protection of children.

As the length of compulsory education has been extended childhood has lengthened.

Childhood has been divided into infancy, childhood and adolescence or youth.

The result was a state of dependence longer than that experienced by the previous generation, which in effect entailed the creation of the new stage of life corresponding to what is now called adolescence (Giles in Bessant et al, 1998, p.9).

In an Australian context the compulsory school age has increased on more than one occasion. The timing of these increases has often been in response to economic downturns or changes in work practices where the consequences have meant there has been a decreased need for the labour of the young. During the nineteenth century when concerns about a lack of direction and delinquency among both middle and working class youth emerged, the concept of the secondary school was developed. So the initial social reason for the creation of secondary schools was to separate adolescents from children and to exert social control over adolescents.

Extensions of the school leaving age have always been at least as much about social control - delinquency and unemployment - as they have been about education (Polk 1993; Lawson & Silver 1973, p.383). With each policy move to increase the effective school leaving age, the length of time in adolescence increases. (Bessant et al, 1998, p.15).

Currently the distinction between where childhood or adolescence finishes and adulthood begins in western society has become less clear. Once the markers for adulthood were joining the workforce, voting, establishing one's own home, lifelong relationships and the raising of children. These were clear and universally recognised signs of adult status. Statistically the average age at which Australians are now entering full time employment for the first time, leaving the parental home, owning their first home and having their first child (Bessant et al, 1998, p.29), is increasing while the average age for a child's first experience of alcohol or the first sexual relationship is decreasing.

A quarter of a century ago, there had been clearly defined markers of the transition from youth to adulthood: leaving home and buying a house, finishing school and starting work, marriage and starting a family. Today, the social structures which accompanied these transitions have changed considerably - employment has lost its permanence, moving from full-time to part-time or contractual work; relationships are less formal and have less commitment attached to them; housing and mortgages, in the context of

uncertain income for the long-term future, is not a consideration for many young adults (Dwyer, Harwood & Tyler, 1998, p.1).

Formal rites of passage of childhood to adulthood in western society have also all but disappeared with marriage being the exception. Even marriage has become a choice rather than a compulsory activity in modern society.

Not only has the length of childhood changed but the experience of childhood is very different depending on the historical period into which a person is born. The time frames into which people are born have become a means of analysing the way a generation will interpret and deal with their social circumstances. Time frames have been labelled with such terms as “baby boomers” (1945- 1964), “Gen X”, (1965 - 1979) “Gen Y” (1980- 1999) and the “Millennials” (2000-). Human resource experts have researched and listed the key social and historical factors that have influenced each generation and have labelled the dominance of the views of one generation over the other as *generational change*. So now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century there is not one experience of childhood but a range of experiences that shift every ten to fifteen years and schools need to adjust and change to meet these nuances.

Insights for contemporary schooling

The conclusions that can be drawn about the changing nature of childhood are:

1. In western society childhood is now a recognised period of development and children are protected under local, national and international law.
2. Children are a product of complex and diverse communities and face a range of social issues. These issues include family breakdown, issues of sexuality, mental illness, body image and substance use and abuse.
3. The period of childhood and adolescence has been extended in the western world. This has led to changes in the nature of the relationships between children and parents. The lengthening of childhood and adolescence has also led to a lack of consensus about when adulthood begins, which has social implications, especially for young men. This has affected the length of formal and compulsory schooling and the nature of the curriculum this requires.

4. Schools play an essential role in the emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth and development of children and are expected to carry out many roles which were previously the responsibility of stable families and communities.

This developing understanding of childhood and childhood's relationship to schooling is a key element in any paradigm of education. Chapter Four of this thesis through reference to youth spirituality research studies, will argue that an extended length of adolescence and shifting understanding of childhood that is a product of complex and changing social context, has led to anxiety in young people surrounding issues of meaning and purpose. Chapters Five and Six will explore how this changing understanding of childhood and adolescence and its effect on young people's capacity to make meaning will change the conception and role of the Catholic secondary school.

The changing nature of schooling

Over time, approaches to schooling have changed to reflect the attitudes and values of particular societies. As society developed new approaches were adopted to reflect and support the societal changes. In the pre-industrial era the model of schooling mirrored the organisation of the society.

A tiered form of education existed which led to a distinction between manual pursuits (training) and intellectual pursuits (education). When they were young, members of the poorer classes were taken on as apprentices by qualified tradespeople to pursue apprenticeships. Wealthy people on the other hand, received a liberal education focusing on languages, the arts, philosophy and theology. The few schools formed during this period were influenced by the structures of the monastery, the military and the feudal state. These influences were physically evident in terms of architectural design where schools and their surrounds often replicated the design of stately homes. The other influences of the monastery, military and feudal state on schools included the emphasis on discipline, the focus on order and status, and the wearing of uniforms by staff and students (Beare, 2001, p.26).

Schools at this time were also the product of their own local communities and their structures were based on the needs of the local community, rather than being organised by bureaucratic centralised bodies. Schools were generally designed for boys or segregated along sex lines.

In pre-industrial societies, education was informal, small-scale and practical, and normally consisted of sexually differentiated forms of apprenticeship, accompanied by grounding in the norms and beliefs of society (Bottery, 2000, p.3).

Vestiges of all these influences can still be seen to varying degrees in contemporary Australian schools.

With the coming of the industrial age, schools in the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth century started to replicate the factory in terms of building design and curriculum delivery. Knowledge was compartmentalised into subjects and students were processed through schools in homogenous age groups to respond to the large numbers of students needing to be educated as a result of the introduction of compulsory schooling. The terminology used in schools at this time reflected this factory model mentality, with terms such as programmes, projects, and modules reflecting the factory practice of moving through an assembly or production line (Beare, 2001, p.32).

Bessant et al (1998) also traced the development of schooling for middle class youth in the early to mid nineteenth century. Bessant et al described how the middle class withdrew its support for sending their children to be apprentices. This shift of support occurred because of the fear that the “masters” would mistreat their children or that their children would be corrupted through coming into contact with the lower classes. Most children of the middle class were kept at home until boys went to university or girls were married. Some small schools did exist at this time and the feature of this traditional form of schooling included a curriculum designed as a preparation for theological training. Such schools were private and expensive with little or no vocational focus.

The pressure of having a large number of middle class children at home with no prospect of meaningful work was one of the factors which led to the re-designing of schools.

The reformed boarding school of the nineteenth century, which became the model for schools more generally, was a total institution, dedicated to controlling the minds and bodies of the sons of the middle classes (Bessant et al, 1998, p. 8).

At the same time the need for working class children to be used as unskilled labour was diminishing as the increased use of mechanisation in factories led to large-scale unemployment in the working classes. The broader population was concerned about large numbers of young people on the streets with nothing meaningful to do and schooling was one solution to the problem of directionless youth.

Insights for contemporary schooling

The conclusions that can be drawn about the changing nature of schools that challenge the present pedagogical perspectives are:

1. Shifts in the nature of society impact on the conceptions, aims and practices of schooling.
2. The design of schools is affected by the aspirations of particular societies.
3. Schools over time have increased the role they play in the social and emotional development of young people.
4. The future direction of schooling nationally and internationally is open to contest.
5. Contemporary schooling systems are concerned with the challenges dealing with
 - links between work and learning
 - student choices
 - relevance and meaning
 - interdependence
 - artificial subject boundaries and the boundaries between
 - educational theories and practice
 - elements of today's post-industrial schools still reflecting the needs and issues of the industrial world.
6. A key element in the changing understanding of schooling is the debate around curriculum, pedagogy and issues of classroom practices.

Emerging concepts of curriculum

Just as childhood and schooling reflected the social norms of the time, the same can be said of curriculum trends. Schools and school-based education in the agrarian era was classical in nature and the curriculum was primarily designed as the preparation of young men for clerical life. According to Hamilton (1990) the

curriculum for pre-industrial schools can be traced back to the development of the liberal arts in Europe in the seventh century. The seven liberal arts were divided into two components known as the *trivium* and the *quadrivium* (Hamilton, 1990, p.11). The curriculum of the trivium included the areas of reading, writing, speaking, logic and rhetoric. The quadrivium included teachings about geometry, geography, arithmetic, astronomy and harmony. The Emperor Charlemagne in the 800s required that all bishops and abbots of monasteries promote scholarship and open schools in the local villages and towns and that these schools should give instruction that included reading, writing, singing and using texts linked to the trivium and quadrivium (Hamilton, 1990, p.12). The Scholastic movement in the 1100s modified the method used since the 800s for the construction of curriculum. Scholasticism was the method of instruction by which logic and philosophy were taught and this method of study also affected the approaches adopted by both the teacher and the school. By the 1500s, during the Reformation, Peter Ramus started to develop logic maps referred to as Ramist maps. These maps developed a curriculum taxonomy that clustered common ideas that education should address. These logic maps helped both students and teachers focus on the “what” and the “how” questions of schooling and gave students keys to unlock the knowledge contained in the liberal arts and science areas (Hamilton, 1990, p.26).

With the coming of industrialisation, thinking about curriculum was further refined. According to Hamilton (1990) curriculum thinking in the twentieth century was dominated by the tension between two groups of theorists. There were those theorists who wanted a return to the known curriculum methods and those who wanted a more progressive approach to the development of curriculum. These tensions can be summarised as those who sought

(1) to re-establish the world of absolutism (e.g. via approved maps, route-plans and destinations) and (2) attempts to redefine the curriculum thinking along progressive lines (e.g. those that respect the intellectual autonomy of the teacher and the learner (Hamilton, 1990, p.42).

Curriculum changes in New South Wales

As a nation Australia is just over one hundred years old and historically schools and school-based curriculum have been the responsibility of the individual states. Each state has had a different approach to curriculum. Analysis of the curriculum

development in the industrial age will focus on the curriculum developed in New South Wales, as the case study in phase two of this thesis will focus on a system of Catholic schools based in New South Wales (N.S.W.).

Barcan (2004) described the philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum in N.S.W. until the 1940s as a humanist-realist version of a liberal education. At the core of this style of curriculum was the belief that the curriculum should explore:

- the relationship between humanity and nature
- the building of character and ideas and
- the knowledge of things (Barcan, 2004, p.16).

As well as the classical foundations that were embedded in the aims of education in N.S.W. there was also a commitment by the educational authorities to the transmission of a cultural inheritance, which included training of the mind, the development of moral character and physical training that would equip young people to be of value to their families and the society (Barcan, 2004, p.19). These philosophical foundations were translated into a curriculum that had a strong emphasis on literature, history and science with the experience of a classical or traditional language such as Latin, French or German. While all students experienced a common curriculum in primary school at the end of primary school, students were assessed on their ability to cope with a liberal humanist style of curriculum through sitting the Primary Final examinations. The results in these examinations and the students' perceived abilities directed students into one of two options for further education. Students progressed onto high schools, which were university focused and the continuation of a liberal education, or they attended technical high schools which were utilitarian in nature and followed a vocationally based curriculum.

Emerging pedagogy

Kalantzis et al (2003) described the pedagogy associated with the traditional curriculum of the twentieth century as having particular features where the aim of the curriculum was to provide universal literacy and basic skills for all members of the society. The skills developed were based on memorising a set of canonical facts that were hierarchical in nature. The method of assessing knowledge was through the reproduction of facts, which were tested in a standardised manner and evaluated

empirically. The curriculum was centralised, framed by common syllabi and the content was contained within textbooks. The pedagogical methods used were didactic in nature and the teacher was the “initiator and centre of discourse” (Kalantzis et al, 2003, p.29).

In post-industrial western societies the structure, appropriateness and relevance of school-based learning is being examined in the light of great social, economic and technological change. Educational systems and schools in particular, are under pressure to produce students who are literate, numerate and technologically adept so they can take their place as functioning members of the workforce (Postman, 1996; Bottery, 2000; Beare, 2001; Conroy & Davis, 2002; de Ruyter, 2002b). Students live in a technologically advanced age and are able to access vast bodies of data quickly and with relative ease. Education no longer needs to concern itself with the imparting of information. Learning is becoming more frequently concerned with the process of how students learn to access, evaluate and re-conceptualise material in a variety of different contexts. This philosophical approach to the provision of curriculum did not take place instantaneously but has happened in stages from the 1960s to the present time.

The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by equality of opportunity for all people. It was a progressive time in education. Educators moved away from streaming according to academic ability, to the teaching of students of mixed academic ability in the one classroom. The focus of education moved from the acquisition of content and knowledge to the learning processes. Sears and Marshall (2000) believed that the change in the discourse in education was affected by the political activism and counter-cultural movements that were prevalent in the 1960s, especially in the United States of America. The late 1970s and early 1980s were characterised by an emphasis on equality of opportunity for all students and the encouragement of girls to achieve, especially in the traditionally male-dominated subjects of Mathematics and Science. Another focus was to integrate students with intellectual and physical disabilities into mainstream classrooms. These developments in education were influenced by the women’s liberation movement, and the political and social changes that were happening in the United States of America and Australia, to recognise and encourage the contributions African Americans and Indigenous

Australians made to their respective societies. The late 1980s and early 1990s, with the domination of the market economy, were characterised by choice about how education could be provided. There was an emphasis on the link between education and the skills it provided for the workplace (vocationalism) and a focus on competition between educational providers for students and government funding. These recommendations were implemented in the Education Reform Act of N.S.W. (1990).

The classroom practices that address the particular needs of students living at the beginning of the twenty-first century have become known as *twenty-first century pedagogies*. According to Mockler (2004) the basis of these twenty-first century pedagogies is found in *critical pedagogy* which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s out of the social movements in western society. Several types of critical pedagogy developed, from Hooks' *Revolutionary Feminist Pedagogy* to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Much of what we think of as underpinning twenty-first century learning has its origins in critical pedagogy. Student-centred learning, the negotiated curriculum, the differentiated curriculum and many more elements of cutting edge education have their origins in critical pedagogy (Mockler, 2004).

The work of these theorists has led to long-term changes in teacher education and teacher practice. These critical pedagogies brought about changes in the understanding of the focus of classroom activities. A shift from the teacher to the student as the central focus meant that practitioners began to reflect on the power relationships in the classroom and who and what needed to be the focus of classroom activity. To ensure that the needs of the learner were the focus of classroom practice a range of new initiatives were developed. Groundwater-Smith, Ewing and Le Cornu (2003) list a range of Australian initiatives, which include the *Project for Enhancing Effective Learning* (PEEL), *Productive Pedagogies* and programmes focused on the improvement of indigenous learning and middle schooling. These are examples that focus on the needs of students (Groundwater-Smith et al, 2003, pp. 96-101). They list the commonalities in the approaches and principles of these programmes as:

- Respect for the individual as a competent, responsible learner who needs to be active in the learning process
- Flexibility

- A meaningful curriculum, relevant and connected to real life
- A focus on the development of individual's strengths
- The provision of collaborative learning experiences (Groundwater-Smith et al, 2003, p.101).

This philosophical shift of placing the needs of the learner at the centre of all pedagogical decision-making has impacted on every aspect of school life.

Insights for contemporary schooling

The conclusions that can be made about the changing nature of curriculum are that:

1. Curriculum provision is influenced by political expedience and social trends.
2. Curriculum is used to both stabilise and replicate social norms and to challenge and reform them.
3. Curriculum is a contested ground between conservative and liberal educators.
4. Pedagogical reform is the focus for twenty-first century schooling.

The evolving critical forms of pedagogy are more clearly related to the meaning-making approach that is at the centre of this thesis than the earlier teacher dominated approaches.

Changing approaches to religious education

As previously stated religious education provides a particular focus for questions of meaning. In the pre-industrial era, religious education was informal in nature and relied on the skill and interest of the local clerics. These pastors, who were themselves educated in monastic and cathedral schools had no formal teacher training. As the majority of Catholics in pre-industrial societies were illiterate, the teaching methods were concrete in nature. The Church used the participation of the faithful in the liturgical life of the Church and the customs and popular piety surrounding local, regional and universal feasts as prime teaching moments.

Morality plays and religious theatre enabled the epic stories of Christianity to be delivered to a largely illiterate population. Oral catechesis by priests was also used to teach “the Apostles Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and some knowledge of Christian behaviour” (Marthaler, 1990, p.299). The other form of personal instruction was private confession where individuals were given personal feedback about their moral responsibilities. The prevalence and extensive use of a

variety of forms of popular piety in iconography, architecture, statues, stained glass and mosaics also helped to transmit the Gospel and universal truths.

In the industrial era the Catholic Church was still under the theological influence of the Council of Trent (1563), which reacted to the challenges posed by the Protestant Reformation. The theological and ecclesial decisions made at the Council of Trent held sway in Church teaching till Vatican Council II, held over four hundred years later. According to Lombaerts (1986) the creation of a Catholic catechism was a response to Calvin, who produced a catechism to change how Christian faith was presented. It was to be a “practical instrument for teaching and learning; it was also a symbolic book” (Lombaerts, 1986, ¶ 33). The Catholic catechism (1566) was written for priests and those who had responsibility for catechetical and liturgical instruction, to address the challenges posed to the Church from the emerging Protestant theologies. Lombaerts summarised the *Catechismo Romano*, (edited in 1566, and written by Carolus Borromeus) as

Being a *methodus* or a *compendium* of the Catholic doctrine. It had many purposes: to be the expression of an authoritative argument in matters of doctrine; to be a reference book of the Catholic doctrine for parish priests; to be a criterion for catechetical renewal (Lombaerts, 1986, ¶ 36).

Lombaerts assessed the creation of this catechism as a forward looking activity that tried to deal with the historical upheaval and dislocation of the time and an honest attempt to answer the questions posed to the Church at the Reformation. It was not a book designed as a series of short questions and answers to be memorised without thought or imagination by children.

Philosophically and sociologically, a by-product of the reformation was *modernism*. This was the era when rational thought, scientific proof and egalitarian social ideals were emerging and these ideals challenged the powerful positions held by the Church politically, socially and religiously. These new ideas forced the Church into a position where it had to justify its beliefs and doctrines and its right to set the moral and social directions for society. Wright (2004) described the building blocks of modernity in the following way.

This resulted in the emergence of three interlinked meta-narratives that together constitute the core of modernity: the naturalistic meta-narrative of the hegemony of science that offers technological control of the physical world; the romantic meta-narrative of moral,

aesthetic and spiritual sensibility that gives life meaning and purpose; and the liberal meta-narrative of the ascendancy of the principles of freedom and tolerance through which cultural diversity is governed and policed (Wright, 2004, p.22).

The challenges posed to the Catholic Church by modernism led the Church to reject modern ideas and to isolate itself. This situation created a “Church versus the rest of the world mentality”, not only within the hierarchy of the Church but also at the local church level and for individual believers. This “us versus them” approach strengthened an ecclesiology based on the ideals of the orthodoxy of theological belief, a hierarchical structure and a way for Catholics to live in acceptance of the imposed structures of the Church. One of the means by which the Catholic Church maintained this theological orthodoxy in a vast universal Church was by the introduction of simple question and answer style catechisms that were not unlike Calvin’s original catechism in structure. These catechisms as noted by Marthaler (1990, pp. 102-103) were the work of individual writers or diocesan or secular authorities: Peter Canisius (Germany, 1556), Robert Bellarmine (Italy, 1597), Caspar Astete (Spain, 1599), Claude Fleury (France, 1683), James Butler (Ireland, 1775), the Imperial Catechism (France, 1806) and the Baltimore Catechism (USA, 1885). Over time this style of catechism was adapted by local Catholic dioceses for their particular needs. These adapted catechisms were then used as the primary method of religious education throughout the industrial period in Western Catholic churches and educational institutions. Children were being prepared to know the “right” answer to the questions about life, belief and meaning.

English (2005) traced the evolution of the use of religious education textbooks in Australia and began the historical overview by describing the use of the catechism in Australian Catholic schools and parishes. The Catholic Church in Australia used Fleury’s Catechism up till 1885 but in that year Butler’s Catechism was published in Ireland and the Baltimore Catechism was produced in the United States of America. In 1885 the bishops of Australia developed and issued the *Catholic Catechism of Christian Doctrine* based on Butler’s Irish catechism. This catechism was question and answer in style and became known as the *Penny Catechism* because of its original cost.

The Australian catechism, adapted from it in 1885 pared the Irish book’s questions down to three hundred and seventy six, which

were to be learnt by rote and recalled on demand. It had no teachers' book (English, 2005, p.35).

This catechism was used throughout Australia between 1885 and 1964 and was the official text for religious education during this period. While the Church developed a child-orientated catechism to address the challenges of Protestantism and modernism, its style replicated a view of knowledge prevalent in the modern era. Knowledge in this era was perceived to be clinical, precise, scientific and provable. A person was thought to be intelligent or in control of knowledge through memorisation and replication. The question and answer style catechism gave fixed answers to questions the Church believed needed to be answered for children, even before they had the intellectual capacity to conceive the questions. The answers in the catechism were concise and contained theological justifications that the Church perceived to be proof of the validity of the answers, thus defending the Church from modernism. Its pedagogy was very similar in nature to how other subjects at school were taught. McGrath (2005) described the pedagogy of catechism based religious instruction as "like" the learning in other secular subjects, as it was teacher centred, textbook orientated and factually based (McGrath, 2005, p.52). This approach to religious education only changed with the implementation of the reforms brought about by Vatican II (1965-1967).

Much time and effort has been expended in Australia mapping the changes that have occurred in religious education as a response to Vatican Council II and the great social changes in western society in the post-industrial age. The Church has produced seven significant documents on Catholic education since 1965, each having a different focus or addressing a specific historical or social need. The primary focus of some of these documents is on the institution of the Catholic school, while others, focus on the role of the teacher or the inter-relationship between the role of the school and the family in the religious education of children. All these documents in some way address the importance of the teaching of religion or religious instruction.

In Australia, after more than one hundred and fifty years of being committed to a form of religious education based on the catechism, the theological changes of

Vatican II challenged those responsible for religious education to develop a more contemporary approach. Religious educators since Vatican II have embraced a number of different pedagogical approaches to religious education in a relatively short period of time. Local writers such as Ryan and Malone (1996), Engebretson (1997) Rossiter (1998a) Buchanan (2003) and McGrath (2005) to name a few, have chartered and published these pedagogical changes using a number of different methods of summary and analysis. These methods have included straight historical accounts; study based on Church documents; and thematic, theological and educational analysis. The causes and effects of the approaches or movements which have included the Kerygmatic approach, Life-Experience Catechesis (Ryan, 1997, p.54), Shared Christian Praxis, the phenomenological approach and the educational approach (Rossiter, 1999; Lovat, 2002) have been the basis of many journal articles and conference papers.

At this time, there is more diversity in approach to the teaching of Catholic religious education in Australia than there has been in the recent past. The debate has moved from a specific model of religious education to determining the most appropriate pedagogy for the religious education classroom. This reflects the debate within generalist education about how students best learn. The debates and their proponents focus on whether children acquire knowledge or construct it, whether the curriculum is fixed or negotiated and whether standards or the needs of the individual student should drive curriculum decision-making. These debates reflect the tensions that the transition from the industrial model of education to a post-industrial model of education pose for those who administer and teach in school systems. Traditionalists argue for the maintenance of the best of the industrial model while liberals try to justify the benefits of a more learner centred model. These philosophical differences about pedagogy and the aims and purposes of religious education have led to a variety of approaches in religious education classrooms in Australia. Some dioceses still have a pedagogy based on Shared Christian Praxis (Parramatta, Canberra-Goulburn, Hobart), others use a textbook based approach (Sydney, Melbourne), and others describe religious education in their diocese as being like learning in other curriculum areas (Broken Bay, South Australia).

Insights for contemporary schooling

The insights for this thesis that can be gained into the nature of Catholic schooling by the examination of the evolution of Catholic religious education are:

1. Formalised religious education outside the family and parish is a recent phenomenon and coincides with the introduction of compulsory schooling.
2. Changes in Catholic religious education are a by-product of theological changes within the Church.
3. The theological approach to Catholic religious education is influenced by the models of Church emanating from the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council.
4. The approach to religious education within the Catholic Church is not universal and is a by-product of the historical and educational factors within the local Church.
5. Australia's approach to Catholic religious education historically and educationally is rooted in sectarianism, state funding of Catholic schools, and the centralisation of Catholic school administration.
6. Recent changes in Catholic religious education are influenced by both theological change within the Church and curriculum and pedagogical trends within schooling systems.
7. The Church's beliefs about the acquisition of knowledge and faith (catechesis, evangelisation and new evangelisation) are also contributing factors to the current approach taken in the classroom.
8. The learner focus of much classroom pedagogy in religious education is at times in conflict with the curriculum that is expressed in traditional content language.

Religious education is a key area for this thesis as traditionally the religious educators in secondary Catholic schools have taken the primary responsibility for dealing with issues of meaning and purpose.

Summary of the historical analysis

This chapter provides some of the diverse data discussed in Chapter Two that will form the basis of the theory building in later chapters of this thesis. As described in this chapter, school-based education is influenced by political, social, economic and

religious changes in society. These shifts and changes in what the individual and the society in general sees, values and believes about the nature of school-based education, are often so subtle as to be indistinguishable. It is often only at the end of a decade, century or millennium that researchers are able to track these changes of thought process and detect trends, changes or shifts in the paradigm of school-based education. To this point, this chapter has focused on the individual elements that affect the schooling paradigm. Another way to analyse this contextual framework in which schools have, do and may operate in the future, is to combine the individual components of the paradigm into an historical and contextual framework that is described in tabular form below. The value of this analysis is that the key differences in the movements from one paradigm of schooling to another are more easily observed.

Table 2. Key factors influencing the pre-industrial era

Society	Childhood	Education/ Schooling	Curriculum	Religious Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The majority of the population lived close to the land or in towns and were involved in agricultural industries. *Society was organised along class lines with monarchs and nobility having status and privilege. * Large cities were limited in number. * Cities were established for military, commercial or political reasons. * Society was inward looking, closed, conservative and fatalistic. * Limited transport and communication added to an isolationist worldview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Childhood did not exist in its current form. * There was no separation of adulthood and childhood due to the absence of literacy skills. * There was no practice of mass education. * High infant mortality led to different family relationships. * Youth was associated with apprenticeship or service. * Young people lived with their employer until they established their own household. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education was the right of the upper class. * There was a distinction between intellectual pursuits (education) and manual pursuits (training). * A tiered form of education existed with training provided for the poorer classes. * The poor were taken on as apprentices by qualified trades people. * Wealthy people received a liberal education that focused on languages, the arts, philosophy and theology. * Schooling was segregated along sex lines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Classical programs were designed for those training for the clergy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Religious education came through the practice of the faith and religiously influenced cultural expression such as iconography, symbolism, liturgy and festivals.

Table 3. Key factors influencing the industrial era

Society	Childhood	Education/ Schooling	Curriculum	Religious Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Nation states developed. * Bureaucracies developed to manage society. * Society was stable, simple and life was repetitive. * Models of societal organisation were preserved as archetypes. * There was the primacy of structure over genesis. * This rule based society was segregated by the functions of work and income. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Children were seen as cheap labour. * Childhood was a by-product of the printing press. * Development of mass literacy and schools led to the development of childhood. * Schools produced literate adults so the young were not small adults but unformed adults. * Childhood was defined by school attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education passed on the shared common culture of the nation state. * The purpose of schools was to develop functional citizens. * Schools exerted control over the young. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The aim was to produce universal literacy. * The focus was on the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. * Learning involved factual modes of knowing * The curriculum was canonical, hierarchical and empirical. * The syllabi were centralised. * Teaching involved reliance on textbooks. * Curriculum delivery was dominated by didactic pedagogy. * The teacher was both the initiator and the centre of the discourse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Catechism came into common use and was the basis for religious instruction.

Table 4. Key factors influencing the post-industrial era

Society	Childhood	Education/ Schooling	Curriculum	Religious Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* The economy is de-regulated.* Competitive individualism becomes apparent.* Large cities and regional areas develop, with a decline in rural areas.* There is a focus on individual rights.* Widespread social change concerning the individual, families, local and global communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Children are initiated into adulthood by becoming fully literate.* The modern paradigms of childhood and adulthood develop at the same time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Students and parents have rights and expectations.* Tertiary education is expanded to include the non- elite.* There is an inclusion of more open learning systems as part of the education process.* Education accommodates the needs of a skill-based economy.* Vocational education is introduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* There is a battle between traditional and progressive approaches.* Traditionalists lobby for<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Back to basics and-Standardised testing.* Progressives push for experimental forms of knowing and constructivist pedagogy.* The focus is on a learner centred approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* There is movement between a range of models including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life-centred• Experiential• Shared Christian Praxis• Phenomenological• Typological• Educational approach and• In some areas a return to the use of textbooks.

Conclusion

This chapter has used a method of analysis that has focused on the key contextual elements that have, are, and will continue to influence the paradigm of secondary schooling in an Australian setting. This analysis has established that there are subtle shifts in the paradigms of school-based education happening all the time and that secondary schools generally adapt well to the economic, societal and religious forces that impact on them.

This chapter has also examined the fact that at certain points in history there have been major upheavals in western society. These changes are generally driven by economics but are also influenced by scientific innovation, religious, philosophical and political shifts, by war or by the general desire of the society to reconceive its structures. The following chapters will search for evidence of similar developments in a rapidly changing world.

This analysis establishes the key aspect of this thesis, namely the direct relationship between a change in the socio-economic context and the model of schooling. This

process does not happen quickly and this chapter has described how the evolution of change in areas such as employment structure and the conception of childhood and adolescence eventually cause the model of schooling to adapt and change to meet the educational needs that social and economic changes bring. Schools, as has been illustrated in this chapter, are not immune to change and in fact are reconceived to help the next generation live in a world that demands a common, yet different, knowledge and skills base than that developed for their parents.

The next chapter of this thesis focuses on the literature that informs the discourse on Catholic secondary schools. It describes some of the subtle changes that are occurring in schools and analyses these changes to identify the beginnings of the paradigm shift that is already occurring in secondary schools in Australia to address the rapid social and economic changes occurring in the increasingly globalised world.

Chapter 4: meaning making: Emerging understandings in an educational context

Background

Chapter Three of this thesis described and analysed the major shifts in society and the ensuing shifts in school-based education. As well as these societal shifts, over the last fifty to sixty years there have been subtle changes in the paradigm of education in western society. In the local New South Wales context, which is the focus of phase two of this thesis, these shifts have manifested themselves in changes of emphasis in the aims of schooling, in curriculum provision (Metherell, 1989; Eltis, 1995; McGaw, 1996; Vinson, 2002), and a renewed focus on pedagogy.

A significant element of this shift has been the increased emphasis on meaning in the literature and the variety of ways this is expressed in the aims and purposes of school education. Meaning also figures prominently in the literatures of spirituality and youth spiritual development. This chapter explores the development of a number of different terminologies and metaphors used to convey the complexity in new ways of understanding and thinking about the nature and purpose of schooling. This chapter also examines contemporary research findings about youth spirituality that illustrate the trends discussed in the theory-based literature.

The extended review of the literature in this chapter and its continuation in Chapter Five will address the discourse on the elements of meaning-making and the associated terminology used to describe this process in a school setting. The review will focus on:

- educational theory related to the current and future models of schooling;
- spirituality and youth spirituality; and
- contemporary theory related to Catholic schooling focusing on religious education, as the pre-eminent concern of the Catholic school.

This review will explore new thinking about the school's relationship to the individual's quest to make meaning, the responsibility schools have to enhance their students' meaning-making capacities and what constitutes a meaningful education. In this exploration the chapter will establish that meaning-making has assumed a new importance and prominence in the educational discourse about the future of

schooling in the twenty-first century. This discourse may well become influential enough to diminish the dominance of the economic paradigm for school education that stresses its role in enhancing national productivity and competitiveness in global markets. This chapter of the thesis provides the theoretical basis to evaluate the role that schools currently play as resource agents to help young people to develop their meaning-making capacities. It also provides a foundation for the manner in which schools could be re-conceptualised to play a more significant role in this area in the future.

The concept of a paradigm shift was developed by the scientist Thomas Kuhn (1922-96) and applied to the major theoretical constructs that underpinned science. Kuhn proposed that within science there is a set of beliefs about the nature of science and that these beliefs made sense of the world. He termed these overarching beliefs a paradigm (Crotty, 1998, p.35). A paradigm shift occurs when findings cannot be explained within the existing paradigm. When this occurs a new way of viewing reality is necessary as some elements of the existing paradigm can no longer be explained. Crotty stated that during times of change scientists were willing to try new explanatory and interpretative ideas and such periods were marked by instability and discontent in scientific discourse (1998, p.35). Even though Kuhn devised this explanation of conceptual change for science, other fields such as social science and education have embraced this model for explaining theoretical and practical changes.

A paradigm shift occurs over a period of time. The recognition, adaptation and acceptance of a new paradigm is a complex process that manifests itself in an irregular manner. This chapter will look further at the emergence of the concepts of meaning-making which are described by a variety of terms. The exploration of the literature in this chapter will focus on the relevance that meaning-making has for the aims of school-based education, young people's spirituality and the theory and practice of Catholic education.

Paradigm shifts in school-based education

As described in Chapter Three, paradigm shifts in school-based education have occurred at regular intervals over the last fifty to sixty years and there have also been subtle shifts in aspects of the model of schooling. Identifying the beginning of a paradigm shift is difficult, as at the start of the process of any conceptual shift, the initial indicators of the shift are imperceptible. The causes of the reconception are complex and multi-faceted. Theorists start writing about paradigm shifts by developing philosophical and theoretical frameworks to justify the subtle changes in the discourse. This points to why the paradigm shift needs to take place and is in fact already underway.

A significant aspect of the construction of this eventual framework is the development of a new vocabulary to enable new ways of conceiving theory and practice that move the boundaries of the discourse and destabilise the old frames of reference. Randolph stated, “The words and the terms used in a discipline 'unlock' the discourse of the discipline” (1996, p.1). Randolph went on to explain that scholars use words and terminology to define their fields and it is possible to track when some terms are discarded and new terms are taken up. This illustrates the process of a paradigm shift within a discourse (Randolph, 1996, p.1). Currently, many of the theorists who write specifically on the nature of schooling are using new terminologies to convey the complexity of new ways of understanding and thinking about the nature and purpose of schooling.

Currently there is evidence of an emerging process of recognition, adaptation and acceptance of a paradigm shift. Some educational writers in the field are still describing the occurring shift (Postman, 1996; Ellyard, 1998; Australian College of Education, 2001; Beare, 2001), some are writing about the economic, social, philosophical and structural causes of the shift (Beare, 2001), and some show awareness of the shift and deal with it by focusing on functional ways of addressing it in the classroom (Gardner, 2002; Vinson, 2002; Simpson, 2003). The complexity of describing a potential paradigm shift in education is also affected by theorists working in different fields that are linked to education. They identify different

elements of the shift and start to name them using different language and terminology.

This chapter explores some examples of the new metaphors and new vocabulary that theorists are using to describe these shifts in understanding about the future of school-based education. This thesis finds in this new language and conceptualisation the evidence for a paradigm shift which is used as the basis for the development of a new model to conceive how the Catholic school can become a more effective resource agent to support students in the development of their meaning-making capacities.

Terminology and metaphor

Educational theorists have developed new terminologies to deal with new ways of perceiving the changing reality. MacGilchrist, Myers and Reed (1997) wrote about the role of schools in fostering the development of reflective intelligence, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and ethical intelligence. Other examples of this include Shepard (2000) who used the term *social-constructivist* to show how we are moving from a *behaviourist* style of education to one where the students themselves create their own meaning. Carneiro (2000) explored the concepts of adaptive and generative learning and inclusive knowledge. He also referred to a “learning society” where learning is the duty of a good citizen. Duke (2000) described the concept of “life-long learning” and the changes which needed to take place in the understanding of how to frame curriculum and educate teachers.

Hayes, Mills, Christie and Lingard (2006) in their text outlined the theoretical foundations of the *Productive Pedagogies Research* (1997-2000), which led to pedagogical reform in the Queensland education system. In the introduction to this text the authors describe how schools are “enclosed spaces” or modernist institutions that exist in a post-modern context (p.10). The authors state that there are elements of the contemporary school that are not open to the forces of change which are exerted on other institutions. They particularly focus the architecture of the classrooms, the constrained curriculum and written texts and how the introduction of new technology challenges this enclosed system and the authority that goes with it. Hayes et al argued that for schools to become more open

institutions, the curriculum needs to be revitalised. In the process of curriculum reform they perceived that *New Basics* needed to be developed that focus on the four curriculum organisers of

- life pathways and social futures;
- multi-literacies and communication media;
- active citizenship; and
- environments and technologies (Hayes et al, 2006, p.13).

Hayes et al emphasise the significant impact of peripheral issues on the learning environment.

Each of these theorists attempted to show how schooling could remain relevant and meaningful to students at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Each theorist tried to frame a movement for secondary schools to explicitly help young people to cope with the complex world in which they live.

Other terms used in this discourse that may indicate that a shift is occurring include meaning-making, meaningful education (de Ruyter, 2002 a), conceptions of the good (de Ruyter, 2002 a), “a reason for living” (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006), “putting life together” (Hughes, 2007a) and meaning-making capacities. These terms will be explored in this chapter and it will be shown that the process of developing a capacity to make meaning will have important implications for the aims of education in general, and for Catholic education in particular; and will provide a unique challenge for the curriculum area of religious education.

Re-imagining the role of schooling

School education has long been regarded as playing a significant role in the handing on of the community’s meaning. Postman (1996) used the metaphor of “gods” to emphasise the need for relevance in education. He considered that for schools to make sense to students and parents, they must have god(s) that they serve (Postman, 1996, p.4). He analysed the “gods” that schooling currently serves and suggested the need for gods which will transform schools from houses of detention to places of emancipation (Postman, 1996, p.7).

Beare (2001) told the story of a girl starting primary school to illustrate the significant impact that globalisation will have on education within the next twenty

years. Beare argued that the development of a belief system will be crucial for the interpretation of the complex world in which she lives. The method Beare proposed for the development of a personalised belief system is based on “a return to myth making” (Beare, p.47). Beare believed that education in general and schools in particular have a key role in helping students make wise decisions about what they believe in and that they also have a responsibility to educate students to become responsible global citizens.

Gardner (2002) used two metaphors to describe how schools should educate young people; “apprenticeship” and “museum”. By apprenticeship he meant that schools and teachers should work side-by-side with students and model how they should learn and behave. With the museum metaphor, he contrasted the structures of traditional schools with the style of learning that might take place in a children’s museum. Gardner considered that the current mode of learning in school is rigid, predictable and based on conformity. While museum learning encourages exploration and problem solving it allows children to learn at their own pace using their dominant intelligence style.

Ellyard (1998) described the changes that need to occur in humanity’s thinking about itself and its relationship with the earth. These changes in thinking need to occur for human beings to survive the pressures placed on humanity by globalisation, technological changes and tribalisation. Ellyard believed that the survival of humanity needed movement from an individualistic worldview to a communitarian worldview, or, to use his metaphors, to move from a “cowboy culture” to a “spaceship or planetist culture” (Ellyard, p.26). Ellyard described the important role that learning will play in a successful transformation. However, for schools to take a leading role in a transformation of culture, it is schools themselves need to be transformed. This transformation in the nature of schools and of learning culture would focus on the re-conceptualisation of the role of the teacher and the critical evaluation of the site of learning.

Ellyard presented a terminology to reflect these changes and suggested that the role of teacher and librarian will be combined and retitled the “knowledge navigator” or mentor. He described the shift in learning culture by listing the eight terms he

thought would drive teaching and learning. These terms are “life-long learning, learner driven learning, just-in-time learning, customised learning, transformative learning, collaborative learning, contextual learning and learning to learn” (1998, p.64). In this new terminology and new way of understanding the possibilities of education Ellyard also re-conceptualised the school as a learning centre.

Schools: A focus for meaning

A specific aspect of the discourse of the reconceptualisation of schools to meet the learning needs in the twenty-first century focuses on how schools can contribute to developing the meaning-making capacities of young people. The next set of theorists in this literature review contribute to the development of the theory base in addressing this question.

Robertson (2001) believed that both parents and educators need to review the type of curriculum provided for young people in schools. Robertson took this view, as he believed that our society risked alienating young people from the existing institutionalised structures if society continued to provide them with irrelevant or outdated curriculum. Robertson proposed that educators needed to consult children in the construction of the curriculum. He believed that while children are generally coping with the complex world in which we all live, children need to be future focused in order to become the architects of their world. This process of consultation would mean that curriculum designers would need to analyse the daily life of children to learn more about their meeting places and their private and public worlds to authentically engage in a more meaningful dialogue with them.

Gerber (2001) reflected on the importance of developing a “sense of place” in the formation of meaning and identity in young children and adolescents. Gerber reviewed the literature of Jackson (1989), Hay (1990) and Uzzell (1996) to highlight the importance of place in identity formation. This highlights the need to create protected, secure environments for young people in order that they might safely explore and create identity for themselves.

Rossiter (2002b) believed that issues of identity and meaning are heavily intertwined and therefore the concept of identity is significant for this research.

Individual identity in the twenty-first century is multi-dimensional and is affected by elements such as family background, ethnicity, religious background, gender, and popular culture. Rossiter with Crawford (2006) took up this view in a later text and argued that in a globalised post September 11 world, the link between personal identity and how this affects an individual's stance on issues such as terrorism, climate change and economic rationalism has become more pronounced (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, pp 95-104). This leads to the conclusion that the ability to find meaning in life relies on the individual being attuned to the influences that constitute the "sense of self" or personal identity. The sense of self is derived from being able to balance various elements while developing capacities to deal with subtle shifts and changes during maturation. The ability to manage this over one's life is important in the development of meaning-making capacities in the individual.

Conroy and Davis (2002) tried to redress a market driven focus in education and proposed that the approach to teaching and learning should highlight the moral and social roles of the teacher. They considered that the value of this approach to teaching was in its ability to access an older, more imaginative and complex source of meaning. For this to occur, teacher training would need to give a higher priority to how teachers could be positive sources of moral guidance and resource agents for students in the area of meaning.

De Ruyter (2002a) argued that children have a right to an education that assists them in finding "meaning in life". De Ruyter proposed a set of criteria that describes the person who has "meaning in life" as having the following attributes:

- life goals,
 - the feeling that his or her life makes a difference,
 - possessing a framework of values to make this purpose intelligible
- (de Ruyter, 2002a, p.35).

De Ruyter also reflected that this framework of values comes out of a "conception of the good". By this, de Ruyter argues that educators should present students with various conceptions of what it means to be "good". In de Ruyter's view there are many sources of this conception of "the good" including parents, the society in which the child is raised and the school. De Ruyter perceived that the school has a special duty in this area. The school has the responsibility to contribute to a

diversity of conceptions of the good, but it also has a responsibility to assist children to reflect on concepts of the good which have been central to their upbringing. An enduring source of the good can be found in the grand meta-narratives that have bound societies together for centuries. Children have a right to know these meta-narratives and schools have a responsibility to present them. This process of introducing the concept of the good, the presentation of a variety of understandings of this term and the evaluation of the worth of these various conceptions are what de Ruyter considered to be essential components of a child's right to a meaningful education (de Ruyter, 2002a, pp. 36-39).

This understanding of a meaningful education is particularly useful to this research as it provides a theoretical basis on which to judge educational programmes for their ability to provide a meaningful education. In another work, de Ruyter (2002b) argued that religious education counters dominant economic values, as it gives a conception of the good and therefore is one of the sources of a meaningful education. De Ruyter's work is a basis for the position that religious education is valuable for the development of all students, whether or not they are going to take up their membership in a religious tradition.

Mockler (2006), in her paper on educating for wisdom, stated that the process of developing wisdom begins in self-knowledge, draws on knowledge of and about the world in which we live in and matures in a growing awareness of social consciousness (p.3). Mockler proceeded to outline six measures that help create a capacity for wisdom in students. The measures nominated were self-knowledge, critical and creative thinking skills, ethical behaviours and actions, collaborative and independent work skills, content knowledge and understanding, and meta-cognitive skills. Mockler also noted that these elements are overlapping and while they are equally important in the formation of wisdom in students, their importance varies within different contexts of learning (p.4). The capacities as she outlined them are situated in an educational context and she uses terminology framed by the *Productive Pedagogies Research Project*, which was the foundation for pedagogical reform in New South Wales under the title of the *Quality Teaching Framework*. Aspects of these capacities will be incorporated into the model developed in

Chapter Six and the coding of one Catholic Educational Authority's documentation in Chapter Seven.

The work of the theorists outlined above has used different metaphors and terminology to refocus schools on their responsibility to develop in students their innate capacities for meaning-making. Part of the difficulty in this educational discourse is that the area of meaning-making and relevance carries a natural ambiguity. This ambiguity is illustrated by the use of the variety of terms that describe the process and the role schools play in assisting young people to develop meaning-making systems. The reason for this ambiguity is that the areas of meaning and values are somewhat intangible and difficult to link explicitly with learning and teaching strategies. Within these writings, the themes of "relevance" and meaning-making are prominent. They are principally concerned with values and meaning. While important, beliefs and values are somewhat more intangible as educational goals than the measurable outcomes of the key learning areas, their long-term impact on the lives of students is equally as important. Educational outcomes in the areas of knowledge and skills are more easily established as having recognisable causal links between what is done in the classroom and what is learnt. There is however a natural difficulty in addressing how the schooling process might promote the development of meaning-making activities. Beare noted:

A significant part of any curriculum is about intangibles, about dealing with the depths from which we generate our life purpose and aspirations. An important part of schooling concerns the formation of constructive and systematic beliefs, the acceptance of social responsibility for the intertwined and complex task that it is, and the development of stories, which convey deep meanings about who we are. Schooling, then, deals with personal formation, belief construction, developing a worldview and with culture transmission over and above the acquiring of useful knowledge and enabling skills (Beare, 2001, pp.21-22).

This section of the literature review has provided:

- an exploration of what revisions and 're-visioning' needs to occur for schooling to meet the needs of learners into the future.
- an exploration of the understanding of meaning-making.
- a case that meaning-making is a significant theme in the current discourse on relevant schooling for learners.
- a description of the breadth of literature in this area which will continue to grow as theory affects practice and reflected practice challenges the established boundaries of the theory.

This is an important set of data for the theory developed in this thesis.

Spirituality: A changing focus in schools

The process of addressing meaning -making in schooling is sometimes couched as the development of spiritual capacities or spiritual education. Spirituality is an area of much interest in contemporary education even though it is not always addressed as an explicit aspect of the classroom curriculum. While it has its roots in both theology and contemporary culture, the term has also been adopted by the health (Myss, 1997) and human resources industries (Whitney, 2001). There are a variety of definitions of the term that range from those with a theological perspective to others that are more secular in nature. Authors such as O'Murchu (1998), Tacey (2000) and Zohar and Marshall (2000) who write about contemporary understandings of spirituality, go to great lengths to make clear distinctions between spirituality and religiosity. Researchers like Bouma (2006), Mason et al (2006), Crawford and Rossiter (2006) and Hughes (2007a) devote large sections of texts to defining what contemporary spirituality in Australia is, and what it is not.

In western society, more and more people feel comfortable in proclaiming that they are spiritual people, while they have little time for the structures and constraints of organised religion. The emergence of the *New Age* religions and the publication of many self-help books that explore a “non-religious” spirituality, show that institutionalised churches are no longer seen as the only conduit through which human beings can explore and express their spiritual selves. The more widespread the use of the term spirituality becomes, the less clear is its meaning. One contemporary view of spirituality sees it as a sense of meaning or purpose to life, the driving force that helps human-beings make sense of their world, leading them to make connections with others and the universe (Tacey, 2003; Mason et al, 2006).

The area of spirituality has been popularised in education by Zohar and Marshall (2000) with their book *SQ: Spiritual Intelligence. The Ultimate Intelligence*. Using the work of Howard Gardner (1993), they proposed that the most recent intelligence to be discovered in human beings is “SQ” or spiritual intelligence. This supports the notion that spirituality can be approached from outside formal religious structures. Popular culture is accessing information and understandings of

spirituality from psychologists and “self help” books, such as those written by Chopra (2001, 2003), Janis (2000), and Maziarek (2003). Businesses, in their attempts to broaden their value base and to help business people find meaning and purpose in making money, have attempted to create a spirituality of work (Palmer, 1990; Wherret Roberson, 2004; Pierce, 2005; Dorr, 2007). These are marketed at seminars with books on effective business management techniques (Guillory, 2001). Organised religions appear to have lost their monopoly as communicators or mediators of spiritual matters. This issue has important implications for this research because it makes meaning-making a marketable commodity in the secular sphere rather than a more complex issue of personal well-being.

Recently there has been an increase in research reports and books that have focused on youth spirituality. These publications have included Hoge et al (2001), Francis and Robbins (2005) in Hughes, 2007b⁵; Smith and Lundquist-Denton (2005); Crawford and Rossiter (2006); Engebretson (2006, 2007); Mason et al (2006) Bouma (2006) and Hughes (2007a), research that focuses on Australian spirituality. So it is becoming clear that the focus on youth spirituality has become a serious area of study and reflection. These studies begin to give an insight into the manner in which young people divorce spirituality from religious practice.

These studies have been included in this review for a number of reasons. The Hoge study (2001), while situated in the United States and focusing on young people beyond school, explores the views of Catholics who have lived in a post Vatican II church and have been exposed to parish and Catholic school structures which have similar foundations to those of the Australian Catholic Church. While the study is not directly applicable to the Australian context it gives some trend lines for the views of young Catholics in western liberal societies. The Francis and Robbins (2005); Smith and Lundquist-Denton, (2005); Mason et al, (2006) and Hughes (2007a) studies, while set in different cultures, are all similar in nature in that they target school-based teenagers (13-18) or Generation Y (13-25). These studies add to the data available on the spirituality and religiosity of young people. The

⁵ The Francis and Robbins (2005) research was reported on in a Pointer's article in 2007 (Hughes, 2007b). When the content of this research is discussed in the rest of this chapter it will be referred to as Francis and Robbins (2005).

Crawford and Rossiter text (2006) draws on these and other research studies on youth spirituality, identity and the search for meaning and this text draws conclusions from the research to provide suggestions to educators and school communities as to how they should support students in their search to find a “reason for living”. Engebretson’s text (2007) reports on a four-year research project that focused on the spirituality of Australian teenage boys aged between 15 and 18. The work examines the boys’ hopes, relationships, values, sense of masculinity and their religious and spiritual life (p.14). Bouma’s work (2006), while not focused specifically on youth spirituality, examines the key features of an Australian spirituality at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For educators who are supportive of young people in their spiritual quest, this body of work gives greater insight into how young people at the beginning of the third millennium construct meaning and form their spiritual identity.

This literature focusing on spirituality provides the foundations for the exploration of the contemporary aims of Catholic education which will be examined in Chapter Five. All these studies give some insight into the spiritual reality of young Catholics in Australia and will be used as a frame of reference when analysing the spiritual needs of Catholic secondary school students in the case study phase of the thesis.

Current research on youth spirituality

During the period of this research there have been several reports on youth spirituality and the findings of these reports give both an insight into the current world of the students and highlight the areas in which the school can become a more active resource agent for the meaning-making capacities of the students.

The Francis and Robbins report (2005) focused on the spiritual health of young people in their mid twenties who lived in England and Wales. One of the major conclusions from this report is that young people, described by the researchers as having a positive spiritual health, had the following characteristics:

- a positive view of their relationships with friends and their parents;
- a positive view of school;
- a concern for global security;

- an acceptance of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity; and
- a belief in God or life after death.

As well as highlighting the positive responses to the survey, the report focused on the responses of young people who were disaffected and were considered to have less than a positive spiritual health. The report also concluded that a large number of these young people surveyed:

- had thought about taking their own life;
- had racist attitudes;
- had a sense of powerlessness, and
- were affirming of beliefs that could damage human health and development.

In their response to these negative findings, the authors provide some indicators for schooling systems to become more active respondents to the needs of these students.

We need to do more to help young people who are thinking of taking their own lives to find meaning, purpose and hope. Young people need to be enabled to accept and respect racial differences. They need to feel empowered to contribute to positive change to the world. Young people need to be enabled 'to test and make rational judgements about their beliefs' (p.54) (Francis and Robbins in Hughes, 2007b, pp. 5-6).

The Smith and Lundquist-Denton study (2005) was conducted to provide more scholarly data on the religious and spiritual life of the teenagers in the United States of America and was conducted between 2001 and 2005. The aim of the study was to provide:

solid answers to questions about the character of teenage religion, the extent of spiritual seeking among youth, how religion affects adolescent moral reasoning and risk behaviours, and much more (Smith & Lundquist-Denton, 2001, p.4).

Mason, Webber, Singleton and Hughes (2006) also investigated over a three-year period, the spirituality of young Australians aged 13 to 29 (Gen Y) in the *Spirit of Generation Y Report*. This study was similar in nature to the research conducted through the Smith and Lundquist-Denton research (2005) but the results, identify the subtle differences between the religious and spiritual life of American and Australian youth. Both studies used a combination of phone and face-to-face interviews and endeavoured to sample a broad cross-section of youth.

Major findings

The first major finding that is common to both studies is that most young people feel that they have purpose in their lives. In the Smith and Lundquist-Denton study a large percentage of teenagers believed religion to be significant in their lives, while 50% of Generation Y in the Australian study had no affiliation with any religion. Both studies also show that adolescent religious demographics mirror those of previous generations and that their religious practice or lack of practice mirrors the practice of their “Baby-boomer parents”. Another important insight from the research is that despite popular belief very few teenagers are religious “seekers”; they are not in search of alternative religious experiences and are not participating in New Age or alternative styles of spirituality.

The reports have found that the most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of young people is the religiosity of their parents. The Australian study reported that the greatest determinant of whether a young person becomes a committed member of a Christian church is that the young person has a parent who is committed and enthusiastic about their faith. The Australia research also identified that of the two parents, it is the mother who is most influential in determining religious practice.

While the reports have much in common there are also cultural differences. The American researchers’ findings suggest that the students are comfortable with a God who helps them succeed. They transform God into a God who is like them and this God does not challenge the status quo. With this understanding of God the biblical or social justice demands placed on adherents are watered down so as not to disturb the middle class lifestyles of believers. The researchers have classified this religious outlook of teenagers in the United States as *Moralistic Therapeutic Deism*.⁶ As defined in the footnote on this page Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is the domestication of God so God takes on the form that validates and supports the existing lifestyle of the believer. In Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, God focuses on and provides for the well-being of the individual and does not demand a significant

⁶ Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is a belief that we “exist, with God’s aid to help people succeed in life, to make them feel good, and to help them get along with others - who otherwise are different in school, at work, on the team, and in other routine areas of life.” (Smith and Denton, 2001, p.169). The language associated with the image of God and religious belief that responds to this image is “happiness, niceness and an earned heavenly reward” (Smith & Lundquist-Denton, 2001, p.171).

contribution to the common good or the creation of a more equitable society by the individual. Hughes (2007a) stated that a way of viewing Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is that youth in the United States “have constructed a soft warm fuzzy view of God” (Hughes, 2007a, p.143). Hughes from his research believes that Australians youth are different from American youth and construct a God who makes sense to them. The respondents in the study knew what their tradition taught about the nature of God but this was mediated through an image of God as a “loving parent” (p.143). Australian students appear to make God more like their parents who are somewhat more demanding in their expectations.

The American research also found that most adolescents had difficulty explaining what they believed. Their Australian counterparts were different in that students who were brought up in a tradition knew the teaching of their tradition but were unsure of how these beliefs should influence and affect their lives. The Smith and Lundquist-Denton report (2005) findings are illustrative of the role that religion plays in American society. There is a stronger link between religious belief and participation in church related social activities which may be indicative that in American society religion plays a more significant role in the social fabric of the society or it could be interpreted as an indicator of a more conservative culture, where young people are more isolated from people of differing religious beliefs.

The unique findings of *The Spirit of Generation Y Report* can be summarised in the following way:

- young women in Generation Y are no more religious than young men of the same age. This is different to previous generations where women were statistically more religious than men.
 - 25% of Generation Y who have been members of a Christian church become ex-members by the age of 29.
 - the majority of young people who believe in God, who have attended a church school and studied religious education at school found religious education classes helpful.
 - those who are spiritual or religiously active have positive civic attitudes, have higher levels of social concern and are more likely to participate in community activities.
 - this generation values friends, family and having an exciting life.
 - spirituality is not highly valued by this generation.
 - this generation wants a peaceful, co-operative, just and secure world.
- (Mason, et al, 2006, pp. iii-v).

Philip Hughes, one of the co-researchers in the Mason et al research, has issued his own analysis of the *Spirit of Generation Y* data combined with some additional data gathered through interviews with school aged students in Catholic and Lutheran schools. This text, *Putting Life Together* (2007a), aims to measure and describe the relationship young Australians have with self, others, society and God. It aims to identify the processes by which these relationships are formed and the implications for families, churches and schools in being agents to help young people form these relationships (p.36). Hughes drew on Fisher's (1988) four domains of spiritual wellbeing and modifies the original categories into five using these modified categories as the organisational structure of his text. The five domains identified by Hughes are:

- the self;
- friends and family;
- society;
- the natural environment; and
- views of the world and ways of life.

Hughes highlighted the fact that young people are generally satisfied with their relationships with family and friends. This generation is communal but they form their own communities of belonging and maintain them using electronic means. They feel very responsible for their friends and put a high priority on helping them. The focus of life for this generation is on enjoyment and they construct life by trying out possibilities and adopting what feels right. A key value for young people is to search for freedom and self-expression through activities that are enjoyable, fun and exciting.

In terms of God, the respondents have a range of beliefs about the nature of God. As stated before the most prevalent image of God incorporates the positive traits of parenthood or elements of friendship. Twenty to twenty five percent of young people do not know what to believe about God. Many young people had incorporated non-traditional beliefs (i.e. astrology, reincarnation) with their Christian beliefs. Approximately 14% of Generation Y attends church regularly, 30% pray regularly and 25% indicate their religion affects their daily lives. This generation does not make a distinction between being religious and being spiritual;

and morality is judged by consequences rather than by principles. This generation wants a society that is peaceful, co-operative, just and secure. They want a society where they can live an enjoyable life while having a low level interest in the wider society.

A significant insight provided by Hughes is that this generation of young people (Generation Y) live in a world which is dominated by scientific knowledge and is black and white. This is the basis of their worldview. However young people also acknowledge that there are areas of life which cannot be explained by science, which are titled as “grey knowledge” or “grey areas” where young people are unsure what to believe. The concept of religion sits in this grey area and is seen as having some value as it attempts to provide clarity to complex issues. The relationship between these grey areas and the concept of religious truth is an important issue for the development of meaning-making capacities in young people. This could be achieved by increasing the focus on exploring the difference between religious and scientific truth in more detail in religious education programmes in schools.

As previously stated, Hughes’ research uses much of the same data as *The Spirit of Generation Y Report*, but is far more hopeful in outlook. While reporting similar findings Hughes is more accepting of the spiritual reality of young people. The analysis, comparing Generation Y’s religiosity and spirituality with that of the baby-boomer generation is not judgemental in nature and accepts the results as simply an indicator of the reality of Generation Y. The report makes suggestions for ways in which Christian denominations and their associated schools could adapt to better cater for the spiritual needs of Generation Y.

Hughes (2007a) made a number of recommendations to churches and schools in the light of his interpretation of the data. The first recommendation focuses on the faith development of family units based on the finding of the important role that parents play in the spiritual life of young people. Hughes argues that the faith life of families needs to be assisted and in view of the significant role parents have in promoting the faith life of their children, supports need to be put in place to allow the adults to maintain their own spiritual lives. The second recommendation is that

schools and churches should work with young people to help build supportive and long-term networks. These networks could include the positive use of blogs and websites, and the incorporation of contemporary music into the life of the church. Another way forward for churches is to make worship interesting and exciting, and incorporate young people's points of view. The final recommendations focused on schools, which should provide young people with the tools to deal with the grey areas in life and immersion experiences. Encounters with people who are marginalised are influential in developing in young people empathetic responses to issues of justice (Hughes, 2007a, p.119).

There have been two very different interpretations of the data offered in a single report. Mason et al (2006) evaluated the results in the report from a deficit point of view. The response of the participants was evaluated in relation to a time when a greater percentage of Australians were members of an official Church and participated in religious and spiritual activities. This was most clearly illustrated in the judgemental and emotional language used in the report. The report uses expressions such as "radical way in which freedom is now understood (p.37)", "the totals are higher than the levels of religious belief in these groups would have led us to expect (p.47)", "This must surprise and horrify those who remember nostalgically the effective warmth of Catholic devotional life in the era of the Second Vatican Council (p.35)" and "To the surprise of the researchers" (p.61). These examples and other wording put the voice and the judgement of the researchers at the forefront of this report. The Mason report portrayed the attitudes of Generation Y towards religious and spiritual matters as a problem for the mainstream churches to solve. In contrast, Hughes interpreted the data more empathetically. He viewed the responses as an evidence of evolution in the spiritual responses of young people. In turn, he hoped that the Church would respond to this data in new ways in order to address the possibilities that young people would be able to find meaning and purpose and support for this within the Church.

Current research on Catholic youth

Hoge et al (2001) interviewed young Catholics between 20-39 years of age. This research project endeavoured to be representative of the ethnic make-up of the

Catholic population in the United States by including a significant number of Latino respondents. It focused on the more traditional manifestations of spirituality. One of the major findings of the research was that young Catholics were overwhelmingly spiritual but there were differing levels of connection with the institutional Church. This generation had a weaker connection to their parish than previous generations and the relationship to the parish was focused on Mass attendance. Spiritually, Mass was the primary institutional based source of nurture for this group and other traditional forms of piety were on the decline. Nevertheless the Virgin Mary was an enduring cultural icon. Young American Catholics were not seeking other spiritual experiences but they placed increased emphasis on a “personal relationship with the Lord”, rather than a spiritual focus on the sacraments and the popular piety of the Church. The researcher speculated that this emphasis may have stemmed from increased contact with evangelical churches that are more focused on individualised spirituality rather than shared communal responses. Lastly the research indicated that there was a major link between the spirituality of the individual and the focus on social justice initiatives and service to the poor (Hoge et al, 2001, pp.166-169).

In the light of this research Hoge recommended that to improve the manner and level at which young American Catholics identify with the Church, the needs of youth ought to be prioritised. He indicated that to do this the Church needs to involve young people in more meaningful ways especially in ministry and liturgy. Hoge believed that the Church needs to invest in the Catholic education of young adults especially in the period post school. The report suggested that this post school education should be modelled on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* program⁷. This model could be focused on mentoring, deliberation, community and discipleship. Lastly the Church needs to dialogue with youth on controversial moral and social teachings (Hoge et al, 2001, pp. 230-239).

Hoge’s recommendations are significant for this thesis and for the Australian Catholic Church’s ministry to young people. The recommendations show that the

⁷ RCIA stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is a formal process whereby those who are unbaptised, are assisted in joining the Catholic Church by receiving what is called the Sacraments of Initiation (Catechumenate Office Archdiocese of Sydney, 2008, p.1).

Church has a responsibility not only to invest in Catholic schools but also to move beyond the parameters of Catholic school education, as this is not the sole contributing factor in young people taking up their membership in the Church. This research would indicate that the Church needs to adopt a three stage approach which would necessitate commitment to Catholic schools, to post-school, parish-based youth ministry and to supporting young people in their vocational commitments. Any expectation or plan which focuses in a limited way on the school alone providing active members of the Church for the future is unrealistic and necessarily flawed. Hoge's ideas with regard to developing an RCIA type of model and particularly the concepts of mentoring, deliberation, community and discipleship could be best harnessed by incorporating them not only into the religious education programme but also into the broader religious dimension of the school. These are areas where the school can actively make choices as to how it can be a better resource agent for the development of students' meaning-making capacities.

The Smith and Lundquist-Denton report (2005) also devotes a chapter to discussing the research findings in relation to Catholic youth. In this study, Catholic youth scored lower on all the indicators of religiosity than students from other religious backgrounds. The researcher concluded that this has occurred for a number of social and cultural reasons. The study concluded that because Catholic parents are less religiously active than parents of other religious groups this has impacted on the religiosity of Catholic youth. Finally, the researchers concluded that the Catholic Church in the United States was less committed to youth than the evangelical Christian churches in terms of the time and financial resources devoted to youth ministry.

The *Spirit of Generation Y Report* (2006) also looks at the denominational responses to the research questions. In terms of the responses of Australian Catholic youth the report finds that Generation Y Catholics in Australia are:

- significantly lower in the belief and practice scales than other traditions and denominations;
- more likely to have a personal relationship with God;
- more traditional or orthodox in their beliefs than their parents;
- more likely to see morals as relative to circumstance; and
- less likely than other groups to see faith as important in shaping their lives (pp. 57-58).

Kath Engebretson (2006) in her text, *Connecting Teenage Boys, Spirituality and Religious Education*, reports on a four year study of 1254 boys. The study set out to investigate what is unique about the spirituality of teenage boys. Engebretson describes in detail seven specific characteristics of boys' spirituality. These are a spirituality of hope:

- that is inspired by others;
- challenges narrow definitions of masculinity;
- is founded and developed in friendships;
- exists in the tension between individualism and social concerns;
- seeks reflection and is open to prayer; and
- has a sense of being Catholic (Engebretson, 2006, pp. 203-206).

This research, while gender specific, has many findings in common with the other reports that focus on Catholic youth.

An interesting facet of this study is to be found in the aspects of young male spirituality that are shown to differ from the spirituality of girls or adults. Boys in this study draw their spirituality from understanding the stories of the lives of inspirational figures and the lives of those who have worked to improve the world. This finding is interesting because in the post Vatican II period the Catholic Church has shifted its focus from telling the stories of inspiring men and women, more commonly known as saints. In making this choice a possible source of inspiration and growth may have been diminished within the Catholic tradition.

These findings challenge Catholic and religious educators to reconsider what activities best meet the spiritual and meaning-making needs of boys. Engebretson at the conclusion of the description of each characteristic makes specific recommendations to guide religious educators in the best ways to teach religious education so that the experience might resonate and speak to the spiritual make-up of boys.

These reports and studies indicate the importance of the influence of Catholic parents on their children. Because Catholic parents are less engaged with the Church than previous generations their children do not have the same level of role modelling as previous generations. Schools can counteract this by providing

models of witness and faith within their own communities to inspire students and promote connection with the broader Church community.

Spirituality of hope: A new focus for the twenty-first century

Gary Bouma (2006), in his recent text which focused on the unique features of Australian spirituality at the beginning of the twenty-first century, concluded that spirituality is on the rise in Australia and that a substantial majority of Australians continue to identify with a religious group. Despite this, Australia's religious and spiritual life is changing as it is far more diverse and less tied to formal organisations. Bouma is of the view that spiritual life is changing because the role of religion is changing in the new millennium. In the twentieth century religion and spirituality provided the means by which identity was formed and meaning was provided for people. In the twenty-first century the core role of religion according to Bouma, is the production and maintenance of hope.

Religion and spirituality in Australia is about hope, the production and maintenance of hope through actions, beliefs, practices and places that link the person and/or group to a reality or a frame of reference that is both beyond the immediate perceptual and material frame and deeply embedded within the person (Bouma, 2006, p.30).

Bouma's conclusions on the role that religions play in providing a sense of hope is connected to the role the Churches can play in building the meaning-making capacities of young people. A significant finding in the research on youth spirituality is that young people want spiritual role models and ideals to aspire to, or to inspire. Young people are seeking people and ideas in which they can invest hope and belief.

It could be concluded that the Christian churches and adult Christians in the last two generations have been more focused on restructuring the Church and on the exploration of individual spirituality than on passing on the essential insights that their tradition has into the human condition and the hope it provides for dealing with the complex world of the twenty-first century. Bouma's insights that religions in general, and Christianity in particular, can play a role in helping people deal with external issues such as terrorism and suffering may serve as a reminder to the Church of the need to be less inward looking and more pro-active in making available to young people their vast theological and spiritual resources.

Insights for meaning-making in schools

The body of research on youth spirituality that has been presented and analysed is foundational to an understanding of why meaning-making is emerging as an important theme in the literature on the future directions of schooling in the third millennium.

The research states that young people are not generally “religious seekers” as once thought and therefore if young people are not born into a religious tradition or do not take up the religious tradition into which they are born, they are more likely to have little or no religious belief. The flow on effect from a large number of young people having little contact with religious traditions is that they are less likely to have access to the sources of meaning that these traditions have provided to societies and individuals for generations. While religious sources of meaning are not the only sources of meaning and in many cases are rejected in later life, they provide young people with a starting point from which they can construct a personalised meaning-making system. Young people who have little contact with institutions that provide sources of meaning have greater pressure to develop coherent meaning-making system for themselves.

The findings from the research that religious and spiritual role models are of significance in the spiritual development of young people has implications for the religious school. The role of personal witness and the mentoring of young people by adults should be re-examined in Catholic schools. This role was once assumed by religious members of school communities. In post Vatican II schools, with the decline of religious, lay people⁸ have taken on the academic and administrative challenges of running Catholic schools but at times they have been reticent to take up the religious leadership of schools. This finding means that Catholic schools need to re-examine how to give personal witness more prominence in Catholic schools.

⁸ While the researcher acknowledges within the structure of the Church vowed members of Religious Institutes are lay people, traditionally, the documentation that has traced the evolution of leadership of Catholic schooling in Australia has referred to the vowed members of Religious Institutes as Religious. This thesis will follow this historical convention even though it is not technically correct.

The research indicates that young people are highly relational. They need to find and associate with other young people who are spiritual or religious, so they do not feel isolated or on the social fringe in their search for answers to their spiritual questions. In the light of this finding, schools could review their academic, liturgical and ministry programmes to evaluate the effectiveness of their capacity to provide direction in the spiritual journey of students and to help build and maintain a sense of connectedness for young people. This review could incorporate the concepts of grey areas and evaluate the extent to which the school is addressing issues pertaining to religious truth.

The finding that young people who participate in religious education in religious schools know what their religious tradition teaches but have more difficulty in coming to a personal stance on key religious issues is significant. This finding challenges Catholic schools, which while maintaining a commitment to teaching an academically credible programme of religious education, also need to focus on the personal relevance of these beliefs to the lives of their student adherents.

Spiritual education

Spiritual education in schools is the aspect of school life that focuses on supporting the spiritual quests of students and staff. An apparent paradox, which is linked to the understandings of religion and spirituality, is that as interest in spirituality has increased in recent years the number of people making ongoing commitments to being active members of religious institutions has declined (N.C.L.S⁹, 2001; Hughes, Bond, Bellamy & Black, 2003; Bentley & Hughes 2005; Bouma, 2006; Mason et al, 2006). At the same time there has been an increase in the number of people researching and writing about spirituality in an educational context (Crawford & Rossiter, 1996, 2006; Rossiter, 1996; Hay & Nye, 1998; Hull, 1999; Wallace, 2000; Bridger, 2001; de Souza, 2003, 2004 a, b; Engebretson, 2001b, 2006; Fisher, 2001, Witham, 2001, Mason et al 2006, Hughes 2007a). Regular conferences on the Spirituality of Children have been held, most recently the *Annual International Conference on Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child*

⁹ N.C.L.S : National Church in Life Survey

(June 2003, Roehampton, United Kingdom), the *Seventh International Conference on Children's Spirituality and Children and Faith* (July 2006, Winchester, United Kingdom) and the Eighth International Conference on Children's Spirituality (January 2008, Ballarat, Australia).

An international journal, the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* has this issue as its focus while the *Journal of Religious Education*, the *Journal of Christian Education*, *Religious Education Journal of Australia*, *Religious Education* and the *British Journal of Religious Education* have all published articles on this theme. In Great Britain, because the opportunity for spiritual and moral development is a mandatory aspect of curriculum provision in schools and the relevance and success of these programmes is assessed, there seems to be more research and academic writing in this area (Crawford & Rossiter, 1996, 2006).

Hay and Nye (1998) have reviewed research on the spirituality of children. They believed spirituality should be at the heart of the school curriculum (1998, p.5) and that governments have put spiritual education on the political agenda, as they fear a lack of spiritual awareness threatens social coherence and the breakdown of morality in society. Hay and Nye considered that the adult world destroys children's spirituality; as to be spiritual is to be open and vulnerable, while adult realities favour individualism and pragmatism. Hay and Nye's research proposed that spiritual education is not an optional extra in education or an activity reserved for the religiously gifted and talented or those who are members of worshipping communities. Opportunities for greater spiritual awareness, education and growth are fundamental aims of education and a fundamental right of students and this challenges educators to develop structured programmes to meet these needs.

Crawford and Rossiter (1996, 2006) have written widely about developing a credible academic religious education programme that is true to the traditions of denominational schools but also allows students to explore issues of relevance to them that will contribute to their spiritual awareness and development. They proposed the development of a programme of study that provides "personal learning through reflection and study" (1996, p.313). A programme of this kind would have elements of religion, ethics and philosophy and would also examine issues of

human meaning, purpose and value. They also proposed that all subjects could develop a spiritual dimension by focusing on skills of analysis, evaluation and appraisal of arguments as these skills contribute significantly to personal development. In their recent text (2006) they continue to call for this style of religious education but have also argued that an across the curriculum spiritual and moral education should be called for and supported by parents and government authorities.

Hence there is an urgent need for public endorsement at school level for the intention to engage in across the curriculum spiritual-moral education, together with a realistic account of how this could be implemented (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p.13).

Wallace (2000) also called for schools to be more aware of the contribution that they make to the spiritual development of children and, in turn, the contribution they make to a more reflective, connected society. This awareness underpins the importance of developing a better understanding of the contribution of religious education to the development of a fitting approach to the study of contemporary spirituality.

Spiritual education has become a prominent theme in education in general and religious education principally in Australia and the United Kingdom. In the Catholic context in Australia, the spiritual dimension of education is being considered in relation to documents written by international policy makers in Catholic Education (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1999), by national policy makers in education (MCEETYA, 1999; Australian College of Education, 2001;) and by state policy makers (Board of Studies, 1999, 2002a; DECS, 2006).

The Adelaide Declaration on the *National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-first Century* was a statement issued by the Federal, State and Territorial Ministers for Education. It was a statement issued to give direction to educational authorities about the aspirations and expectations that governments around Australia have of schooling. The preamble to the statement lists some broad principles about education for school age students in Australia. These include a statement that education provides “a foundation for the intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development of young people” (p.1).

In response to the *Adelaide Declaration on the National Goals for Education* (MCEETYA 1999) and the celebrations in 2001 of the centenary of Federation, the Australian College of Education conducted an assembly to discuss the possibilities for education in the near and distant future. Only one point out of the sixteen-point declaration, *Beliefs and the Spiritual* directly relates to meaning. Issues related to the construction of meaning are also embedded in other areas of the submission. The College considered that by default, schools have become the principal agencies for passing on a unified value system in Australia. The document noted some reaction against the outcomes-based orientation of recent policy making in education. It discussed the need for an education system that emphasised personal development and which developed a positive set of attitudes and beliefs, which should be part of a utilitarian curriculum focused on people.

One of the aims of Catholic education is to help each student develop spiritually and to come to his or her own personal and ongoing relationship with God. The Congregation for Catholic Education (1999) stated that there should not be a distinction between activities in school that give students access to information and activities that help develop personal formation and wisdom. The bishop of the Diocese of Broken Bay noted this in the introduction to the religious education curriculum, using the language of the tradition:

Catholic schools are a means to provide the Catholic community with a forum to educate and form their children in the faith, and offer them an experience of following Jesus as members of the Catholic Community (Walker, 2002).

Both Church sponsored schools and governments throughout the world are acknowledging the value of helping young people become aware of their own spirituality and helping them to gain skills in accessing and expressing this spirituality. In the United Kingdom, the *Education Reform Act of 1988* made the following statement:

The Curriculum ... [is] balanced and broadly based and promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and prepares pupils for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (cited in Rossiter, 1995, p.21).

The Ministry of Education in the United Kingdom has established the *Office for Standards in Education* (OFSTED) with responsibility for the inspection of schools

to assess to what extent they have provided opportunities for moral and spiritual development. The spiritual development of students is becoming a significant issue in education, not just in Australia but also on the world scene. The spiritual dimension of students' lives is perceived as one aspect of human development, which needs to be addressed within formal educational structures.

The organisation that has responsibility for curriculum in N.S.W. is the Board of Studies. The aim of the N.S.W curriculum is to:

...foster intellectual, social and moral development of students
[and to] provide a context within which schools also have the
opportunity to foster students' physical and spiritual development
(Board of Studies, 1999, p.5).

More recently the *South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services* (DECS) has acknowledged the role that schools play in helping the young develop a sense of spirituality, by issuing a discussion paper "Does Spiritual Wellbeing Belong in School?" (2006). This paper defines the term spirituality and explores the question of whether spirituality is relevant to public schooling. The Department defines spiritual well-being as

a sense of connectedness to something larger than oneself, bringing
with it a sense of meaning, purpose and personal value (DECS,
2006, p.6).

The paper outlines the research of Fisher (1998, 2005), which focuses on the relationship between spirituality and personal well-being. Lastly the paper explores through the research work of Nodding (1992), Palmer (1999, 2005) and de Souza (2004), the appropriateness of the inclusion of spirituality into a state sponsored education system. This discussion paper concludes by posing further questions for discussion and finally by quoting Palmer (1998):

We are entering a new era when spirituality and education need not
be seen as enemies but as partners in a conversation about the
future of public schooling (Palmer, 1998 in DECS, 2006, p.18).

In these statements, Church and state authorities use terms such as values, morals, spirituality, spiritual development, ethics, wisdom, responsibility, formation, personal development and well-being. Each of these terms has specific religious, psychological and educational meanings. These concepts are used in aims statements as aspirational terms but there are few suggestions about their practical

implementation, or the educational research behind the articulation of these aspirations. These statements also fail to place what has become known as *spiritual education* within the broader contexts of education and religious education.

John Hull's (1999) writings concurred with the understanding of education espoused by the Congregation for Catholic Education and suggested that, by its very nature, education was spiritual. Hull made a distinction between training and education. Hull believed that the difference between the two is that education is person-centred where training seeks to develop a set of skills for a particular task. Hull stated that once we concern ourselves with humanisation or human and self-development we enter the realm of the spiritual. He proposed that when we speak of "anything, which lifts human beings above and beyond the biological" (1999, p.51), we are speaking of the spiritual. Hull considered that all subjects in the curriculum make a contribution to the spiritual education of students, but religious education has a special responsibility. He proposed that religious education is in a unique position, as this subject helps students gain an increased knowledge of themselves and the world and is also in a position to help them deepen their spiritual awareness.

Andrew Wright (2000) led the *Spiritual Education Project* at King's College from 1996-2000. The aim of the project was to analyse the nature of spiritual education in England and Wales and to develop an alternative critical basis for spiritual education (Wright, 2000, p.170). Wright stated that spiritual education should have two elements, spiritual literacy and spiritual education. Wright argued that if students are only nurtured in one spiritual tradition this experience is termed confessional education, but when the programme critiques the child's own and other spiritual traditions, spiritual literacy is developed. Finally Wright described what he believed to be an effective spiritual education.

An effective spiritual education will combine a hermeneutic of nurture with a hermeneutic of criticism. A good school will unashamedly induct children into the spiritual values and world-view which it considers to be of the greatest worth, as well as insisting that children explore alternative possibilities (Wright, 2000, p.176).

Wright recommended a three phase pedagogical strategy to develop spiritual literacy and to provide students with a spiritual education. The first phase examines the topic from the horizon of the child, the second phase from the horizon of the religion, and the third from the engagement across the horizons. The first two horizons are self-evident. The third, the engagement across horizons, focuses on developing analytical and thinking skills to deal with any dissonance that occurs in the exploration of the previous two horizons. This process hopefully would lead students to “engage in informed conversation about their beliefs, and the beliefs of others” (Wright, 2000, p.183).

Engerbretson (2001b) also stated that when schools deal with questions about the ultimate meaning of life they are addressing spiritual questions and therefore are participating in spiritual education. She went on to say that under this definition of spiritual education, all religious education teachers would agree that they participate in spiritual education (2001, p.100). Engerbretson explored the idea that when schools promote the study and discussion of the arts and sciences they give students the opportunity to gain access to spirituality.

Witham (2001) proposed that there is a spiritual dimension to education, and by developing or alerting students to their spiritual dimension students are given a resource for resilience. Witham noted that resilience is a dimension of character that is crucial for young people living in a complex society. Witham wrote from a Christian perspective and within a Christian ontological framework that has been a building block of Australian cultural, legal and political life. He stated that these perspectives give young people a positive body of language to describe themselves and therefore contribute to their self-esteem. Witham proposed that the presence of a chaplain in State schools in Western Australia is an example of how Christians can help provide spiritual resources for students of all beliefs.

Grace (2002), in a research study of Catholic schools in Great Britain, investigated ways in which Catholic schools maintained their distinctiveness in an educational environment that is market and economically driven. Grace examined the spiritual, moral and social justice dimensions of Catholic schools and asked principals to justify and quantify how they challenged young people to develop their spirituality.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an insight into the extensive research, writing and discussion around the area of spirituality in general and child and adolescent spirituality in particular. The chapter explored the ways in which spiritual education is being examined from religious, educational, health and cultural perspectives. The chapter described how national and state educational authorities in Australia and overseas have noted the importance of spirituality and spiritual development by acknowledging it as relevant to the aims statements for education in their jurisdictions. It has documented that within the context of a rapidly changing world, issues of meaning-making have become prominent in the educational sphere. The chapter has acknowledged that while there are many different language constructs and ways of expressing this broad umbrella concept it seems that different educational bodies and theorists are all reflecting on the importance of the same issue and highlighting the necessity to address this area at the current time. The chapter argued that the framework of spirituality from which these educational authorities work is closer to a definition of meaning-making than it would be to religious adherence. This is foundational to the approach taken in the rest of this thesis.

Chapter Five will explore similar themes within the Catholic school context. This will involve the exploration of the philosophical and theological underpinnings of Catholic education and the spiritual issues that face Catholic education in Australia at the current time. The chapter will then proceed to examine the current developments in Catholic religious education which aim both to develop religious literacy and to contribute to the spiritual development of students. Chapter Five will also set out to highlight links between education, spirituality and meaning-making through a review of the literatures, that identify areas of convergence and which have application to the religious dimension of the school and the teaching of religious education.

Chapter Five: Meaning-making a core pedagogical principle in Catholic education

Introduction

As stated in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis, a major challenge facing all schools is how they help students develop their meaning-making capacities to deal with the increasingly complex cultural context in which they live. Some of the specific twenty-first century challenges that have caused humanity to focus on issues of meaning include global warming, terrorism, equitable resource sharing by the majority world, generational change and personal well-being. Chapter Four examined the research on youth spirituality and highlighted the emerging key spiritual needs of young people that are to some extent fashioned by the named twenty-first century challenges. It described the links between spirituality and meaning-making and examined in a generalised manner, ways in which schooling can be a resource agent for young people's meaning-making capacities.

This chapter focuses on the literature related to the purpose of Catholic schooling. It explores the themes, terminology and metaphors in the literature that identify the existing role that Catholic schools play in supporting the meaning-making capacities of young people and the mandate this offers to expand this role. It particularly focuses on the developing understandings of religious education in Catholic schools that integrate the findings of the research analysed in Chapter Four. It promotes a contemporary Catholic framework for the development of the emerging model of the thesis.

The cultural context of Catholic schools

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, once again, the Catholic Church internationally and in Australia is discerning its place in the world. In this context, the purpose, value and direction of Catholic schools is being called into question (Bishops of N.S.W. & ACT, 2007; Fisher, 2006; Pell, 2006). One of the questions posed for Australian Catholic schools is what role do Catholic schools play in Catholic life and mission? Another key question explores whether the Catholic school is, as claimed by some theorists, the new 'church' (Grace, 2002; Cahill,

2006)? In the light of this claim, does the magisterium of the Catholic Church need to review its ecclesiological understandings to incorporate this new reality? Lastly, what role do Catholic schools play in the development of faith, morals, values and the construction of meaning for young people in their care? (Bishops of N.S.W. et al, 2007; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). The answers to these questions will have profound effects on the future directions of both the Catholic parish and the Catholic school. While all these questions are somewhat interdependent, this thesis is concerned with how the Catholic school in particular contributes to the meaning-making capacities of young people.

Lealman (1986), a secondary school principal, made the following observation about the relationship of the school to the spiritual quest of young people.

The age old obsession of young people with questions of justice and morality: the sense of being personally touched and helpless before intense beauty, pain, tradition or genuine greatness; the search for a frame of reference within which to make their own decisions; the need for a personal commitment to an ideal; these are all evidence of that side of our nature which can be termed spiritual and which can either be enhanced and enriched by the educational diet that it is given, or stunted and warped by starvation (Lealman, 1986 in Engebretson, 2004, p.1).

Lealman's quote speaks to the idea that young people are searching for a 'frame of reference' to make decisions about life's great questions. Catholic Christians find this frame of reference within the Paschal Mystery; the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the foundational source for their spiritual life and an inspiration for the works of Christian service in the world. Within this context the Church established Catholic schools to support parents and parishes, as the Bishops of N.S.W. and the ACT state:

in their educational, evangelical and catechetical mission, as well as to help the wider community in its educational and civic service (Bishops of N.S.W. & ACT, 2007, p.10).

This quote encompasses both the young people's quest to develop personal spiritualities and meaning-making systems and the role that schools can play in supporting them in this quest.

This chapter describes how Catholic schools have been resource agents for the meaning-making capacities of young people since their inception. Catholic schools

have fulfilled this role innately rather than as a response to any specifically stated mandate. This chapter will review the literature that supports this claim and highlight the dimensions that enable a Catholic school to address meaning-making. The chapter proceeds to argue that in light of the world in which we live, the Catholic school has a responsibility to prioritise this aspect of its function and mission. The chapter then considers the specific role that religious education plays in providing a theological, philosophical and spiritual foundation and a model which will enable and empower students to conceive issues of meaning and purpose.

Catholic identity and the value of a Catholic worldview

Crawford and Rossiter (2006) described the complex process by which human beings and organisations form an identity. While the process of identity construction may be complex, the identity of an individual or an organisation according to Rossiter is the answer to the simple questions; “Who am I?” or “Who are we?” and “How” do the answers to these questions relate to the larger groups to which I or we belong? If, as this thesis proposes, Catholic schools are resource agents for the meaning-making capacities of young people, then schools are part of the process of identity formation for Catholic students. Catholic schools can only fulfil this role in the life of their students when the institution is clear in its understanding of its own identity and can articulate what aspects of this identity provide the means and resources for young people to consider issues of meaning. The expression of this understanding means that Catholic schools need to be able to respond to the questions of “who am I?” and “who are we?”

Much time and energy has been invested in articulating the key elements of Catholic school identity. One of the key writers on Catholic identity over the last twenty years has been Thomas Groome. Groome (1996) challenged the Catholic community to recognise that Catholics have a way of seeing the world that provides a view of life and a way to approach all of life. This way of life has an ontological concern, a sociological concern and a universal concern (p.109). More recently this way of being in, and seeing the world has been referred to as a Catholic worldview. Like any worldview this provides a framework through which to see and interpret life. The key elements of a Catholic worldview that have been described by Gilkey (1975) and promoted by Groome are founded on a positive Christian anthropology

and recognise the sacramentality of life that draws on the substance of the world. Groome stated that the Catholic identity that flows from the Catholic worldview has a communal emphasis and invites people to consider their own story in terms of *the story*. He acknowledges that a Catholic way of life is committed to the truth of the tradition but also appreciates and values the rationality of life. Groome argued that the curriculum in a Catholic school that flows from this worldview should highlight and promote that students are good because they are created in the image of God; should encourage students to live as responsible partners with God; convince students that they have the capacity to influence and shape the future of the world. For Groome this means that students are able to see themselves as “history makers”.

Groome’s work is important to the theoretical framework of this thesis, as it is one way of naming and describing the key indicators of a Catholic worldview. The Church has conceived this worldview based on the teaching of Jesus Christ combined with two thousand years of history and tradition along with theological and philosophical reflection. This worldview has been universal in its concern, incorporated into a multitude of cultures, survived the challenges of opposing philosophical and political organisations and provided meaning and purpose for countless generations of Catholics. Up to this time the Church has relied on describing this worldview in theological terms and has measured the success of its transmission through the strength of parish and liturgical life. Groome’s articulation of the Catholic worldview in theological, anthropological and sociological terms opens up an opportunity for Catholic educators to present this worldview as a package of meaning that can be a resource to students. The Catholic worldview can be taught as a model for a “way of being” that has intellectual rigor, spiritual depth and addresses the key issues of life. The presentation of the Catholic worldview in this way also provides students with a reference point from which they draw insights on how they might address issues of meaning in their own lives.

More recently, Archbishop Miller (2005, 2006, 2007), Secretary for the Congregation of Catholic Education used similar categories to Groome to indicate the “Five Marks of Catholic Schools”. Miller based these benchmarks on an analysis of documents published since Vatican II’s Decree on Christian Education

*Gravissimum Educationis*¹⁰. Miller (2005) stated that the goal of Catholic schooling is:

to foster the growth of good Catholic human beings who love God
and neighbor and thus fulfil their destiny of becoming saints
(Miller 2005, p.6).

According to Miller this goal can be achieved in the Catholic school founded on an anthropology that promotes developing the person, which happens in a community that is imbued with a Catholic worldview and sustained by the witness of teachers. This document, the most recent Vatican document on Catholic education, while being ecclesial in its focus outlines the significance of the role and purpose of the Catholic school in the life of the Church. Miller identifies what the Church understands a Catholic worldview to be and he contributes some reflections that add to the theoretical base for the role the Catholic school should play in helping young people to develop meaning-making capacities.

The first of these observations is that students should have a focus both on their responsibility to be “good citizens” of this world by caring for their neighbour but also be focused on the ‘world to come’ through a love of God (p.20). The second relevant observation is that Catholic schools have a responsibility to help children fulfil their destiny through the development of the whole person. The other significant statement is that a Catholic view of the world should be included in all aspects of the curriculum and, within the context of academic study, students should be encouraged to search for meaning, wisdom and truth. Miller stated that the school should prepare students to live in secular society and be given the analytical tools to critique society in the light of the Gospel (Miller, 2006, pp. 43-52). This document gives the Catholic school the mandate to focus on the development of skills to help students to discern issues of meaning and purpose that are founded in a Catholic worldview. This worldview helps students meet their responsibilities as citizens and members of the church while considering issues of faith.

¹⁰ The documents referred to are the 1983 Code of Canon Law in its section on schools’. The Catholic School (1977); Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (1982); The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1988); The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997); and Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools: Reflections and Guidelines (2002).

At the 2006 *National Catholic Education Commission Conference (NCEC)* the contemporary identity and the contribution that Australian Catholic education makes to the broader society was considered. Gray (2006) conceived the key elements of Catholic identity as “bridges to God” (p.2). Her paper acknowledged that some of the areas also mentioned by Groome (1996) and Miller (2005) such as the sacramentality of life open the concept up to the “embrace of all humanity”, which Gray defines as the outreach the Church has to the peoples of all nations (Gray, 2006, pp.2-3). Additional observations made by Gray, which also incorporate her Australian perspective were:

a concern for the disadvantaged through social justice, God’s continuing presence throughout creation, the deep practicality and frequently ordinariness of faith and how this is lived out, the faith of women, and the constant challenge of God’s hope for us in eschatological orientation (Gray, 2006, p.2).

Gray’s observations highlight the great tradition of Catholic schools to both educate and to serve the disadvantaged in society. Gray recognised that women have given both witness and service in the formation of Catholic identity for many generations which has often been overlooked by the official Church. Catholic schools do highlight the need to work for justice but more work could be done to critically engage in the causes of injustice and the theological reasons why the Church undertakes the work of justice and is committed to the marginalised. This paper also highlights the impact of the Australian landscape on the development of personal spirituality and this may be a key observation for those trying to build support systems to promote youth spirituality. Lastly the paper described the role of hope in Catholic identity.

Eschatology is the promise to us of the future already active in our present but yet to become fully realised... It is this *constant challenge of God’s hope for us* that frees us from in-turned and backward looking preoccupation with our identity as Catholics, so that in hope and faith we reach out with energy to the *wherever* God is leading us now... Hope makes a future for us with God. I believe that this is the way to understand our Catholic identity in its call for a more *faith-based and life-confirmed* bridge to God, not as just “singing from the same hymn sheet” (Gray, 2006, p.11-12).

The value of Gray’s observation on hope for this thesis is that her views re-enforce Bouma’s (2006) view that in this new century, a spirituality focused on a theology of hope is the way that the Christian Church will remain relevant. In this view the Church and the Catholic school focus less on identity and on passing on a one size

fits all pre-packaged body of meaning and instead focus on creating communities that are centred on the hope God has for us. This allows the Catholic school to explore how it might become a more pro-active resource for developing a sense of hope for its students and to move into the future as a model of hope for the broader community. This change of focus allows the school to build educational programmes that challenge the view that the questions we face such as international terrorism and climate change in a diverse cultural milieu are so overwhelming that there are no answers. This outlook allows the Catholic school to explore with students how hope can be an enduring means of approaching life's key questions, a resource for the individual's meaning-making capacities, and a way to develop personal resilience and a sense of well-being.

As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, one of the emerging expressions of Catholic identity is the ability to express and apply a Catholic worldview. In the United States some theorists have stated that if a person has a Catholic worldview this should be manifested in a *Catholic character*. Lickona (2007) stated there are six factors or changes in the view of society that have driven the current *character education* movement. These factors include:

- the weakening of the family;
- the rise of the mass media and the popular or marketplace culture as a largely negative influence on the values and character of youth;
- the perception of widespread moral breakdown in society;
- troubling youth trends suggesting that societal moral breakdown is particularly reflected in the values and attitudes of the young;
- a negative attitude towards non-directive, relativistic approaches to values education; and
- the recovery of the belief that there is common ethical ground even in our intensely pluralistic society (Lickona, 2007, pp.1-2).

Lickona believed that the goal of Catholic character education is not simply "good character" but the character of Christ. By this Lickona suggested that families and Catholic schools should focus on both:

the cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, etc., but also the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the supporting spiritual virtues of prayer, frequenting the sacraments, and a radical obedience, in imitation of Christ, that surrenders our will to God (Lickona, 2007, p.2).

Character education as outlined by Cronin (1999) and Lickona (2007) is behaviourist¹¹ in nature. Cronin suggested the implementation of character education in Catholic schools and the observable behaviours that indicated an inner belief supported by teaching and the witness of adults. The school provides opportunities for students to practise the behaviours through community service activities and rewards the manifestation of these behaviours through award systems (Cronin, 1999, pp. 28-30). This version of character education simplifies the complex process of values acquisition to the reproduction of behaviours that are socially acceptable.

For some 'character education' is merely a useful banner under which they hope to reinstate religious Authority with a capital 'A'. They want the opportunity to drill children mindlessly, accepting their own religious and moral beliefs. They are looking to instil specifically religious habits, to get them ingrained in children while their intellects are firmly switched off (Law, 2006, p.129).

The literature on character education proposes that the failure of Catholics since Vatican II to focus on the teaching of virtues is the cause of what proponents of character education perceive as a generation who lack a moral framework and whose character has been adversely affected by secular influences. While having a character that is inspired by Jesus Christ is something to aspire to, the process by which character is developed is presented in a simplistic fashion.

This model does not focus on the development of critical and analytical skills that help students discern complex life issues and it does not present the Church's teachings and values as a worthwhile resource on which to base these choices. It does however narrow the revolutionary teachings of Jesus Christ into a checklist of virtues. While this thesis is not premised on this material it is described and analysed for two reasons. The first is to acknowledge that within the current cultural context of young people, their disaffection with religious institutions combined with the Church's anxious desires to religiously and spiritually engage youth will lead to a range of solutions to deal with what some members of the Church perceive to be a problem. While some solutions are couched in a language of certitude this does not mean that there will be a guarantee of success. Secondly this thesis acknowledges

¹¹ Behaviour modification is a form of teaching that has, as its outcomes, behaviours which are aimed for in an educational programme designed around behavioural objectives. Instead of specifying knowledge or attitudes as the desired outcomes, highly specific and easily assessable behaviours serve as the desired outcomes (Winch & Gingell, 1999, p.27).

that while some of Lickona's (2007) causal factors for the changes in western society are valid, there is a need for a response from Catholic educators acknowledging the fact that a simple behaviourist response is inadequate. This thesis proposes that the solution to the challenges of the current cultural context of young people is to be found in a nuanced response that respects the rights of young people to be provided with a Catholic education that is intellectually rigorous and develops the skills of self knowledge as well as a capacity to critique the existing structures of Church and society.

Up to this point the Chapter has reviewed some of the recent literature on Catholic schooling that is applicable to the role the Catholic school can and does play in the development of secondary school students' meaning-making capacities. Much of this literature however, is not framed in this context but in the context of Catholic identity. The reason for this is that the authors of this literature are still working out of a paradigm where, if schools can identify and articulate the key elements of Catholic identity they will be more effective in imparting a Catholic identity to their students. This belief flows from a the mindset that the Catholic school can impart through its culture a package of meaning and that when the school is successful, students will, as a matter of course, identify as being Catholic. This thesis proposes that there is a paradigm shift happening in Catholic schools due to a change in the cultural context of students and the effects that this cultural context has on how students construct their spirituality. As the spiritual needs of students change (*cf* Chapter Four, pp.89- 94), so must the role of the Catholic school. The elements of what is valuable about being Catholic have not changed but how they are presented to students must change. Church and school authorities must realise that students source their beliefs, spiritual resources and personal worldview from a range of sources and therefore the Church needs to be more proactive in presenting what is valuable and life giving about embracing a Catholic worldview.

Other insights into the future of Catholic schools

The focus of the literature in the first section of this chapter has been an inward one. The authors have explored the key indicators of a Catholic identity and how Catholic schools can support parents and parishes to develop a Catholic identity in

the students in Catholic schools. This section of the chapter examines the missionary activity of Catholic schools as they reach beyond those who are committed Catholics to those students who are still coming to know God (New Evangelisation¹²). This moves the focus of the discussion to their responsibility to build a religiously harmonious society (Cahill, 2006) and their responsibility to support a cohesive and resilient society (Angelico, 2006).

Grace (2002) the English researcher on Catholic schools named five distinctive aspects of Catholic educational mission as:

- an education in faith;
- a preferential option for the poor;
- formation in solidarity and community;
- education for the common good; and
- academic education for service (Grace, 2002, p.125).

These characteristics are based on documents from the Congregation of Catholic Education (1977, 1982, 1988, 1998). These features have theological aspects in common with the work of Groome (1996) and Miller (2005) although the work of Grace is framed in missionary terms. Missionary work may lead eventually to Catholic identity but it is about the bigger issue of the young person's relationship with God and coming to personhood in the light of this relationship.

Mission, according to D'Orsa, occurs when the Church engages with the world.

The missionary work of the Church involves the process of tapping into the presence of God in all cultures and developing a fuller consciousness of God's presence and work as this is revealed in Jesus. In this sense the missionary work of Christians is as much needed in contemporary western societies as it is in developing and underdeveloped societies (D'Orsa, 2003, p.296).

Marissa Crawford and Graham Rossiter (1988) named their seminal text on Catholic religious education: *Missionaries to a Teenage Culture*. Once again Catholic educators were reminded that they had a responsibility in mission to engage with young people but twenty years later the cultural context of this challenge is a very different one. With only 6.5% of Australian Catholics under the age of twenty attending Mass on a regular basis (Weedon, 2005, p.9) the terms of

¹² The call by Pope John Paul II for "the Church to preach the Gospel anew in previously Christian communities which were falling away from the Gospel in the face of secularisation and other cultural change" (Bishops of N.S.W. & ACT, 2007, p.12)

engagement are very different. The majority of young people enrolled in Catholic secondary schools have very little personal experience of the Church, let alone the language to engage in discussions of the theological concepts that underpin this experience. So the missionary activity of the Catholic school needs to be truly missionary in character. It needs to be dialogical in nature and respectful of the cultural context of young people. It needs to preach the message of the Gospel, but this message needs to address contextual questions about meaning, purpose and spiritual direction. The Catholic school also has the responsibility to challenge students to think beyond their own personal experiences and spiritual questions, to explore issues of justice and to consider how they may be of service to their community and the wider world. Catholic secondary education is built on these premises and in focusing on how to better engage with the world of young people. In this way it might fulfil both its missionary responsibilities as set out by the Congregation of Catholic Education and be a more effective resource agent for the meaning-making capacities of young people.

Cahill's (2006) keynote address at the NCEC Conference made some interesting observations about the directions that Catholic schools should take in the future. Cahill firstly stated that the Catholic Church and schools have a responsibility to build a religiously harmonious society (p.1). This ideal can be achieved through educating students to be critical thinkers who question racial and religious stereotypes and reach out to communities and schools of other faiths, to build bonds based on mutual respect and thus encourage religious understanding in the broader society. Cahill also explores the idea that within the Church, parish life is atrophying. Parishioners are aging and the numbers are declining while the strength of the Catholic school is on the rise (p.6). He suggested that the Church should acknowledge the Catholic school as a sacred place of belonging and identity. The distinction between parish and school could be removed as the school with its resources, expertise and relationship with youth takes on some of the traditional roles of the parish including that of Sunday worship for youth (p.7). Cahill's paper also encourages Australian Catholic schools to become "global centres of educational excellence" (p.9). Cahill suggested the skills that needed to be developed in students in order for them to be successful in a globalised twenty-first

century world included navigating skills, discerning skills, mapping skills, negotiating skills and translating skills (p.9).

While Cahill presented these skills in terms of information literacy skills; these skills can be translated into building blocks or “essential questions” for a programme to help students to develop their meaning-making capacities. In this context these skills could be conceived in the following manner. The essential question to be answered in the area of navigating skills is what are the key ideas that students will need to help them navigate through the truth claims made by multinational companies, the media and governments? The answer to this question in the area of globalisation would relate to the key concepts concerning the causes of poverty, the value of free trade and the impact of economic rationalism. In the area of terrorism and global conflict the essential questions could include the key beliefs of the major religious traditions, the causes and threats of fundamentalism in religious traditions, the historical background to the conflict in the Middle East, the role of poverty, politics, propaganda and the media in global conflicts. In the area of climate change the key concepts might include the scientific evidence for global warming, the contributing factors that are leading to climate change, the possible effects of doing nothing and the effects of a change in western lifestyle to address climate change might have on economies, communities and individuals. The mapping skills area could address the development of skills to apply the concepts of globalisation, generational change, economic rationalism, religious fundamentalism, poverty and excessive consumption in global and local contexts. Negotiating skills could develop the individual’s ability to come to a personal stance on local and global issues and develop students’ abilities to express and defend these positions in a written and oral form. It also could include the capacity to listen to the views of others and the ability to adapt their own personal views based on new knowledge and insights. Translating skills involve the life-long skills that enable the learner to translate what has been learned in one area of life to another. While the skills mentioned above focus on the global stage, translating skills focus more on the personal level. This could include the implementation of just principles into personal relationships the translation of the understanding of the threat of global warming to personal consumption; and the need for religious tolerance on the global scale to be translated into the interpersonal interactions that occur with people of

other faiths in the local community. The area of discernment skills is possibly the most important set of skills to help support students in the development of their meaning-making capacities. This area could focus on the differences between a discernment process and simply making decisions. Discernment skills might include a knowledge of the skills outlined earlier combined with the spiritual capacity for self reflection, the search for truth and the capacity to find meaning and purpose in proposed ways forward.

Cahill's NCEC keynote (2006) was structured on identifying local and global issues facing Australian Catholic schools and making some suggestions about where he believed time and energy should be focused to address these challenges. While Cahill did not directly mention issues of meaning or purpose, the issues he highlighted and the suggestions he made about the future of Catholic schools in Australia were all centred on the "transitions" that Catholic schools need to make in a globalised world and he touched on issues that contribute to meaning-making.

In contrast, Angelico (2006) analysed the data surrounding the contribution Catholic schools make to the broader local community in terms of building well-being and personal resilience and being a manifestation of hope to that community.

Angelico's paper reviewed the research on Victorian Catholic schools in light of the contribution that Catholic schools make to "social capital"¹³. The aim of her research was to argue that the money spent by Federal and State governments on Catholic schools is value for money in a utilitarian sense. It is Angelico's position that:

Through the combined capacities of the institutions of religion and schooling, Catholic schools engage with broader social processes, such as social cohesion, social stability, social integration and social transformation (Angelico, 2006, p.2).

The Catholic school does this by being concerned with building communities that focus on the "dignity of the human person"¹⁴ and challenging students to develop

¹³This concept refers to networks, working together with shared morals, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within and among groups. The capital resides in social relationships rather than in individuals (as is the case with human capital). Social capital is therefore seen to be a public good, produced by social investment (Angelico, 2006, p.7).

¹⁴ The dignity of the human person is a concept, which includes a defence of human rights, but also attributes to the human person the dignity of a child of God; it attributes the fullest liberty, freed from sin itself by Christ, the most exalted destiny, which is the definitive and total possession of God himself (*sic*), through love. It establishes the strictest possible relationship of solidarity among all persons; through mutual love and an ecclesial community. It calls for the fullest development of all that is human, because we have been made masters (*sic*) of the world by its Creator". (Miller, 2005, p. 8).

their potential academically, emotionally and spiritually. The paper considers that not only does the school focus on the needs of its students but it makes strong connections with the broader community through its pastoral work with parents.

As families are becoming increasingly isolated and neighbourhood networks and institutions are undergoing change, schools are becoming the front line centres of care for the local community. In addition to learning needs they are responding to a range of pastoral and welfare related needs and a demand for services traditionally provided by social workers, psychologists, health workers and parishes. The Catholic school's connection with the community is also reflected in its socio-economic enrolment profile (Angelico, 2006, p.8).

The value of Angelico's research for this thesis is that her work gives a practical example of the lived experience of the Catholic schools' theoretical commitment to a positive anthropology and the building of Christ centred communities. The research also quantifies the work the Catholic school does to make a significant difference in local communities in which they are situated. In terms of this thesis, the research supports the argument that the Catholic school models to students a way of life that has a clearly articulated theological and philosophical base but is also lived out in its interactions with its pastoral involvement with individuals and broader communities which not only build the Church but make a valuable contribution to the social capital of the society.

Caldwell (2007) has written extensively over the last twenty-five years on the organisational structures and management of schools and educational leadership. His current work focuses on the balance of the four "capitals", intellectual, social, spiritual, and financial in the management of schools. Spiritual capital is defined as "the strength of moral purpose and the degree of coherence between values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning" (Caldwell, 2007, p.55). Caldwell's work uses the same theoretical basis as Angelico (2006) and acknowledges the role that Church based schools play in the creation of social capital for the community in which they are situated. Caldwell makes this claim by quoting the work of Putnam (2000) stating that shared religious beliefs and practices make or accounted for up to 50% of social capital measured in a recent study (Caldwell, 2007, p.59).

Caldwell gives ten indicators by which schools can assess the extent to which they have built spiritual capital into the culture of the school and developed spiritual capital in the individual student. These indicators focus on the alignment of the stated values of the school in the policy and curriculum base of the school and the behaviour and actions of students and staff. Caldwell's insights are of value to this thesis as these indicators give a tangible way of assessing how the charism, Catholic worldview and habitus¹⁵ have been embedded into the current culture of a Catholic school community.

The role religious education plays in the spiritual education of students

Therese D'Orsa in 2003, in an article on New Evangelisation made the observation that we cannot separate religious education from Catholic education and if we do conceive them separately there is a risk to Catholic Education.

Catholic Education and Catholic Religious Education are separated at our peril. In a very real sense now, and in an increasingly necessary sense in the future, all Catholic Education is, and must be construed as religious education (D'Orsa, 2003, p.287).

This section of the chapter will describe and analyse the key issues that currently face religious educators and evaluate the place that meaning-making holds in the current discourse of Catholic religious education.

As stated in Chapter Four, spiritual education and the role it plays for the spiritual well-being of students is becoming more prevalent in the stated aims of schooling and the policies that implement these aims in both State and Catholic education documentation. The Catholic school develops students spiritually by giving students the opportunity to integrate personal knowledge with wisdom and faith to develop an ongoing relationship with God. *The Religious Dimension of the Catholic School* described the school as providing students with opportunities and capacities:

to make judgments about what is true and what is false; and to make choices based on these judgments. Making use of a systematic framework, such as that offered by our philosophical

¹⁵ Habitus: refers to a deep centred cultural disposition which deals with the present in light of past experiences (Hunter, 2004, p.178).

heritage, with which to find the best possible human responses to questions regarding the human person, the world, and God. Lively dialogue between culture and the Gospel message. The fullness of truth contained in the Gospel message itself, which embraces and integrates the wisdom of all cultures, and enriches them with the divine mysteries known only to God but which, out of love, he (sic) has chosen to reveal to us. With such criteria as a basis, the student's careful and reflective study of philosophy will bring human wisdom into an encounter with divine wisdom (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, No. 48-51).

The philosophical, theological and spiritual heritage described above which is now spoken of as a Catholic worldview and as indicated previously in this chapter, is crucial to the development of Catholic identity is required to be integrated into all aspects of school life. The Catholic school provides the capacities and opportunities for students to develop their own personal spirituality through a combination of the academic, pastoral and religious dimensions of school life.

It tries to relate all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illumine everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life, and about the human person. (1) The Council, therefore, declared that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension, and that this is to be found in *a*) the educational climate, *b*) the personal development of each student, *c*) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, *d*) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith. (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, No. 34).

While a Catholic worldview is also required to be integrated into all academic subjects, it is through the religious education programme that the opportunities to explore the integration of faith, culture and the development of a personal relationship with God can be addressed in an academically sustained and expansive way led by teachers who have qualifications in theology and religious education. The religious education class therefore, provides a specific focus for the spiritual and religious education of young people where issues of meaning and purpose can be specifically explored and addressed. To effectively assess the role that Catholic education can and does play in the development of secondary school students' meaning-making capacities there is a need to assess what role Catholic religious education plays in the life of the Catholic school.

The shifting focus of Catholic religious education

Rossiter (1999) lists the following five themes as a way of tracking changes in emphasis in the discourse in religious education over almost the last sixty years in Catholic religious education in Australia.

- The quest for personalism and relevance;
- The centrality of the concept of faith development;
- The development of diocesan guidelines for religious education
- New state courses and the quest for academic credibility; and
- Student resource materials for use in the classroom (Rossiter, 1999, p.8).

Some aspects of these themes have their basis in historical, Church and societal events that have caused them to emerge, gain importance and then dissipate.

Malone (2007) noted some of these key events to be the Second Vatican Council, liturgical reform, the Kerygmatic movement, social change during the 1960s, the Vietnam War, the Vatican document *Catechesis Tradendae*, the development of diocesan guidelines and development of State based Studies of Religion courses. Aspects of all five themes are currently being discussed and written about in religious education. The area of personalism and relevance is being addressed by writers such as Ryan (2001), Rossiter (2002 a, b) Crawford and Rossiter (2006), Engebretson (2001b, 2004, 2006) and de Souza (2004b, 2003, 2005, 2006); and a number of research projects have recently been published by these writers to quantify and clarify issues of youth spirituality, meaning and identity.

The area of faith development is addressed by Rosier (1998), Ryan (1998b) and D'Orsa (2003). These writers deal with the implications that the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) and New Evangelisation (Holohan, 1999) will have for the place and nature of religious education and liturgy in the Catholic school. Crotty, Fletcher and McGrath (1995), Bezzina et al (1997) and Crotty and O'Grady (1999) have reflected on the appropriateness of various models of religious education and the impact that the implementation of outcomes based diocesan curriculum guidelines has had on the status of religious education in schools. Malone (1995a,b), Ryan (1999), Goldberg (2001), Thomas (2001), Engebretson (2001a), Lovat (2002) and Crawford and Rossiter (2006) have all charted the implementation of state based courses in religion and have debated the value of this approach. The major discussion in this area has focused on the impact that State religion courses at

senior school level have had on students in terms of developing tolerance towards other religious traditions and the effect that the introduction of these courses has had on the religious dimension of the schools in which these State courses are taught. Finally Ryan (2000), Engebretson (2000), Mudge (2000), Crotty and Crotty (2000), Rymarz (2000), Lovat (2000) and Elliot (2002) have reflected on the educational value of developing textbooks and resources that support diocesan guidelines or the State religion courses. The discussion in this area has focused on the efficacy of textbooks, and the elements that contribute to the development of quality learning and teaching resources.

The role of personalism and relevance in religious education

In a 1995 paper, Rossiter proposed that a quest for personalism and relevance is the most important theme in Catholic religious education today. Rossiter (2002a) maintained this stance in a response to Flynn and Mok's (2002) proposal that formal religious education classes in Year 11 and 12 should be disbanded, countering with the view that present forms of religious education in Year 11 and 12 are "too tame" (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p.380). Rather than abandoning formal religious education classes at the senior level, there is a need to re-conceptualise them. Rossiter considered that in the perceptions of students, diocesan curriculum guidelines have focused classroom activity in religious education on the maintenance of the institutionalised Church while state religion studies programs have given too much attention to a phenomenological description of religious practice of various religious traditions in Australia. Rossiter proposed that religious education in senior classes should focus more on the critical study of current societal and religious issues. This view stems from Rossiter's belief that this form of study is more likely to engage senior school students and has the potential to contribute to their spiritual and identity formation, or in other words, to help students to construct meaning.

Malone (1998), in a conference paper delivered to the Australian Association for Religious Education, reflected on the key issues for religious education for the next millennium. Before addressing the issues of concern to religious educators, Malone placed these issues against the background of the cultural, religious and educational challenges of the early twenty-first century. This background included the

challenges of an ethnically diverse Australian culture, the continued emergence of an Australian spirituality, and the implications of a globally interdependent society. Malone argued that the great challenge facing religious educators is to develop a language that helps young people to:

- construct questions;
- explore their own tradition;
- explore their own spirituality identity; and
- participate in and develop a new social order. (Malone, 1998, p12).

In a chapter in a recent text Malone (2007) identified that learning in religious education should focus on “ritual, service and various expressions of ethical behaviour” (p. 744). Malone states that this learning should focus on the whole person, and encompass some interaction with local religious communities. Lastly the chapter focuses on the relationship between meaning, values and spirituality and raises the idea that the Catholic religious educator has the dual responsibility to respect the needs of the learner and the wisdom of the tradition.

Catholic schools have always claimed to give a high priority to religious education, which provides an explicit focus on these values. They now face the challenge to identify the extent to which their formal and informal programs promote this search for meaning and the spiritual, and have not simply become enmeshed in theological discourse that may seem irrelevant to both their students and teachers (Malone, 2007, in de Souza, 2007, p.745).

The capacities listed above by Malone, while a life long quest for the students, can be assisted by a solid foundation in the tradition. Religious education classes provide this through the study of theological concepts and the broader opportunities within the school for prayer and liturgical celebrations. The challenges posed by Malone in these papers would recognise the importance of meaning-making as conceptualised within this research.

Grimmitt (2000c), reflected from the perspective of county school religious education in the United Kingdom on the construction of meaning in religious education. In this chapter Grimmitt developed an approach for *constructivism* to be the epistemological model for the teaching of religious education in government schools. It proposed to allow students to:

- imaginatively and critically study religious issues;
- make connections between their own feelings and experiences, to the content taught;
- arrive at their own conclusions; and

- deconstruct problems that relate to language, meaning, power and privilege (Grimmitt, 2000c, p.223-224).

Most importantly for this research, Grimmitt made the following links between the role of religious education, personal relevance, meaning and constructivism:

Far from being a problem in the understanding of religion and religions, the fact that each and every pupil is engaged in this form of *interpretation* does not undermine the educational experience of RE but enhances it. One of the fundamental concerns of this subject is to enable pupils to participate consciously and critically in the process of meaning-making as a characteristic activity of being human. RE enables pupils to do this through considering the inescapable, ultimate questions that arise from reflecting upon the human condition. Merely conveying to them pre-packaged meanings (although constructivism shows this to be an impossibility) does little to engage them in such reflections or convince them of the need to do so (Grimmitt, 2000c, pp. 223-224).

Grimmitt's work not only questions the effectiveness of a purely doctrinally focused programme of study of religious education, it also provides this research with a set of criteria by which to judge to what extent constructivism is built into an existing or developing religious education programme.

De Ruyter (2002b) argued that religious education is valuable in a liberal democracy because it presents a different value system to that promoted by dominant economic, secular and hedonistic forces (p.9). De Ruyter considered that religious education addresses issues of belonging and community and these issues relate to meaning in life. Religious education also provides a conception of the good and makes a contribution to the development of students' identity because it provides a mental and moral model which students can draw upon. De Ruyter claimed that religious education makes a contribution to identity formation. This claim is based on the understanding that identity is formed in relation to ideals and values and that religious education provides an alternative source of ideals and values to those promoted by popular culture. Lastly, the paper claimed that religious education is important for a liberal democracy because a liberal democracy needs the ideological contestation of ideas so there is not a single conception of a "good life". It was argued that the different conceptions of the good that are provided by religious education introduce children to thinking about and debating the values and ideals dominant in their culture (p.12). De Ruyter highlighted the

personal and societal value of the study of religious education as it makes contributions to personal meaning, identity formation and the development of societal critique. This perspective moves the debate on the significance of religious education in the curriculum away from the institutional maintenance of religious traditions and focuses the debate on the contributions that religious education can make to society by supporting students as they develop their meaning-making capacities.

While both Grimmitt (2000c) and de Ruyter (2002a, b) are writing out of the context of religious education in state run schools in the United Kingdom, their insights have application for religious education in a Catholic context in Australia. This is the case as many of the social and educational factors affecting high school students' perceptions of religion and spirituality are similar in nature or have the same basis in both nations.

In an Australian context English (2007) stated "Religious education has a role in helping people become more fully human" (p.1). In English's exploration of this statement he incorporated the work of the 20th century philosophers Gadamer, Arendt and Ricoeur. The key concept explored was *bildung* which is described in the following way:

Bildung according to Gadamer is the *concept of self-formation, education, or cultivation* (Gadamer p.9). It is the 'properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities' (Gadamer p.10)... *Bildung* is a constant and continuous process that goes on all our lives. *Bildung* has no goals outside itself. It does not lead to the use of templates because the template for a human life does not exist (Gadamer p.16). Humanity is not something humans have, or a skill we can learn and then have once and for all. It is a direction we attempt to follow and something we try to cultivate (Hahn p.10) (English, 2007, pp. 2-3).

English stated that the process of *bildung* takes place in a pluralistic society and in terms of religious education it takes place within a pluralist Church. This concept of *bildung* challenges religious educators to question what role religious education plays in helping students to develop their talents and their capacity to grow into their humanity. This question also needs to be answered in light of the research on youth spirituality.

All these observations lead to the conclusion that a model of religious education that focuses on helping students construct their own meaning system fulfils two aims. Not only does such a model give access into and an understanding of a religious tradition, but it also meets the criteria of other contemporary educational approaches which respect the individual learner and provide meaningful and relevant curriculum connected to real life.

The view that issues of personal relevance, spiritual development, meaning and identity are key issues in contemporary religious education is also borne out by the attention given to these issues at recent international and national conferences. At the *International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV XIII)* in July-August of 2006, 32% papers related to the themes of spirituality and identity development or issues of relevance and meaning. The *Fifth National Symposium on Religious Education and Ministry* in Brisbane, June 2007, offered 34% of papers related to issues of spirituality and meaning.

Re-imaging the role of religious education

A more recent theme not contained in Rossiter's 1999 article has been the re-emergence of the debate over what is the most appropriate pedagogical approach for religious education to respond to the challenges of post-modernity. Over the last fifty years much time, effort and energy has been expended in the discussion on the most appropriate model for religious education. These approaches have included the catechetical, kerygmatic, life-centred, shared Christian praxis, phenomenological and the educational approaches (Lovat, 2002; Buchanan, 2003). White (2003) noted that in all these approaches and models there has been little evidence specifically concerned with pedagogy. He proposes "pedagogy is the missing link in religious education" (White, 2003, p, 17). White defined pedagogy in the following way:

Pedagogy represents the underlying rationale that informs the selection of specific teaching strategies and is capable of incorporating an eclectic array of methodologies matched to the particular needs of the student cohort (White, 2003, p.17).

Grimmitt (2000a) also noted that, "after a long period of neglect, the term pedagogy is re-establishing itself in educational parlance and thinking" (p.16). Grimmitt

moved from a discussion of pedagogy to an examination of the pedagogical models in religious education. He stated that all pedagogical models in religious education express a set of assumptions about the nature of education and religion and they describe the relationship between the two. Grimmitt believed that any model of religious education also sets the parameters in which specific classroom pedagogical judgements are made (2000a, p.17). From this understanding of pedagogical models Grimmitt stated that pedagogical principles and procedures emerge.

Pedagogical principles are general laws or substantive hypotheses about teaching and learning which inform the process of devising *pedagogical procedures or pedagogical strategies* which, in turn, determine how pupils will *experience, engage with and respond to the content*. Ideally in designing a pedagogical model pedagogical principles should first be expressed in generic terms (i.e. as Piaget or Bruner might formulate a principle about assisting concept development) and then expressed in terms specific to RE (Grimmitt, 2000a, p.18).

This quote while set in a religious education context is applicable to all forms of school- based education. This thesis proposes that addressing the concept of pedagogical principles is key to a successful paradigm shift in Catholic secondary schooling. Currently in N.S.W. there is little or no discussion about underlying pedagogical principles as the majority of time, energy and government funding focuses on pedagogical strategies. This focus has occurred due to a research base that states the way to achieve success in standardised and high value testing is to improve the pedagogical procedures and strategies of teachers (Hayes et al 2006). This has led most professional development to focus on the micro-curriculum or the construction of individual lessons and how this lesson builds “intellectual quality, quality teaching environment and significance”¹⁶ (N.S.W. DET, 2007). As illustrated in Chapter Four, the improvement of educational standards to allow all students to have the greatest possible choice of vocational opportunities and to build the social capital of the country is an important pedagogical principle. Schools are not only required to consider the vocational needs of students but need to make a contribution to students’ capacity to make meaning throughout life. For schools to

¹⁶ “The N.S.W. Quality Teaching model is based on the latest international and national research. It is able to be applied from K-12 across all key learning areas. The N.S.W. model is based on the three pedagogical dimensions:

- Intellectual quality
- Quality learning environment
- Significance” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007)

be successful in supporting students in developing their capacities for meaning-making, there needs to be a commitment at both the state and system level. This commitment is to not only name meaning-making as a specific pedagogical approach, but to invest in exploring the philosophical basis for this principle before seeking ways to support and promote it with related professional development. In this manner the principle can be achieved with the considered holistic development of appropriate pedagogical meaning-making procedures and strategies.

Andrew Wright (2004) takes up the issue of what are the most appropriate pedagogical principles and procedures for religious education so it can stay relevant to students in a post-modern society. This question is important to Wright because he like others, (Hayes et al, 2006) has argued that the present model of schooling is a modernist institution trying to adapt to the demands of post-modernity. Not only is school a modernist invention, the roots of religious education are grounded in what Wright calls a “pre-modern branch of learning” (p.181). Wright addresses this question by constructing a model which he calls “critical religious education”.

Wright describes this model in the following way:

A genuinely critical education, we suggest, needs to combine a fundamental openness towards a range of horizons of meaning with the cultivation of a reflective wisdom capable of empowering students to negotiate their way through an increasingly complex cultural context. Finally we argued that religious education must avoid the conventional route of utilising religion to buttress the meta-narratives of naturalism, romanticism, liberalism and anti-realism, and strive instead to fulfil its transformational potential by opening pupils up to the questions of ultimate truth and cultivating appropriate levels of religious literacy (Wright, 2004, p.221).

Wright argued that a critical religious education should have four virtues: to be honest, receptive, truthful and wise. The virtue of being honest described how the background and preconceived ideas about the religion of the teacher, students, the school, the tradition, and the society need to be named and acknowledged in the learning process. Wright defines the virtue of receptivity as being open and sensitive to the truth claims and worldviews of other individuals and traditions. The definition of wisdom is that it is the capacity to deal with the tension that exists between competing issues and the ability to enter into conversation about issues of contention, while maintaining the abilities to respect the views of others and maintaining the ability to argue and live by a personal stance on the issue.

The religiously educated person will be capable of *thinking*, *feeling*, *communicating* and *acting* intellectually in response to the claims of religious traditions, and their secular counterparts, as they seek to respond to the ultimate mystery of the world (Wright, 2004, p. 225).

Lastly by truthfulness Wright means that religious education should help young people “engage for themselves in the struggle to establish an authentic relationship with the ultimate order of things” (p.225). Critical religious education is a pedagogical approach that develops religious literacy and the skills of analysis to critique society and the power relationships within society. However its ultimate goal is to enable students to engage with competing ‘meaning horizons’, to grapple with the ambiguity of competing claims and hopefully develop a sense of meaning and truth that makes sense for the individual. These meaning systems will draw on the elements of examined and critiqued meta-narratives and will hopefully orientate the students and give them a foundation to live by and consequently deal with “ the ultimate mystery of reality and striving after the ultimate truth of the order of things” (p.231).

The researcher (Hack, 2004b) has also argued that too often in religious education, especially in the school situation, there has been excessive focus on the pedagogical procedures and strategies. This focus has skewed time, energy and resources into the ‘how questions’. How do we make religious education classes like all other classes? How do we develop religious literacy? How do we meet the outcomes? How do we assess? How do we effectively use textbooks? How do we give valid feedback? All of these questions are important but are only answerable in the context of why we are making these choices. In Grimmitt’s terms the “why” questions are the overarching pedagogical principles that need to be addressed. An emerging pedagogical principle for the teaching of religious education in the twenty-first century is that of the construction of meaning.

Using the construct meaningful education, gives religious education a different voice. It is a voice that allows for the passing on to Catholic students of a rich philosophical and theological tradition that gives them a framework from which to judge other conceptions of personhood and which may also help students to make educated decisions about the type of people they wish to be (Hack, 2004b, p. 41).

This section of the chapter has examined the current issues in the discourse of religious education.

Other perspectives

There are a number of factors which indicate that traditional religious beliefs and practices do not figure strongly in the spiritual life of Generation Y. Falling mass attendance and recent research have called many in the Church to question the efficacy of the investment the Catholic Church places in Catholic schools in Australia. While much of the recently released research on youth spirituality has not been fully analysed, the questions the research poses for the Church to consider with regard to generational change have focused the attention of Australian Bishops once again on the effectiveness of Catholic schools. The Bishops acknowledge that the Catholic school is the “jewel in the crown” (Bishops of N.S.W. et al, 2007, p.6) of the Australian Church. At the beginnings of the Catholic Church in Australia early leaders chose to create a Church based on the liberation of Irish Catholics through the power of education. Consequently they invested their money and resources in schooling. The result is one of the great Catholic education systems in the world where there is much invested in terms of resources and social capital. The Bishops, like theorists and practitioners, have high hopes for Catholic education but they perceive that in N.S.W. at least, Catholic education is at a crossroad due to the increased number of students who do not have an ongoing relationship with the Church through connection to a parish and a worshipping community. In their most recent pastoral letter the Bishops identified the issue at the heart of the future of Catholic schooling as Catholic identity.

This thesis sees that while a review of the sources of Catholic identity at a time of social and ecclesial upheaval is necessary, it is also myopic and introspective in focus. This chapter began with a quote from Lealman stating that young people needed a “frame of reference” to help them make decisions. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) described the role the Church can play in providing pre-packaged sources of meaning from which young people can build their structures for meaning. De Ruyter (2002a) described the part religious schools play in providing “conceptions of the good”, or religious ideals (2006). De Ruyter described the value of exploring

and debating these ideals in religious education in terms of the contribution these discussions make to the formation of identity in students. Wright (2004) argued for a “critical religious education” that draws on the truths of the tradition but challenges religious educators not to present these truths in a “modernist” fashion but as a horizon of meaning whereby students can explore and compare and contrast the wisdom of the Catholic tradition with other horizons of meaning. While the researcher would agree that the Church is at a crossroad, like the theorists the researcher wishes to look beyond the narrow corridor of institutional identity and maintenance to the responsibilities the Catholic school has to support young people in their quest for meaning.

Nearly twenty years ago Buetow (1988) stated:

The Church has both rights and duties in schooling and education. The Church has rights because people have a spiritual nature as well as a physical one, because of social justice, because of the need for the betterment of human life, and because of education’s being essentially a moral enterprise dealing with the “good person”, the “good life” and the “good society” (Buetow, 1988, p.323).

The Church has the right to have their schools help in developing the Catholic identity of young people. The Church also has the responsibility to contribute to the forming of a “good person”, a “good life” and a “good society.” The Church does this by sharing with young people a two thousand year old spiritual wisdom that gives students a model or a frame of reference that has coped with the key human questions of every age, which, if young people choose to embrace it, can be the source of a deep spiritual life.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored a number of themes within the discourse of Catholic secondary schooling. The chapter has established the centrality of spirituality and the quest for personal relevance, which can also be conceived as meaning-making within the discourse of Catholic schooling. Chapters Four and Five have established that spirituality in its broadest context, meaning-making, spiritual education and religious education have a significant degree of overlap. The building of meaning-making capacities is a central aspect of a personal spirituality

and is therefore an important element of the concern to promote spiritual development through education.

This thesis argues that the major transition that the Catholic school needs to make to achieve the goals of the building of Catholic identity and the “betterment of human life” is to acknowledge and address the responsibility the Church has to become a resource agent for young people as they face the challenges of a globalised world. In addressing issues of meaning and purpose and in supporting the development of each student’s meaning-making capacities, the Catholic school makes a valuable contribution to the development of the good person, the good life and the good society.

Chapter Six of this thesis uses the key themes of the literature review in Chapters Four and Five to design a model that describes the role that secondary schools in the current context could play in supporting the development of capacities for students to consider issues of meaning and to build their capacity to make meaning. Examples from current Catholic secondary school practice will be highlighted to show how elements of this model have already been implemented and areas where other elements of the model can be implemented through the incorporation of meaning-making as a key pedagogical principle in the aims of Catholic schooling.

Chapter Six: A twenty-first century pedagogical model

Introduction

This chapter¹⁷ builds on the exploration of the literatures of educational theory related to future models of schooling, spirituality, youth spirituality and Catholic schooling contained in Chapters Four and Five of the thesis. These foundations are used to construct a model that describes how the Catholic school can be a resource for the development of the meaning-making capacities in secondary students. This chapter also makes the link between the school being an effective resource agent for meaning and the school having an educational focus on meaning or meaningful education. Lastly the chapter highlights the ways in which Catholic schools, in their existing structures can, and already do, contribute to the development of the meaning-making capacities of the students in their care.

Building blocks for the model

This thesis presents a pedagogical model as a way of conceptualising the elements that contribute to an understanding of how young people in the twenty-first century develop meaning-making capacities. This model is then used to develop the codes in the case study section of the thesis. Any model of this nature needs to address the aims of the state, the Church and the individual, and the changing context of the society and the learner. This chapter develops this pedagogical model with its focus on a Catholic educational context and uses the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) as the theoretical base.

Delors (1996) in a seminal document from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) described and discussed the key changes that need to occur internationally in education to help it fulfil its aims of improving knowledge and skills and bringing about the personal development and the building of relationships among individuals, groups and nations (Delors, 1996, p.12). Some of the key ideas contained in this report include:

¹⁷ Some of this chapter has been published in two articles by the researcher, *Personal meaning: An emerging pedagogical principle in religious education*, and *Charism in the Catholic school: A workable twenty-first century model*. The co-author of the second article, S.Brien has given permission for aspects of the article to be used in this thesis.

- education has a role in helping young people make sense of the changes taking place in their world.
- lifelong education or “learning throughout life” is based on the four pillars of learning: “learning to know”, “learning to do”, and “learning to be” and “learning to live together”.
- education which has traditionally emphasised the acquisition of knowledge now needs to be conceived in a more encompassing manner.
- secondary education needs to be refashioned in the context of learning throughout life.
- choosing a type of education means choosing a type of society and consequently public debate is needed on the most appropriate approach to adopt to deal with educational reform.

While each one of these points has implications for the future directions of twenty-first century education, it is the four pillars of learning that have captured the imagination of contemporary writers in education (Education Queensland, 2001; Carneiro, 2003; Power, 2003). ‘Learning to know’ refers to broad based general knowledge. ‘Learning to do’ encompasses vocational skills, and learning to work in teams both in informal and social settings. ‘Learning to live together’ refers to developing an appreciation of other people and the interdependence between human beings. It also refers to the development of respect for the values of others. Lastly ‘learning to be’ describes the development of autonomy, judgement, personal responsibility, memory, reasoning and communication skills (Delors, 1996, p.37).

Carneiro (2003) perceived that meaning-making is an essential part of the human condition. He believed that in a society buffeted by change which has also lost access to its past, the social function of education becomes more important. In this society education must situate itself between permanence and change. Due to the shifting nature of society, education needs to help individuals become persons in the fullest sense. In order to build the future these individuals also need to be active, participating citizens.

Humans are meaning-seeking beings. We need to make meaning - to make sense of our lives - just as we need to breathe. We would be wise to put that need at the center of the work we do in schools (Ancess, 2004, p.40).

Carneiro believed that human beings are on inner journeys that embrace meaning-making dialogues; and that schools and educational institutions are vessels where teachers and pupils see the meaning and significance of their joint learning stories

(p.14). According to Carneiro, as well as having academic concerns, schools also have *teleological concerns* which include learning about:

- the human condition;
- citizenship;
- one's cultural template;
- processing information;
- managing vocational identity; and
- constructing wisdom (Carneiro, 2003, p.15).

Carneiro also perceived that changes in the use of the terminology in education also indicate shifts in conceptual thought. He noted that the shift in the discourse in education away from the use of the term “teaching” to that of “learning” is one indicator of the move away from the industrial model of education. However, while this is an important shift, the more subtle change that is associated with the use of the term learning is the shift away from the communal dimension of schooling to a focus on the individual. Carneiro perceived the process of schooling as a complex journey metaphor. Rather than a single reality, Carneiro perceived this experience as an interconnected experience of the “journey without” or “outwards” and the “journey within”. Carneiro defined education as the “outer journey” by which individuals are inducted into the social meanings of the society. Carneiro understood the use of the term learning as placing the emphasis on the needs of the individual. According to Carneiro, this is about the “inner journey”. Carneiro argued that the aims of education (communal) and the primary aims of learning (individual) are not at odds, but in fact meaning-making occurs at the intersection of the journey outward (education) and the journey inward (learning).

Twenty-first century meaning-making models

Foundations

Delors proposed that the four pillars of “learning to know”, “learning to do”, “learning to be” and “learning to live together” should be the basis for developing both an international and national educational systems that deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century and which would provide for the needs of young people who are being educated in this unique time. The question could be asked why have these building blocks only emerged at this time? Why were these pillars not identifiable aspects of the earlier pre-industrial and industrial models of education?

In previous meaning-making models the areas of “being” and “living together” were fixed realities. The knowledge and understanding of “learning to be” and “learning to live together” were the responsibility of the Church and the State. An understanding of “learning to be” was contained in philosophy and theology and transmitted through society’s meta-narratives, the doctrines of the Church and laws of society. “Learning to live together” was passed on through social mores and religious tenets and was implemented and monitored by the hierarchy of the Church and the State and to a certain extent determined by family and place of birth. “Meaning” was found for the individual in this time frame by “learning to know” and ‘learning to do’ within the fixed confines of “being” and “living together”. The acquisition of knowledge and skills was not fixed, but occurred during the process of dissonance and accommodation of the individual’s ideas against fixed and rigid societal and Church views. This process of knowledge and skill acquisition led to the individual developing his or her own personal meaning within the accepted parameters of meaning.

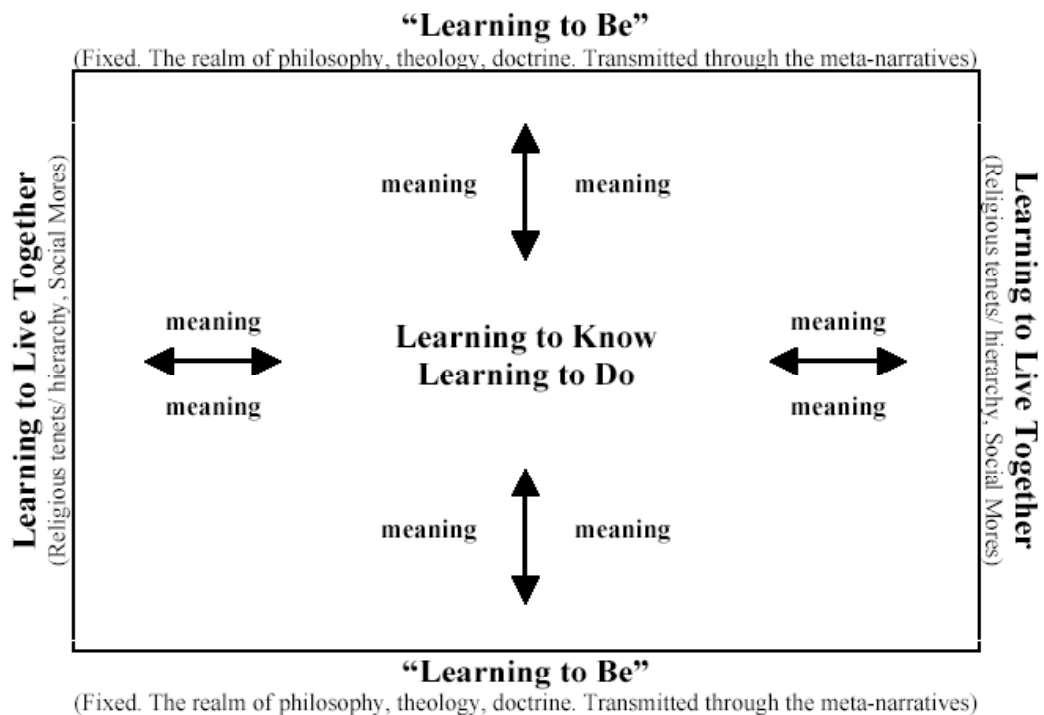
The diagram gives a visual explanation of learning in previous times. In a fixed world where the State and the Church determined the boundaries of the known world these boundaries were more than just geographic realities. Within these confines there were few external ideas and limited new knowledge. There was censorship of certain ideas which did not confirm to the framework of accepted thinking. Boundaries were created by philosophical, theological and structural understandings of the world. Certain tenets, behaviours and ways of being were acceptable and consequently supported by tradition and society. Punishment was the repercussion for being out of step with society. In this world the communal sense of identity was created by a shared view of the world and a limited body of accessible knowledge.

Certain behaviours emerged from this construct in determining how society functioned and how individuals interacted with one another. Societies were structured along hierarchical lines, dominated by males with rigid control structures. Members of society had to learn to recognise the boundaries and what society determined as acceptable and the norm. Straying outside the boundaries frequently meant censure and removal from society either temporarily or permanently. With little flexibility, learning to live together meant the individual taking up their

accepted social and vocational responsibilities and meeting the expectations of the society.

Figure 1. Pre twenty-first century model of learning about meaning

(Incorporating terminologies from Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003))



As referred to earlier, contemporary western society is in a post-modern era. In terms of philosophy this means that the great meta-narratives of the Church and society no longer hold universal relevance. In this situation the individual is more responsible for the construction of personal meaning. This in turn has changed the role of the school, the educator and more specifically the role religious education can play as a facilitator of meaning. In the contemporary situation there is no longer a fixed ‘box’ of meaning. This unique situation can be best addressed by structuring a pedagogical model and finding a conceptual way of constructing meaning so that we can practically address the situation.

A possible model

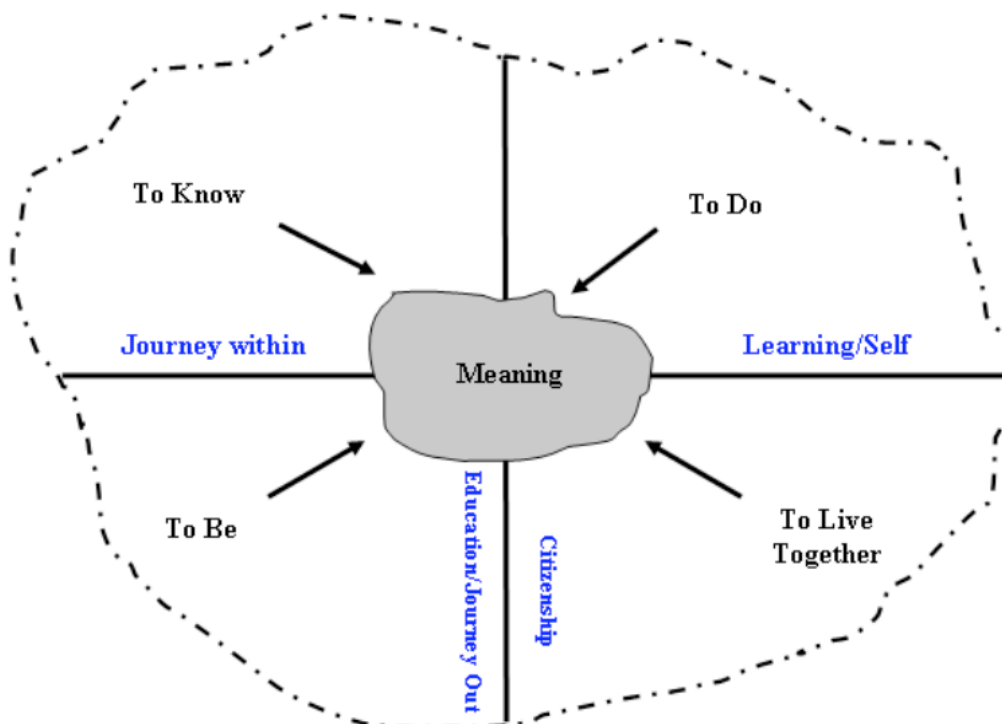
In the proposed model, each individual is responsible for structuring and accessing the resources for meaning-making in his or her life. This occurs because the fixed

boundaries for meaning-making have lost the monopoly on validity and credibility. In post-modernity the established sources of meaning have been deconstructed and the individual assumes greater responsibility for the construction of meaning where the traditional frameworks of society have fractured.

The proposed model combines the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) to formulate a new understanding of how meaning-making can be addressed in a pedagogical manner within all classrooms but particularly in the religious education classroom. As a starting point this model focuses on the work of Carneiro and Delors. As previously stated, Carneiro presents meaning as being at the intersection of the journey within to selfhood (learning) and the journey without to citizenship (education). For the individual to make this dual and simultaneous journey within and without, there needs to be both scaffolding and support structures. This support needs depth and quality in order for it to meet the needs of the individual and to connect with society's existing meaning systems. When an individual has a sense of personalised meaning they can articulate a sense of self and also take up their responsibilities as an active functioning member of the state and the Church.

In the proposed model, each individual is responsible for making meaning in his or her own life. Because there are no longer fixed parameters of meaning, it must come about through a flexible approach allowing for individual differences. The individual constructs meaning for his or her own situation and circumstances. This may be similar to, or different from, the ways other individuals construct meaning according to their own situations. The four pillars of learning become not the boundaries of the meaning system but the supports for it. They are adaptable resources for the journey both within and without. They move from being areas to master, to supports which aid the construction of personal meaning. In the new model all four aspects of learning need to be acquired and experienced in a balanced manner. There can no longer be the assumption that an individual will accept a pre-conceived or packaged worldview or that governments, churches or societal leaders can control any one of the four pillars.

Figure 2. A Twenty-first century model of meaning-making



In the new model, meaning-making for the individual occurs at the intersection of the ‘journey within’ and the ‘journey without’. There are no longer fixed boundaries or limitations with regard to what is possible or acceptable in a social or educational context. Boundaries are no longer communal constructs but rather they are individual elastic frameworks that change with circumstance, maturity, life experience and situational realities.

Knowing, being, doing and living together are the pillars on which education can be situated. These pillars become the resources for the “journey within” and the “journey without” for each individual student. Knowing, being, doing and living together become the domains which resource agents address to assist students with developing personal meaning-making systems. In this model the skills of the educator and their vision for education give a vista of the questions and areas which can be addressed. This model views knowledge not as just a series of facts to be acquired but rather as abilities to assess, manipulate, deconstruct and reconstruct ideas for the individual’s own understanding and meaning-making system.

All these elements have two foci: to match the dual responsibilities of all persons. There is the knowledge that each person will need personally and another area of knowledge which will enable people to take up the responsibilities of citizenship. Individuals need to be enabled to focus on the journey within to find personal meaning-making structures and at the same time individuals need to discover how to be a person who contributes to the broader society.

In the new model knowledge is fluid and addresses such diverse areas as vocationalism, recreation, membership of the knowledge society, financial literacy, rights and responsibilities, citizenship of both the state and the Church, issues of conflict, resource allocation and identity.

In this system, 'learning to know' and 'learning to do' are more likely to come about through self-directed learning. Educators would teach skills for knowledge acquisition rather than the knowledge itself. The quantity of knowledge is less important than making judgements and connections within the knowledge sphere. We would no longer view knowledge as fixed and controllable or believe that one can acquire all the knowledge one needs.

The knowledge arts include communicating strategically, insightfully and effectively; thinking critically and creatively and putting school knowledge to work in what educators sometimes humbly call the "real world." The knowledge arts bundle together deep reading, compelling writing, strong problem solving and decision making and the strategic and spirited self-management of learning itself, within and across the disciplines. We need to put the knowledge arts on the table to celebrate them for the depth and power they provide and for the ways they make knowledge meaningful. And we need to worry about their neglect (Perkins, 2004, p.14).

Knowledge has to be critiqued in the light of the other three pillars. Whereas in the past knowledge was the beginning point, the new model suggests that the four pillars are much more fluid and integrated. 'Learning to do' is much less theoretical than in previous times. Students can explore options and there are many ways to acquire the necessary skills to live a productive life.

With earlier understandings of meaning-making there was very little variance in conceptions of 'being' and 'living together'. Throughout history society has elevated certain lifestyles and approaches to personhood. There have always been

moral structures that have had societal approval and others that have resulted in the imposition of punitive measures. Society was kept in check by the accepted systems of reward and punishment. In the new model there is far less prohibition of particular lifestyle choices.

Individuals and societies are exploring different ways to be community. Discussion about the place of the family, of nation states, or religious worldviews and how these interact are significant in the post-modern world. This does not imply a laissez faire approach as there are still broad based conceptions of community and personhood but the individual is free, as never before, to frame his or her own particular way. There are few sanctions imposed for doing things differently.

In teaching and learning for making meaning, students rigorously explore powerful ideas from multiple perspectives and sources: texts, images, other people, and personal experiences. Students learn to develop and defend their own points of view and to subject their viewpoints to the scrutiny of their peers and teachers. Classrooms provide opportunities for conflicting and controversial ideas to find voice - and for difficult conversations to take place across traditional divides of politics, religion, race, class and gender, awakening students to the need to hear other perspectives and build common ground (Ancess, 2004, p.36).

The school and society can provide the resources for the individual through the integration of the conceptions of 'learning to know,' 'learning to do', 'learning to be' and 'learning to live together'. Together these four pillars can draw on the knowledge, understanding and wisdom of the great educational and philosophical traditions. The main difference in the model is that each individual builds his or her own unique meaning system using these supports in any manner they might choose and consequently the model of meaning construction is expansionary and has no limits.

If educators marry the work of Carneiro (2003) and Delors (1996) they can put meaning at the core of their pedagogical approach. Meaning is the core of the model and it provides opportunities for meaning-making which do not occur by accident but come about through design.

Searching for meaning is the purpose of learning, so teaching for meaning is the purpose of teaching. If teachers do not have meaning-making at the core of their pedagogy and practice, then let's not call the activity teaching. To do so demeans the word and the noble art and science it represents (Grennon Brooks, 2004, p.9).

Each individual is responsible for seeking and making meaning in his or her life. This will always be an individual quest and educators need to begin to provide flexible structures to cater for different situations and personalities. The four pillars of twenty- first century learning can enable the quest for meaning-making for the life journey. They offer support both for present pedagogies and possibilities for the future.

What is ‘meaningful education’?

As mentioned earlier, many recent publications in education have started to use the term ‘meaningful education’. It has become a catchcry to justify changes in pedagogical methods and teaching practices. It can become a powerful concept for change in schools if the understandings of Carr (2003), who suggested that the role of education is to provide young people with a conception of personhood, are married with the reflections of Lynch (2002) who explored a contemporary understanding of personhood.

Carr (2003) showed how the interchangeable use of terms such as education, learning, schooling and training has led to a lack of precision in what is meant by these terms. He described how the recent promotion and use of some terms in education in preference to others equates with the battle between the proponents of those who perceive the purpose of education is for knowledge for its own sake (non-utilitarian view) and those who see education as a way to social and economic ends (utilitarian view) (p.15). Carr presented a view of education concerned with “the initiation of human agents into rational capacities, values and virtues that warrant our ascription to them of the status of *persons*” (p.4). Carr believed that all young people are entitled to a cultural inheritance and that schools have a responsibility to initiate them into this inheritance which he summed up as the aesthetic, scientific, spiritual or social and political interests and passions that provide a reason for living (p.16). This model would seem to suggest that the cultural inheritance provides fixed boundaries to the areas of being.

Trying to explore concepts of meaning or meaningful education becomes problematic because of a lack of clarity in terminology. The problem with a term

like meaning is that it is axiomatic and can refer to everything or to nothing. One way of exploring the concept of meaning is through the examination of how groups in society appropriate meaning.

Lynch (2002) investigated how Generation X derived its sense of meaning. Lynch argued that rather than perceiving Generation X as an age specific generation, they should be perceived as a group of people who have been affected by the following factors:

- social and relational instability; and
- lack of a sense of meaning while maintaining a great interest in meaning (Lynch, 2002, p. 21).

They are also a group of people according to Lynch (2002) who can be identified as having the following types of characteristics:

- a particular attitude towards a process of making sense of who they are and how they should live in a late or post modern culture;
- defining themselves in relation to popular culture;
- sharing a worldview, which is a product of western culture, where capitalism and the free market is the fixed-point of social organisation;
- a realisation that meaning is personal;
- an understanding that personal meaning is fluid and unclear; and
- an attitude of incredulity to meta-narratives.

This means that the grand theories or stories of the world, whether they are economic, psychological, social, political or religious are no longer compelling or convincing to Generation X (Lynch, 2002, pp. 30-31) and to the emerging generation of young people, Generation Y.

According to Lynch's definition, a large percentage of Western society has a Generation X mentality. The implication of this is that there is no longer a pre-packaged set of meanings that are transmitted generationally by the family or political and religious institutions. For these people the search for meaning is a fluid individual quest, which is sometimes termed a "spiritual quest". This spiritual quest has become the battleground of traditional religions, new age spirituality, self help gurus, health professionals and the like, who all compete in this meaning-making market for survival, influence, market share and in some cases, profit.

If the role of education is perceived as Carr suggests, to provide young people with a conception of personhood; and if the conception of what it means to be a person is no longer fixed, or pre-packed in the meta-narratives provided by social, political or religious groups, then a meaningful education is an education that must provide students with the knowledge and skills to come to a position on what they believe it means to be a person in the twenty-first century. To do this effectively students need to be exposed to a variety of conceptions of personhood or as de Ruyter (2002b) terms it conceptions of the good and the skills to analyse the strengths and weakness of each of these conceptions. Ultimately they can then discern and package a personal meaning-making schema. A meaningful education is an education that provides students with the knowledge and skills to come to an individual position on what they believe it means to be a person and to live in the twenty-first century. De Ruyter emphasised the “evaluative” role of schooling in enhancing young people’s meaning-making. Whether intentional or not, this emphasis tends to question the legitimacy of presenting traditional meanings and meta-narratives, as they may compromise young people’s freedom and autonomy. The evaluative emphasis runs the risk of relativism, as it tends to devalue the need for communicating traditional meanings. It can underestimate the individual’s need for, and initial dependence on, basic institutional meanings and it can overlook the role of institutions in the communication of such meanings. This emphasis can also overestimate the maturity levels of many young people if it presumes too much of them in terms of their ability to critically evaluate meaning. Teaching the skills to evaluate meaning is without doubt very important for education. This needs to be complemented by an acknowledgment that young people still need access to their traditional meanings and meta-narratives as a basic cultural inheritance. These packages of meaning can serve as the baseline from which their own self determination of meanings can develop. With maturity and experience young people are able to develop a framework of meaning for themselves. In order to enable this acquisition to take place young people have an important developmental need for “packages of meaning” from family and community. The development of personal meaning-making takes place best in dialogue with traditional community meanings.

If schools are the agencies to provide students with a meaningful education, according to these views, there needs to be a change in the conception of schooling to give due emphasis to the role of the school in educating pupils in meaning-making. If this emphasis becomes more widely acknowledged as a central role for school education, this could lead to a paradigm shift in aims for school education. The focus of schooling would then give more significant attention to content and skills that address issues of personhood and therefore give students access to a meaningful education. In this paradigm, the schools' prime responsibility and focus would no longer be the provision of vocational and utilitarian skills but the provision of programmes that deal with higher order cognitive skills that lead students to develop personal meaning-making systems. This does not override the need for the students to learn 'to do' but would seek a greater balance with the other elements of Delors' model.

Elements of meaningful education

From recent writings which address what constitutes a meaningful education, some of the key elements of school-based initiatives and programmes to encourage students to construct a personal meaning-making system would include:

- Exposure to 'conceptions of the good' or "packages of meaning" from the family and the community;
- The development of skills to analyse and critique the strengths and weakness of each of these conceptions;
- The cognitive and reflective skills to discern and package a personal meaning-making schema; and
- The knowledge and skills to come to an individual position on what they believe it means to be a person in the twenty-first century.

The capacities that need to be developed in students to help them analyse and construct their own meaning-making schema would include the following:

- critical and creative learning styles;
- meta-cognitive skills;
- ethical behaviours and actions;
- collaborative and independent work skills (Mockler, 2006, p.4);
- the capacity to make the journey within (spirituality); and
- the capacity to make the journey outward (to make contributions and connections to society).

These elements can already be identified in varying ways in most Australian secondary schools and specifically in Australian Catholic schools.

Australian Catholic schools: Current and possible contribution to the meaning-making capacities of young people

Australian Catholic schools in keeping with the aims of Catholic education have developed a range of processes that contribute to some aspects of the provision of a meaningful education. This Chapter proposes ways in which Catholic secondary schools could make a greater contribution by being more intentional about activities that develop and support meaning-making as set out in the first section of this chapter.

The contemporary context of the Australian Catholic secondary school

Catholic schools exist within both global and local contexts. Schools are confronted with demanding societal expectations as they take responsibility for areas far beyond the formal curriculum and the processes of teaching and learning. The educational base has been broadened to encompass a range of traditionally parental and societal responsibilities. There is also an expectation that Catholic schools will compete in the educational market place and achieve academic and co-curricular results which are comparable to the achievements of other educational institutions.

Increasingly, schools provide one of the basic stable communal structures for students. The breakdown of the nuclear family and changing employment patterns contribute to this situation. The traditional influence of the parish as a community base has less significance with falling church attendance. “In Australia, Catholic students who abandon formal worship within eighteen months of graduating from school amount to a staggering 97% of the student body” (Tacey, 2003). Current research in theology, spirituality and religious education would indicate that many young people are disaffected by formal and traditional religious adherence (NCLS, 2001; Mason et al, 2006).

Catholic schools are well positioned to give students a sense of connectedness and to make a contribution to the meaning-making capacities of students through the development of a meaningful education. In the Catholic tradition this connectedness is founded in the ongoing commitment to be part of a Christian community that is ritualised through baptism. Educators make choices about how they can best assist students in living out this baptismal commitment and making

life-long connections with Jesus Christ. The process of education can, and frequently does offer young people that sense of connection and meaning. The theologian Skelley (1991) writes of a worldview when he says: “More than education about God we need direction to God, direction that will guide us in searching out our own experiences of God” (Skelley, 1991, p.79). The overall educational and spiritual approach of a Catholic school can be that element in schools that gives students a ‘direction to God’, and contributes to their capacity to make meaning.

Catholic schools have a responsibility to provide a range of experiences which assist their students in developing their faith. Since their inception this concept has been key to the foundation of Catholic schools. This therefore is and always has been a major responsibility of educators in Catholic schools. The imperative is all the more important in the twenty-first century because schools are the dimension of the Church where there is daily ongoing relational involvement with young people.

The contribution of Catholic schools

In the light of this model the specific areas of Catholic schooling that this thesis analyses in terms of their contribution to meaning-making are:

- charism- the spirit that forms and enlivens the religious dimension of the school;
- the Catholic worldview;
- pastoral care;
- prayer and worship;
- pedagogy; and
- religious education

The link between the charism of a Catholic school and a meaningful education

For Catholics, like all Christians, the Gospel is the foundational inspiration, which calls Christians to live out their vocations. The Gospel is a radical manifesto which calls individuals and communities to a life of discipleship. In the school context it is often difficult to ask young people to come to terms with the totality of the Gospel message. Catholic schools conceptually frame a means to live the Gospel on a day-to-day basis when they look to foundational people, stories and charism to allow them to present the call of the Gospel in an accessible way. Charism, in its broadest sense, provides the Catholic school with a lens through which to view the

Gospel, in the hope that communities will be inspired and compelled to live this call to discipleship.

Marachel (2000) suggests that charism provides a school community with:

- a story to enter;
- a language to speak;
- a group to which to belong;
- a way to pray;
- a work to undertake; and
- a face of God to see (Marachel, 2000, p.2).

A school's particular identity comes from its charism. Charism provides a philosophy and foundational principles on which to build a community, an understanding of the world, a culture and a distinctive way of living a Catholic identity. A charism built on Marachel's understanding provides a Catholic school community with:

- a foundation to address the question 'how shall we live?';
- ways to answer the 'why' questions rather than the 'what' questions;
- a resource to help build the meaning-making capacities of young people;
- a way into decision making and action at all levels of the community;
- the courage to take up our vocations as baptised members of the church; and
- countless opportunities for the faith "to be known, celebrated, lived and translated into prayer" (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, No. 84).

Charism, Catholic worldview, Catholic habitus and a meaningful education

Over the last decade a number of leaders and scholars including Duminuco (1999), Groome (1996), Walker (2004) and Miller (2006) have been exploring the concept of a Catholic worldview as a way of expressing how Catholics see and make meaning in the world, and in particular, how this view can be interpreted through an educational lens.

Thomas Groome has written about the Catholic worldview and the infusion of Catholic values into every aspect of Catholic school life over an extended period of time. He says:

My proposal is a rather self-evident one: that the distinctiveness of Catholic education is prompted by the distinctive characteristics of

Catholicism itself, and these characteristics should be reflected in the whole curriculum of Catholic schools¹⁸ (Groome, 1996, p.107).

In later writings Groome (2002) outlined what is unique about a Catholic worldview or what he calls a Catholic spirituality. Groome summarises the essence of this spirituality as commitment, community, conversation, compassion, celebration and life long conversion. All these dimensions of a Catholic worldview are integral and evident in Catholic schools.

The charism of schools is a lens through which to manage or ‘construct’ the whole religious dimension of any Catholic school. Charisms in and of themselves, if they are fully explored provide a framework to address meaning-making in school communities at a variety of levels. Charism allows Catholic educators a way to focus on the why questions and the conceptual how questions that allow individuals and communities to address the bigger questions about common ideals and ways to be community. Charism lifts the school vision away from the known and the accepted to a place where anything might be possible. Focussing on charism allows schooling to be about aspirations and ideals rather than processes and procedures.

Caspary (2003) examines similar ideas in the context of a religious community. Her comments go to the very heart of the issue.

The community has as its central bond an open loving concern for the others, a willing investment of time, service, caring and personal sacrifice. Such a community existence, because of its constant need to reinforce its ideals, remains a rarity. Society itself operates to turn communities into institutions (Caspary, 2003, p.216).

Caspary highlights the crucial elements that form a community of people supporting and nurturing one another rather than operating as an institutional group of people who are simply working together. A charism faithfully explored and a Catholic worldview give educators a way of encouraging an approach which is holistic and encompasses every aspect of school life.

Grace (2002) argued that beyond a Catholic worldview there is a Catholic habitus. The human reality of habitus reveals itself only in reference to a definite situation

¹⁸ Groome indicates by curriculum he means “the content taught, the process of teaching and the environment of the school” (Groome, 1996, p.107).

or group. It refers to a deep centred cultural disposition which deals with the present in light of past experiences. In any context, habitus has the potential to constitute and construct. It is always in a state of flux and constantly negotiated; constructed/ing, reconstructed/ing and maintain/ing (Hunter, 2004, pp.175-192).

While there is an identifiable Catholic habitus it shows variance from community to community based on local issues. In this sense cultural influences overlay a religious way of being. In terms of Catholic education the charisms of religious orders have informed the context and the resulting identifiable Catholic culture, qualities and values, which can be discerned in schools that were initially developed by these religious orders.

In terms of meaning-making, Catholic secondary schools provide young people with a model of a community which is built on a belief in Jesus Christ, a living charism, a Catholic worldview which is a theoretical framework on which the school is built and a Catholic habitus. This belief becomes the reason for “being”, the foundation for decision-making and the source of meaning for this community. While all students in this community may not necessarily choose to make Jesus Christ the source of their own meaning-making system in the same way as that presented in the Catholic school, the school models the values and beliefs, and demonstrates behaviours that are congruent with these beliefs, the value of having a positive ontology and the value of hope. As noted, the spirituality of young people is positively influenced by inspiring role models, by “conceptions of the good” and by models of hope. This the Catholic school does when it is at its best and has clear understanding of a Catholic worldview and implements it through its charism to build a positive Catholic habitus.

This thesis has explored the concept of charism and its connection points with the Catholic worldview and the Catholic habitus as one way that the contemporary Catholic secondary school can provide a framework for the meaning-making model it presents. The next section of this chapter will explore how these concepts can be applied in practical terms to the various dimensions of school life; pastoral care, school-based liturgical experiences, pedagogy and religious education.

Pastoral care: A model for a way of being in the world

The pastoral dimension of the school is concerned with healthy relationships and the emotional well being of all members of the community. Healthy relationships establish a community where people feel ongoing connections with one another. These connections are the building blocks for the development of positive self-image, resilience and a sense of identity and contribute to the capacity the members of that community have to make meaning in their lives.

The introduction to *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) examines the development of both individuals and community.

What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. It tries to guide the adolescents in such a way that personality development goes hand in hand with the development of the "new creature" that each one has become through baptism. It tries to relate all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illumine everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life, and about the human person (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, No.1).

This provides a vision of the communities that Catholic schools hope to foster for the well-being of their members, but also provides a framework to build a cohesive Christian community that provides students with a meaning system and a community to both connect with, and contribute to. Effective pastoral care systems in schools are holistic in approach and touch on every facet of school life. Individual students need support, particularly at times of vulnerability and crisis and this support is one important aspect of pastoral care. Effective pastoral care aims at providing young people with life-giving relationships and structures which will support their growth and development through adolescence into adulthood.

Linking all the major activities in the life of the school through pastoral structures allows students to be known, connected and admired for what they can offer the wider group. It offers leadership opportunities for students with a variety of talents rather than limiting leadership to the few. Students contribute when they can, and over time most students find an opportunity to share their particular talents with the school community. This affords all students the opportunity or chance to derive a

sense of worth from what they contribute to the community. The sense for each student that he or she is meaningful encourages meaning-making to occur.

Schools tend to operate as more inclusive models of society than the wider secular world. Their approaches allow school communities to break away from traditional hierarchical structures and at least aspire to adopting flatter models of leadership which employ feminist approaches to structuring relationships and inclusive participation. These structures free the community to promote participation by a broad cross section of the community. Students participate according to the gifts they bring to the community rather than gender, age or social standing in the community. Schools present some very clear messages about the community's relationship with God if the school leaders are the only people who are given visible roles and responsibilities. When a different model is adopted different messages are conveyed. In the school situation all students can be given a leadership role or take responsibility for some area of school life. It is a matter of reflecting on the power and importance of connection as a way to make meaning and matching individual talents and abilities to particular roles. Inviting the participation of all students teaches and symbolises inclusion and the importance of affirming the gifts of all members of the community. The message that all people have worth and a place in this community is explicitly conveyed.

These models of inclusion and participation provide students with a sense of belonging, a community to belong to and a model of being and meaning which is at times counter cultural to the world they usually inhabit. This vision of inclusion and participation provides different frameworks for the students both now and in the future. In their journeys both within and outwards this vision can promote feelings of value and self worth and provide a tool for reflecting on the structures of society.

Prayer and worship. The spiritual dimension of a meaningful education

One of the sources of meaning in the life of all human beings is language and use of symbols. This thesis has already explored how young people have lost touch with the great meta-narratives and symbols are one way to re-connect with the enduring messages of these stories and the tradition. The symbols used in schools and the manner in which they are used speak to young people about the significance of

what is valued and lived out. The language of symbols is a deeper, more powerful language than words of explanation.

Symbols are not things people invent and interpret, but realities that 'make' and interpret a people. What we need today is not so much 'better symbols'. But a willingness to let ourselves be grasped and explored by them. For a symbol is not an object to be manipulated through mime and memory, but an environment to be inhabited. Symbols are places to live; breathing spaces that help us discover what possibilities life offers (Mitchell (1994) in Huck, 1994, p.140).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* reminds leaders of Catholic schools that: "it is the special function of the Catholic school to: ...enable young people, while developing their own personality, to grow at the same time in the new life which has been given them in baptism" (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, No.259). Catholic schools have a responsibility and a special opportunity to provide encounters for students to connect with the Church, and if they choose, to develop their faith enabling them to grow as people who take up membership in the Church.

Through worship, the Church offers a framework and a 2000 year-old paradigm, which has formed faith communities and mediates the divine-human relationship. When schools gather for liturgy or communal prayer they offer young people the opportunity to explicitly seek out and name the experience of God in their lives. Both liturgy and communal prayer in the school context are able to invite young people into the possibility of relationship with God and do so using language and symbols that have layers of meaning.

Liturgy is celebrated in the school, particularly at key moments of the community's life through the celebration of the Eucharist and sacramental Reconciliation. The necessity for Catholic school communities to engage in some official liturgical activities is indisputable. The school needs the connection to the broader Church provided by liturgy. When schools celebrate the liturgy they celebrate a connection to the Church. They strengthen the bonds of community by marking significant events in the lives of individuals as well as the community and the church. Some of the other ways in which schools remind and highlight the students' connection to the Church include:

- the prominence given to Scripture in liturgy, assembly, religious education;
- the use of symbol and ritual;

- links to the tradition of the Church;
- adherence to the liturgical year;
- full conscious and active participation of members of the community in liturgy and prayer;
- the use of an inclusive liturgical model; and
- the incorporation of student and staff creativity.

Experiences of liturgy and worship not only connect students to the Church but give both an intellectual experiential insight into the Church's meaning system and an experience of connected community that not only focuses on its own members but shows concern and prays for the wider world. They provide a language and forms of symbol and ritual that may assist the young person in their expression of their own spirituality and in making meaning in their world.

Catholic Pedagogy: The art and science of exploring a Catholic worldview

A pedagogy that is proper to a Catholic school has the potential to provide the students with many resources in their task of meaning-making. Duminuco (1999) describes a Catholic pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, in the following way:

It must include a worldview and a vision of an ideal human person to be educated. These provide a goal, the end towards which all aspects of an educational tradition are directed. They provide criteria for choices of means to be used in the process of education. A Catholic pedagogy therefore must assume the worldview of Christ and suggest more explicit ways in which the gospel values can be incarnated in the teaching and learning process (Duminuco, 1999, p.155).

If, as Duminuco suggests, the essence of a Catholic pedagogy is the transmission of Christ-centred worldview, Catholic educators need to be able to articulate how this worldview applies to the key issues and events of the twenty-first century. A worldview describes a distinctive way of looking at a reality that creates a context for living.

(It) holds the basic assumptions of a culture, held at a very deep level and often unquestioned because they are so deeply part of a culture that we may not be consciously aware of them (Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Broken Bay, 2003, p.6).

The primary focus of the secondary school is the provision of quality teaching and learning. This endeavour involves educating young people for a future that is beyond our imaginations. Students need a worldview and a set of values to take into this future. Frequently in the secondary school, curriculum concerns dominate

the school agenda with little regard to the other domains of school life. In the quest for academic success some parents, students and teachers forget that individual worth, both personally and communally, is not derived from academic results. Success as a human person has to be more holistic than test scores and percentile bands.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School stresses just this point:

If a school is excellent as an academic institution, but does not witness to authentic values, then both good pedagogy and a concern for pastoral care make it obvious that renewal is called for - not only in the content and methodology of religious instruction, but in the overall school planning which governs the whole process of formation of the students. (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, No.19).

Schools communities are required to address curriculum issues and the appropriate government mandates with regard to education. There is a need to balance the academic agenda with other aspects of school life including the construction of meaning. Meaning is not always about the content and skills taught and the facts students can recount. It is also about the values that students learn in the process.

Joan Chittister (2001) challenged Catholic educators to be leaders who make a difference and who “create an educational system and schools that help students assess their world in terms of its “possibilities and its brutalities and question its assumptions its stereotypes” (p.4). Chittister challenges Catholic educators to an approach that reflects a hundred years of papal encyclicals on social justice. She describes the possibilities:

It would be a good idea to have a Catholic geography that taught who was taking whose resources and at what cost to them. It would require great spiritual leadership to write a Catholic history that taught the sins against conscience of the authoritarian systems. And it could be real teaching if we had a Catholic science that taught the full humanity of women and Catholic economics that taught the sinfulness of the ill-gotten gains of sweatshops’ new industrial slavery. And, oh yes by the way, let’s finally get a Catholic speller that spells ‘male’ and ‘female’ E-q-u-a-l in the languages of both State and Church so that we had at our disposal for the building of the reign of God everywhere, in politics and international economics and law, in all the seminaries and synods and sacristies of the world. Maybe, then, we would be doing twice as well as we are now (Chittister, 2001, p.10).

Chittister is alluding to a Catholic pedagogy and a call to transform the world in the light of the Gospel. More than this, she is referring to an educational approach with meaning-making at its heart. She speaks of structuring an educational paradigm where students continually assess the world they live in and demand answers to the questions they have about the world. In this situation the teacher does not provide the answers but creates a situation where students are free to frame the questions and actively seek answers that allow them to make meaning of their world.

There is much evidence in the annual reports of Catholic dioceses throughout Australia that a Catholic worldview is incorporated into the pedagogical activities of secondary Catholic schools. This focus on a Catholic worldview draws on Groome's (1996) concepts of a positive anthropology, sacramentality of life and the transformation of the world in light of the Gospels. At present much of this activity is an unconscious, unplanned for, by-product of a Catholic habitus. For this work to have a long term impact on the meaning-making capacities of young people, schools need to acknowledge their responsibilities to become effective resource agents in this domain and to become more intentional in incorporating this domain into all aspects of the curriculum. Before this can occur schools need to acknowledge this role, assess what is already happening and plan how they can best expand and deepen their approach to address the questions of the future.

The possibilities for religious education to contribute to meaning-making

In the model developed in this thesis religious education is ideally positioned to foster both the "journey within" and the "journey without". The journey within is generally understood as an exploration of spirituality, which, by its very nature is individualised, reflective and personalised. Christian tradition has a wealth of knowledge and experience with regard to fostering the various ways of expressing and exploring spirituality. In Catholic classrooms in the multitude of learning activities there are countless opportunities for the journey within. Religious educators facilitate within the school day and the school year opportunities for this journey within which include daily prayer, reflection days, retreats, school liturgical experiences and classroom activities and questions to encourage self-reflection.

The journey without presents educators with two key areas of responsibility and opportunity. Initially there is a responsibility to expose young people to the richness and largesse of the particular religious tradition. The hope would be that young people take up their citizenship rights and responsibilities that membership within the tradition implies. The second responsibility is to the secular society in which we live. This responsibility is to develop young people who have foundations in ethics, morality and values and who can integrate that into their daily lives. The journey without provides young people with countless opportunities to critique the secular world and religious education offers them the skills to carry this out with wisdom and discernment. Religious education helps young people develop their own worldview.

If the essence of a Catholic pedagogy is the transmission of a Christ-centred worldview, Catholic educators need to be able to provide the content of the tradition in a way that stimulates learning and to articulate how this worldview applies to the key social, economic, ethical and political issues of the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has combined the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003) to construct a model that illustrates the role that Catholic schools can play as resource agents for students in the development of an individual meaning-making system. This model describes the journey within (inner self/spirituality/learning) and the journey without (citizenship/religiosity/education) and proposes that the intersection of the two is crucial to the meaning-making process.

This model was then used to identify and name common practices that are already occurring in Catholic secondary schools in the areas of charism, prayer and worship, pastoral care, pedagogy and religious education that support young people in the development of their meaning-making capacities and therefore provide students with a meaningful education. The chapter argued that for this role to become more significant in the life of Catholic schools and to have a greater impact on the lives of students, schools could evaluate the existing practices and become more intentional in their support of young people in the process of developing their meaning-making

capacities. In becoming more intentional about issues of meaning, schools will provide students with a meaningful education and in doing so will become more effective resource agents in this area.

The completion of this chapter concludes stage one of this thesis. The data gained in the literature review presented in Chapters Three, Four and Five of the thesis was used to build the theory and provided the groundwork for a theoretical model presented in this chapter. Chapter Six has presented a model that explores the role that schools can play in the development of meaning-making capacities in students. Lastly the chapter describes aspects of Catholic secondary schooling that illustrate how schools are already resourcing students in the area of meaning.

The next chapter presents Stage Two of the thesis. It will develop and implement one way to measure the intentionality of a contemporary Catholic school system in terms of this theoretical model. The data collected from the literature review and incorporated into the theoretical model will form the basis of the coding process to evaluate an existing approach of a Catholic Educational Authority in terms of this model.

Chapter Seven: Case study of how meaning-making is incorporated into the strategic policy and research documentation of one Catholic Educational Authority

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to profile one Catholic Educational Authority and analyse the documentation produced and commissioned by this system in terms of its contribution to the development of the meaning-making capacities of the students in their care. Carneiro (2003) stated, “schools or educational systems are the vessels wherein travellers in the world of knowledge; pupils and teachers alike, seek meaning and significance for their joint learning stories” (Carneiro, 2003, p.14). This thesis has argued that historically all schooling has had a role to play in supporting students to develop their innate abilities to seek meaning in life. The significance of this role has increased in this historical period because the intrinsic demands of a globalised society can lead people to a situation where they lack a sense of belonging. The thesis has also argued that due to its theological base and the educational philosophy that flows from this base, Catholic secondary schooling has a mandate and a responsibility to work with students in their quest to develop meaning-making systems that can deal with the complex challenges of the twenty-first century. The case study presented in this chapter tests out and applies the theoretical model developed in Chapter Five.

Context

As stated in Chapter Two, documentary case study methodology is used to profile the extent to which this particular Catholic Educational Authority contributes through policy and practice to the development of meaning-making capacities of students. To achieve this aim a selection of the major documents of the selected Catholic Educational Authority is analysed and evaluated in this study.

The Catholic Educational Authority¹⁹, which is the focus of this study, is based in the northern suburbs of Sydney and extends to a regional area in close proximity to

¹⁹ For the rest of this chapter this authority will be referred to as the CEAS which stands for Catholic Educational Authority Sydney.

Sydney. The CEAS has been an entity in its own right for twenty years and administers seven secondary schools four of which are co-educational while the other three are single sex schools. The case study methodology used for this chapter is restricted to the analysis of the documents of the CEAS that focus on the mission and administration of the secondary systemic schools within the Diocese.

The extent to which meaning-making is incorporated into the mission and life of the Diocese is assessed through the evaluation of this range of documentation sourced from the CEAS. These documents are in the categories of strategic planning and review, policy, programmes and research reports commissioned by the CEAS. Strategic planning includes overall strategic and annual plans and the reporting documents that track the extent to which these plans have been successfully implemented. While the evidence of the implementation of this strategic planning could be considered as self-reporting as these documents are published by the CEAS, these documents are public documents that have a variety of authors, and meet the requirements of both Church and State authorities. The authors of these documents include school principals, school executives, committees and sub-committees which have clergy, parental and university personnel membership. This diversity of authorship and the process of acceptance by committees objectifies this data.

The first category of documents considered are the policy documents of the CEAS. These documents are authored by the CEAS and are the method by which the aims and strategic direction of the CEAS are implemented. These policies support the breadth of the curriculum offered by Catholic schools in the Diocese. The second category of document is the Foundation section of the Religious Education Programme²⁰. This Programme is the only completely self-generated academic syllabus of the CEAS. The last set of documents are the commissioned research reports that focus on the effectiveness of selected secondary schools in contributing to the catholicity of the students. These documents have been commissioned by the

²⁰ This syllabus is endorsed by the Board of Studies in N.S.W. in Stage 5 and Stage 6 and is mandatory in all systemic schools in the jurisdiction of the Authority.

CEAS and have an independent researcher as the author. The full lists of documents that form the basis of this study are:

Table 5. Categories of CEAS documents

Policy	CEAS Strategic Plan covering 2005-2006.
	CEAS Annual Reports 2005-2006.
	CEAS policies related to the Pastoral Care of secondary students.
Religious Education	CEAS Religious Education foundational section of the curriculum.
Commissioned Research	The research reports commissioned by the CEAS on the faith development of secondary students in the diocese.

Analysis of the documents

Two Perspectives

The documents of the CEAS will be analysed from two perspectives. The first perspective is that of the CEAS itself. This perspective includes the responsibility the organisation has to individual students and the Church to build spiritual capital (Caldwell, 2007) and the current concern the Catholic Church has to instil within students a strong sense of Catholic identity (Cook & Ostrowski, 2007). The second perspective from which the documents will be reviewed is that of the individual student. From this standpoint the documents will be analysed from the perspective of how the CEAS supports an individual to develop capacities to make the *journey within* (spirituality) and the *journey without* (citizenship). These journeys are considered from the perspective of what Carneiro (2003, p.15) calls *teleological learnings* which are developed through the exploration of the concepts of the human condition; citizenship, cultural template, information and knowledge, vocational identity and the building of wisdom. As well as the analysis of this documentation from the teleological perspective they will also be reviewed from an educational perspective using the four pillars of twenty-first century education; learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.

Justification for reviewing the documentation from two perspectives

The justification for the analysis of the documents from these two perspectives is that Catholic organisations, like other secular organisations have taken on

contemporary strategic planning models and structures. These structures are based on identifying goals, setting short and long term targets in achieving these goals, enacting strategies to achieve the targets and delegating individuals and groups with the responsibilities of assuring these goals are met. These plans usually have annual reviews and the success of the organisation is benchmarked against tangible quantifiable products. The advantages of such processes are that individuals and organisations are accountable for the time and money that are invested in them. The disadvantages of using these processes are not unlike the critique of the outcomes based education movement, in that the affective aspects of life that are not easily observable, quantifiable or reportable are not prioritised in these planning process.

The ongoing concern for the over emphasis of strategic planning is that if Catholic Educational Authorities are not prudent this style of accountability can overlook the necessity for reporting on the long term goals of Catholic education which were explored in Chapter 5. These long term goals could be succinctly stated as the desire for students to enter into an ongoing personal relationship with God, to develop a moral framework, to thirst for the creation of a just society which values the dignity of the human person, and to be able to discern meaning and purpose in both the mundanities of life and in the challenges of personal and societal upheaval. This could be summarised as providing students with an awareness of the responsibility they have to become a “good person” living a “good life” and being a member of a “good society” (Buetow, 1988).

Recently the Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education (Miller, 2006, 2007) and the Catholic Bishops of New South Wales (2007) issued documents focusing on the need to bolster the building of Catholic identity or what Caldwell (2007) would call the spiritual capital of students who attend Catholic schools. Both documents make some reference to the long-term goals of Catholic schooling as listed above. Both documents have as their primary focus the responsibilities the Catholic school has to the development of the Church rather than the students. These responsibilities, especially from the Bishops of N.S.W., are framed in strategic accountability language rather than educational language or inspirational language and focus on functionality and institutional maintenance issues such as

- the qualifications of leaders in Catholic schools;

- the socio-economic and religious make-up of Catholic schools;
- the religious symbolism in schools;
- the connections between parish and school; and
- the increased focus on religious literacy (N.S.W. Bishops Conference, 2007, p.18).

Not one of these critical indicators of success from the N.S.W. Bishops' Conference focuses on the development within individual students of personal religious, spiritual, moral or meaning-making capacities. The Bishops' issue such statements infrequently and the fact that they focussed on issues of Catholic identity and have not addressed issues of meaning indicates that for now at least, developing meaning-making capacities in young people is not part of their agenda.

The CEAS meets the accountabilities it has to parishes, the Diocese, the wider institutional Church and State and Federal educational authorities through its committee structures, the publication of reports and its public policies. A sample of this documentation is also analysed in this chapter from the perspective of how the CEAS meets its educational and ecclesial responsibilities. The CEAS, while an independent organisation, exists within an Australia Catholic cultural context which reflects the opinions of the Bishops. The Bishop, to whom the CEAS is responsible, is a co-signatory to the N.S.W. Bishops' Pastoral Letter and therefore any analysis of documentation of the CEAS needs to take into account the institutional responsibilities of the CEAS. The responsibility the CEAS has to the institutional Church which is currently focused on Catholic identity will be addressed by developing codes that flow from the work of Caldwell (2007) and Miller (2006) that will be described in the next section of this thesis.

This thesis has argued that in the twenty-first century, schools and especially Catholic schools have a role in supporting individual students to develop robust meaning-making systems as they approach maturity. The personalised quest for meaning which draws on the great philosophical, theological and spiritual resources of the Church and society is vital for the well-being of both the individual and the society. The school has to some extent always fulfilled this role. The evolution of an increasingly complex world has demanded that this role become more formalised. The expectations that will flow from formalising this role mean that

there will be more extensive discussion and resources directed to addressing how schools can address their role as resource agents in a more effective way. The researcher is aware that practice is sometimes slow to follow theory and that the formal policy base of Catholic schooling may lack any major acknowledgment of the role that schools plays in the area of meaning-making and spiritual development but slowly this domain is starting to be incorporated into the aims of schooling. This very slow progress is evident in the N.S.W. Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter where the needs of the individual students are subsumed by the demands of organisational structures.

To effectively analyse to what extent the CEAS is supporting students in their quest to make meaning in life the documents are reviewed from the perspective of meaning and meaning-making. To do this, a *Meaning in Life* coding draws on aspects of the model developed in Chapter Six, the key themes explored in literature in Chapters Three to Six of this thesis and the works of Carneiro (2003) and Delors (1996). From this material, a set of *Meaning in Life codes* is developed to evaluate the documentation.

Process of coding

The coding of the documents uses the software programme *Atlis Ti*. The electronic forms of the documents have been sourced from the CEAS. The Microsoft word or PDF version of the document is then imported in to *Atlis Ti* and coded using the category codes.

Theoretical basis for spiritual capital and Catholic identity

Perspective One

Chapter Five of this thesis (*cf* pp.121-122) cited the work of Angelico (2006) and Caldwell (2007) in acknowledging the role that Catholic schools play in the creation of social capital and spiritual capital in communities in which they are situated. Caldwell focuses his work on spiritual capital on shared values, the establishment of positive dispositions in students and the value of exemplars or role models of positive behaviours provided by both staff and students. Caldwell gives ten indicators that school communities can use to assess the depth of spiritual capital held within a school system (p.59). These indicators have been consolidated into

eight indicators as the researcher perceived there was duplication in some descriptors and that eight elements would cover the key areas highlighted by Caldwell. The descriptors were finally modified to incorporate a Catholic context through the inclusion of concepts (*cf* Chapter Five, pp. 113-114) drawn from Miller's (2006) *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools* to develop the following spiritual capital elements. These are reworded or coded as presented to provide a qualitative measurement of the elements of spiritual capital identified in the document analysis.

Table 6. Spiritual Capital codes

Code	Description
Alignment of values	The level of alignment between the values, beliefs and attitudes about life and learning held by the school and members of its community including parents. These values should flow from a supernatural vision and be founded on a Christian anthropology.
Mission and vision	The values and beliefs of the school including the religious foundation are included in mission and vision statements, goals, policies, plans and curriculum.
Policies, plans and curriculum	These values and beliefs are taken into account in the formulation of policy. The policy and curriculum base of the school should be imbued with a Catholic worldview, which is inspired by the Gospel and directed towards the growth of the whole person (Miller, 2006, pp. 42-43).
Publications and presentations	That the school explicitly incorporates and articulates its values and beliefs in publications and presentations.
Trust	That high levels of trust exist between the school and members of the community. The hallmarks of a trusting relationship between students and teachers are that it is placed in the context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity and coherence of attitudes, lifestyle and day-to-day behaviour (Miller, 2006, p.37).
Actions of staff and students	The values and beliefs of the school are evident in the actions of students and staff. This should be evidenced in the creation of a community of 'faith' that is based on co-operation and teamwork between educators and bishops; the interactions of students with teachers; and the school's physical environment (Miller, 2006, p.29).
Staff and students as exemplars	Staff and students who are exemplars of the values and beliefs of the school are recognised and rewarded. This witness should be inspired and sustained by the teaching of the Gospel (Miller, 2006, p.53).
Times of crisis	The values and beliefs of the school have sustained the school and individuals in the school or are likely to sustain the community in times of crisis.

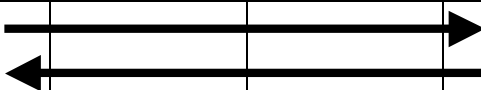
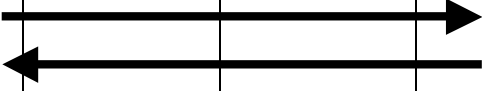
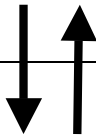

Theoretical basis for "Meaning in Life" coding

Perspective Two

This set of codes focuses on how the individual constructs meaning and evaluates the role the school plays in being a resource agent to this process. As previously stated Carneiro (2003) took the work of Delors (1996) on the *Four Pillars of*

Twenty-First Century Learning and combined it with his own views on learning addressing teleological concerns to develop a meaning of life matrix, which is reproduced, below. The horizontal aspect of the table focuses on the teleological dimension of “Meaning in Life” while the vertical aspect of the table describes aspects of “Meaning in Life” that are associated with Delors (1996) *Four Pillars of Twenty-First Century Learning*. The documents of the CEAS will be analysed from both these perspectives.

Figure 3. Learning the Meaning of Life (Carneiro, 2003, p.16)

	To Be	To Know	To Do	To Live Together
Human Condition	Self			
Citizenship	Participation	Rights and Duties	Community	Diversity
Cultural Template	To Belong			
Information and Knowledge		Processing		Sharing
Vocational Identity	Learner	Production	Endeavour	Conscience
Building Wisdom	Human	Synthesis	Happiness	Solidarity

Carneiro, in his 2003 article, describes in general terms what he meant by the intersection of the vertical pillars with the six transversal areas but does not describe the resulting eighteen intersections in great detail. These eighteen intersections form the meaning in life coding of the documents of the case study. The four pillars are taken separately across the horizontal dimension and the headings of Carneiro’s matrix form the left hand column of this analysis and provide the six possible elements for understanding and therefore for coding. In Carneiro’s matrix some of the intersections of the pillars and the transversals are not given a title or characteristic. For example in the human condition element there is a journey from a focus on the self (to be) to an understanding of the community position (to live together) and vice a versa. As the positions are the opposite ends of a continuum and focus on an emerging self and community awareness there is not a specific knowledge component (to know) or the requirement for the development of

particular skills (to do), so some intersections have a continuous arrow through them rather than having specific titles.

The researcher, using Carneiro's matrix of eighteen terms as a basis, has developed tables of descriptions using the four pillars as the organisational structure. As described in the previous paragraph Carneiro did not develop terms for each intersection of the matrix so the table of description contains some empty rows. These descriptors of how meaning can be constructed within the structure of a "journey within" and a "journey without" will be used to analyse the documents of the CEAS to record the ways in which Catholic secondary schools support and develop the meaning-making capacities of secondary school students. The descriptions of each element of the matrix has incorporated the major themes in the literature on meaning-making presented in Chapters Three to Six of this thesis.

‘Meaning in Life’ coding descriptors

Table 7. Meaning in Life: To Be

Code/	Context	Description
Self	Human Condition	Knowledge of the self and the capacities to analyse the role that family, culture, and religion play in the development of personal identity. This capacity includes the ability to consider questions of justice and morality and how these questions impact on local, national and global issues. This exploration of the human condition makes a significant contribution to the journey within sometimes referred to as spirituality.
Participation	Citizenship	An ability to incorporate knowledge of the local, national and global communities to which students belong so that this understanding helps to facilitate an active participation in these communities. This capacity includes the ability for faith to be known, so that it may be celebrated, lived and translated within a faith community (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).
To Belong	Cultural Template	The development of skills that help build connections to the normative meaning and cultural inheritance of meaning that is embedded in families, religions, community groups and the nation state (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p.54). This element includes making use of a systematic framework, such as that offered by the Church’s philosophical heritage or tradition, with which to find the best possible human responses to questions regarding the human person, the world and God.
	Information and Knowledge²¹	
Learner	Vocational Identity	An awareness of present and potential academic and interpersonal skills as a life long learner. Vocational identity includes the development of collaborative and independent work skills.
Human	Building Wisdom	The growth and development of philosophical underpinnings of the human condition and how human beings interact with others and their environment. This element includes exposure to conceptions of the “good” or “packages of meaning” from the family and the community and the development of skills to analyse and critique the strengths and weakness of each of these conceptions.

²¹ In Carneiro’s matrix some of the intersections of the pillars and the transversals are not given a title or characteristic. This occurs because some aspects teleological meaning are on a continuum. These aspects do not have an obvious relationship to the nominated “Pillar of Twenty-First Century learning”.

Table 8. Meaning in Life: To Know

Code	Context	Description
	Human Condition	
Right and duties	Citizenship	A knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen in the local, national and global contexts. This element would include education for the <i>common good</i> and a <i>preferential option for the poor</i> .
	Cultural Template	
Processing	Information and Knowledge	Accessing and interpretation of information from a wide variety of sources in order to “function” in the world as a life long learner. This includes the life-long skill that enables the learner to translate what has been learned in one area of life to another. While the skills mentioned above focus on the global stage, translating skills focus more on the personal level. This includes the implementation of just principles into personal relationships, the translation of the understanding of the threat of global warming to personal consumption and the need for religious tolerance on the global scale to be translated into the interpersonal interactions that occur with people of other faiths in the local community.
Production	Vocational Identity	This element would include a Catholic view of the world and would be included in all aspects of the curriculum. Within the context of academic study of the religious tradition students should be encouraged to search for ways the tradition explores meaning, wisdom and truth.
Synthesis	Building Wisdom	The growth and development of philosophical underpinnings of the human condition and how human beings interact with others and their environment. This element includes exposure to conceptions of the “good” or “packages of meaning” from the family and the community and religious traditions. This includes the development of skills to analyse and critique the strengths and weakness of each of these conceptions.

Table 9. Meaning in Life: To Do

Code	Context	Description
	Human Condition	
Community	Citizenship	The development of skills that help to facilitate the active participation of the individual in local, national and global communities. This element would include a personal commitment to ideals and a personal frame of reference within which to make one's own decisions. It also includes academic preparation for service that would allow students to undertake community service activities with the capacity to reflect and critique approaches and deepen their appreciation of the needs of others.
	Cultural Template	
	Information and Knowledge	
Endeavour	Vocational Identity	This element would develop an individual's ability to come to a personal stance on local and global issues and would be demonstrated in the student's abilities to express and defend these positions in written and oral form. It is also the capacity to listen to the views of others and the ability to adapt their own personal views based on new knowledge and insights. This capacity also includes the ability and confidence to appreciate and take up various vocations as baptised members of a Church, which calls the individual to a vocational, purposeful, specific response.
Happiness	Building Wisdom	The capacity to reflect and integrate life events, which include goals, success and disappointments into a theory that makes sense of one's experience (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006, p.32). This element also includes commitment to community, conversation, compassion, and celebration and life long conversion (Groome, 2002).

Table 10. Meaning in Life: To Live Together

Code	Context	Description
The other	Human Condition	The development of personal capacities that enable the individual to conceive the world from another person's point of view.
Diversity	Citizenship	The development of personal capacities and an appreciation of those elements that create diverse social, ethnic and religious communities that live with each other in harmonious ways. This capacity will help address the question; "How shall we live?"
Dialogue	Cultural Template	The development of personal capacities that enable diverse social, ethnic, and religious communities to relate to each other in a multiplicity of ways.
Sharing	Information and Knowledge	The capacity to use critical and creative thinking skills for the common good. This capacity includes ethical behaviours and actions.
Conscience	Vocational Identity	The incorporation of ethical behaviours and actions into personal and professional life. This capacity will address questions of justice and morality.
Solidarity	Building Wisdom	This refers to the building of empathy and the capacity to make the journey outward and to make connections and contributions to society.

This coding is more interpretative in nature as the process by which people acquire the capacity to make meaning is a very personal journey influenced by the experience of school but also influenced by family, ethnicity, culture, personality, the events that shape history and a myriad of other factors. The response is firstly coded in Delors (1996) four areas, of "learning to know", "learning to do", "learning to be", and "learning to live together"; and then it is matched with the appropriate sub-codes. As this material is focused on the experiences that young people have during secondary school the culture of the particular school which they attend has impacted on the results. This occurs because to some extent a school is an idealised society where the values of the community are fostered by rules and maintained through encouragement and reward or through the exclusion of participation in certain activities. Schools tightly manage how the community members 'live together' and as this is a given of school culture there is less mention of aspects of living together in the analysis. This reflects the issues noted in Chapter Two (*cf* pp.26-28) when discussing the theoretical factors related to culture that underpin the hermeneutic process of interpretation adopted.

Results of the coding

The analysis of the documentation takes place in three stages. The first is the analysis of the policy documentation of the CEAS. These documents include the Strategic Plan, Annual Reports for 2005 and 2006 and the Pastoral Care policy of the CEAS. The second stage is an analysis of the introduction to the Religious Education Syllabus of the CEAS. Finally the reports that summarise the independent research commissioned by the Diocese on the catholicity of a sample of secondary school students are analysed.

The independent research report is described in detail as it records the views of students and the research gives a voice to the students of the Diocese and allows them to express their perceptions about the aims and effectiveness of the Catholic education that is provided by the CEAS. As this research was undertaken to access opinion it has been easier to include direct quotations from the research that provide insights to address the extent to which the CEAS is addressing elements of the meaning-making capacities of students. As the Religious Education syllabi of all N.S.W. Catholic Education Authorities are outcomes based and focus on the teaching of key theological concepts in an educational setting, the actual outcomes section of the syllabus will not be analysed, as it is a primarily theological document transformed into outcomes. The analysis focuses on the Rationale statements found at the beginning of the syllabus that outline the educational context in which the syllabus is framed and the aspirations the Diocese has for its students in the area of Religious Education.

Policy documents

The policy documents of the CEAS that were chosen to be coded were the Strategic Plan covering the period 2005 to 2006 and the Annual Reports of 2005 and 2006 which report the success of the annual goals and strategic plans. The Annual Reports contain a summation of the activities of individual schools, the sub committees of the CEAS Board and the CEAS Board. The Pastoral Care policy of the CEAS was chosen for analysis due to the fact that is similar to the Religious Education syllabus of the CEAS. It is the document that directly addresses students' short term and long term well being, sense of resilience and to some extent their capacity to make meaning.

Table 11. Results of the coding indicating the contribution policy makes to spiritual capital²²

Spiritual Capital Code	Percentage of total number of occurrences in three policy documents. (n=115)
Alignment of Values	47%
Mission and Vision	17%
Policies, plans and curriculum	5%
Publications	2%
Trust	0%
Actions of Staff and Students	26%
Exemplars of Behaviour	3%
Times of Crisis	0%
Total	100%

In terms of spiritual capital as described in the policy documents the CEAS codes most strongly present are in the areas of *Alignment of Values* (47%), *Actions of Staff and Students* (26%) and *Mission and Vision* (17%). This is to be expected as policy documents naturally emphasise vision, values and the specific actions of staff and students. The CEAS in its Strategic Plan, states what the organisation wants to achieve in what it calls *Catholic Life and Mission*, which is in essence its *mission and vision* statement. The Annual Reports show how this has been achieved by *aligning the values* of its staff and students through educational activities and professional development activities. The Diocese then reports how these values are lived out in the *actions of staff and students* through observable quantifiable activities. The behaviours that are more subtle in measures of spiritual capital such as *trust* and individuals *being exemplars of behaviour* are more subjective in nature and do not appear in the official documentation of the Diocese. In an era of accountability unless there is tangible evidence of an activity, it is not noted. This is sometimes at odds with the culture of Catholic schooling. In the area of how Catholic school communities deal with crisis especially in the area of unexpected

²² The percentages in this table are derived from the coding of the three examples of policy documents from the CEAS using the Spiritual Code descriptors (*cf* Table 11 pp. 179). The numbers of occurrences of a particular Spiritual Capital code in these three documents was then divided by the total number of coding in the three policy documents.

death there is an abundance of anecdotal evidence that Catholic schools are outstanding in the support of students. As this is an area of life which cannot be planned for, it does not appear in the strategic planning documents but occurs in the life of the school, when and if the need arises.

Table 12. Results of the coding indicating the contribution policy makes to the “Meaning in Life” codes concerned with teleological meaning

Teleological Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings in three policy documents (n=74)
Human Condition 0%	Self	0 %
	Other	0%
Citizenship 54%	Participation	15%
	Rights and Duties	5%
	Community	23%
	Diversity	11%
Cultural Template 8%	Belong	7%
	Dialogue	1%
Information and Knowledge 4%	Processing	4%
	Sharing	0%
Vocational Identity 13%	Learner	1%
	Production	5%
	Endeavour	4%
	Conscience	3%
Building Wisdom 21%	Human	7%
	Synthesis	7%
	Happiness	0%
	Solidarity	7%

In terms of teleological meaning the Diocese prioritises the areas of *Citizenship* (54%), *Cultural Template* (8%) and *Vocational Identity* (13%) as together they make up 75% of the coding. This means that the Diocese perceives that in terms of ‘meaning’ its prime responsibility is to pass on the cultural templates of the Church and Australian society. Schools encourage students to participate in the behaviours valued by these two institutions and there is a hope that this moves from mere participation to full membership of Church and State where participation turns into community building activities. In terms of meaning these documents reflect the Diocesan priorities concerned with the enculturation of institutional meaning in the life of its students.

In the teleological meaning codes that focus on personalised meaning which are the *Human Condition* and *Building Wisdom* only 21% of the coding focused on this area.

The three areas of the *Human*, *Synthesis* and *Solidarity* were equally evident in the coding for the *Building of Wisdom*. This also has both a communal aspect and a right and duties dimension. Happiness, a sense of self and knowledge of the other were no specifically mentioned.

Table 13: Results of the coding indicating the contribution policy makes to the “Meaning in Life codes” concerned with the “Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning”.

Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings in three policy documents (n=74)
Be 30%	Self	0%
	Participation	15%
	Belong	7%
	Learner	1%
	Human	7%
Know 21%	Rights and duties	5%
	Processing	4%
	Production	5%
	Synthesis	7%
Do 27%	Community	23%
	Endeavour	4%
	Happiness	0%
Live together 22%	Other	0%
	Diversity	11%
	Dialogue	1%
	Sharing	0%
	Conscience	3%
	Solidarity	7%

When the results of the meaning codes are re-configured under the four pillars of twenty-first century learning it shows that the CEAS prioritises all four areas in a relatively balanced manner. The area that coded most highly was Learning *To Be* (30%). In a Catholic education context the documents that focus on the aims of Catholic education emphasise the role that the school plays in helping students to

consider who they are called to be in relationship to themselves, God and others. The second area that coded strongly was *To Do* (27%). Catholic schooling has always prided itself on building strong diverse communities and this area totally dominates the *To Do* category with *Endeavour* and *Happiness* making very little contribution. In the area of *Living Together* which surprisingly coded only at 22% the system supports *Solidarity* and *Diversity* and this is evidenced by the enrolment policies and outreach activities but rates poorly on *Dialogue*, *Sharing* and the exploration of the *Other*. The domain of *To Know* coded lowest at twenty one percent. This occurred, as the focus of the documents was policy focused rather than concerned with the detail of the implementation of the curriculum. Results indicate that seventeen percent of the twenty one percent in the *To Know* domain focused on *Synthesis*, *Rights and Duties* and *Production*. This is illustrative of the Catholic understanding of the acquisition of knowledge which should eventually be of services to others.

Religious education curriculum

The section of the Religious Education syllabus that was coded was the Foundational section of the document. This section of the document articulates to parents, teachers and the clergy of the Diocese the vision of Religious Education on which the document is premised.

Table 14. Results of the coding indicating the contribution the Religious Education Curriculum makes to spiritual capital

Spiritual Capital Code	Percentage of total number of occurrences (n=53)
Alignment of Values	9%
Mission and Vision	56%
Policies	26%
Publications	0%
Trust	0%
Actions of Staff and Students	7%
Exemplars of Behaviour	2%
Times of Crisis	0%

The fact that 56% of the codes relate to *vision and mission* indicates that the document is directed to the clergy and parents in the diocese as a justification for the approach adopted to religious education. This result may be a by-product of the contested place that religious education has at this moment in history in Australia. The Religious Education curriculum is often the focus of critique from conservative members of Church who focus on the orthodoxy of the theological foundations of the document. Other than documenting the vision of religious education the Foundation section of the syllabus does make some statements about the values that should flow from the implementation of a well constructed religious education curriculum. This statement focuses on the alignment of student values with the values of the Church (9%) and to a lesser degree some expectation that intellectual engagement with religious ideas will lead to action by the students (7%) who are motivated by these beliefs.

Table 15. Results of the coding indicating the contribution the Religious Education programme makes to the “Meaning in Life” Codes concerned with teleological meaning

Teleological Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings (n=23)
Human Condition 0%	Self	0%
	Other	0%
Citizenship 42.5%	Participation	2.5%
	Rights and Duties	10%
	Community	25%
	Diversity	5%
Cultural Template 10%	Belong	5%
	Dialogue	5%
Information and Knowledge 5%	Processing	5%
	Sharing	0%
Vocational Identity 17.5%	Learner	0%
	Production	2.5%
	Endeavour	10%
	Conscience	5%
Building Wisdom 25%	Human	2.5%
	Synthesis	15%
	Happiness	0%
	Solidarity	7.5%

In terms of the teleological meaning codes, the Foundation section of the religious education curriculum strongly focuses on the passing on of a template of meaning provided by the Church. This is evidenced by the fact that 70% of the coding focuses on citizenship, cultural template and vocational identity. In this context all these codes relate to being a citizen of the Church (42.5%), presenting a cultural template of the Church (10%) and promoting a vocational identity (17.5%) that is related to making a contribution to the Church. The religious education document is the document that associates meaning as something sourced from the institution of the Church.

The document only focuses on the individual capacity to build personal meaning in a limited way with 25% of the codes relating to how the curriculum will help students to develop a sense of *Wisdom*. Most of the coding in the area of *Wisdom* relates to synthesis or how the students relate what is taught in the curriculum to the reality of their lives and how this translates into a capacity for students to show empathy for the circumstances of others. The foundation section of the curriculum did not code strongly in its capacity to help students consider various conceptions of what it means to be human or what contributes to human happiness.

Table 16. Results of the coding indicating the contribution the Religious Education Curriculum e makes to the “Meaning in Life” codes concerned with the “Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning”.

Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings (n=23)
Learning to Be 10%	Self	0%
	Participation	2.5%
	Belong	5%
	Learner	0%
	Human	2.5%
Learning to Know 32.5%	Rights duties	10%
	Processing	5%
	Production	2.5%
	Synthesis	15%
Learning to Do 35%	Community	25%
	Endeavour	10%
	Happiness	0%
Learning to Live together 22.5%	Other	0%
	Diversity	5%
	Dialogue	5%
	Sharing	0%
	Conscience	5%
	Solidarity	7.5%

In terms of the Four Pillars of Twenty-first Century Learning Meaning codes the foundation section of the Religious Education curriculum documents most strongly focuses on knowledge (32.5%) and knowing what to do with that knowledge (35%). Issues related to Living Together and To Be are not strongly evident in the documentation. This model of prioritising Learning to Know and To Do over learning To Be and To Live Together mirrors the traditional model of acquiring meaning as presented in Chapter Six where packages of meaning presented by Church and State dominated over the individual construction of meaning.

Results of the coding indicating how independent research reflects the significance of spiritual capital

The independent research reports on the Catholicity of senior students in three secondary schools in the CEAS. These reports were commissioned by the CEAS to assess the effectiveness of Catholic schools on the Catholicity of students and the

need to seek clarity and direction as to how the Catholicity of schools can be maintained and enhanced. The CEAS commissioned an external body to undertake the research and the principal researcher had extensive experience in undertaking research that focuses on the spirituality and religiosity of young people. The research was a combination of online and face-to-face interviews and the coded documents consisted of the individual high school reports and cumulative report that contained both primary and secondary responses. In the cumulative report the aspects of the report that pertained to secondary school students were clearly identifiable. The report, while containing some statistical data, was mostly qualitative in nature. The section that follows summarises the key themes from this report using the Spiritual Capital codes for an organisational framework structure. This summary is qualitative in nature but uses some simple statistics to trace emerging trends.

Table 17. Results of the coding indicating the contribution that independent research makes to spiritual capital

Spiritual Capital Code	Percentage of total number of occurrences (n= 44)
Alignment of Values	48%
Mission and Vision	4%
Policies	0%
Publications	0%
Trust	4%
Actions of Staff and Students	26%
Exemplars of Behaviour	9%
Times of Crisis	9%

In the area of *alignment of values* many students, especially in senior school, indicated that school had influenced their values, provided them with a sense of discipline and had impacted on their view of the world. Students specifically identified that the school had highlighted particular world issues and encouraged them to work to make the world a more socially just place. Some students also indicated that they believed that they had become more Catholic since being at the school. Students indicated that the school encouraged them to accept and respect people of other races and religions; 25%²³ indicated that they drew positively on

²³ The additional percentages that are not listed in Table 17 were cited in the original research commissioned by the CEAS.

religious beliefs or a philosophy of life to make sense of life; and approximately 45% indicated that religion had some impact on their approach to life; and 70% believed that there was a spiritual dimension to life. 90% stated that they believed in God.

In the category of *policies plans and curriculum* students indicated that the values of the school were made present to them through the schools motto, liturgies, assemblies, religion classes, positive re-enforcement, school rules and social justice groups.

In terms of *trust* some students made reference to the influence that teachers had on them. This was evidenced by reference to the kindness of teachers; the level of support that they gave to students and the encouragement teachers gave students to try things out. This was especially noted by senior students.

In the allied area of *actions of staff and students*, the area that had the most positive response from students was interest in social issues. A third of students indicated that they had an interest in social issues that had flowed from the exploration of the issues at school. These issues include environmental issues, the position of asylum seekers and Aboriginal reconciliation. A significant number (around 80%) of students reported that have been encouraged and supported to participate in social justice action groups.

In the area of *staff and students as exemplars*, students made note that teachers had set a standard of behaviour, corrected inappropriate behaviour and one student made note of the prayerfulness of teachers. 20% of secondary students indicated that they had turned to teachers to speak about spiritual matters.

Lastly in the category of *times of crisis* the research report had a specific section that focused on how students coped with bad experiences. Most students indicated they turn to friends or family members to work through major life issues. A limited number indicated they would speak to a teacher with whom they had a relationship. Approximately 10% indicated that they would incorporate prayer or other

sacramental activity into discerning a course of action or dealing with a difficult situation.

As this research report was commissioned to evaluate the Catholicity of the CEAS schools through sample surveys and interviews in nine of the Authority's schools it was not set to report against the eight spiritual capital codes used in this analysis so it is not surprising that the students did not make any substantial clearly directed comments on *mission and vision* and *policies plans and curriculum*. The other reason that school students do not make note of the effects of policies and curriculum on the experiences of schooling is that students are not generally aware of the documentation that influences and directs the human interaction in schools which the previous research (Hughes, 2006, Mason et al, 2006) has shown to have the most effect on students.

Results of coding Independent Research using the “Meaning in Life” codes related to teleological Meaning.

Table 18. Teleological meaning in Independent Research

Teleological Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings (n =100)
Human Condition 20%	Self	14%
	Other	6%
Citizenship 28%	Participation	11%
	Rights and Duties	5%
	Community	11%
	Diversity	1%
Cultural Template 20%	Belong	19%
	Dialogue	1%
Information and Knowledge 3%	Processing	3%
	Sharing	0%
Vocational Identity 7%	Learner	2%
	Production	2%
	Endeavour	2%
	Conscience	1%
Building Wisdom 22%	Human	6%
	Synthesis	8%
	Happiness	4%
	Solidarity	4%

The teleological meaning codes indicate that the students of the CEAS acknowledge the contribution that Catholic education has made to their *Citizenship* of the world and Church (28%), the handing on of a *Cultural Template* (20%) and *Vocational Identity* (7%). It also needs to be noted that the questions asked by the independent researcher related strongly to these areas and so received stronger and more frequent responses on the part of the students. The interesting difference in the student responses is that they highly value educational activities that help build *Wisdom* (22%) and exploring aspects of the *Human condition* (20%) which involves aspects of *Self* (14%) and *Others* (6%). The *Wisdom* component includes the rating of all the elements including *Happiness* which has failed to rate in either the policy or the religious education documents.

Table 19. Results of the coding of independent research for “Meaning in Life” concerned with the “Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning”.

Four Pillars of 21st Century Learning Meaning Code	Sub-code	Percentage of total number of codings (N=100)
Learning to Be 52%	Self	14%
	Participation	11%
	Belong	19%
	Learner	2%
	Human	6%
Learning to Know 18%	Rights and duties	5%
	Processing	3%
	Production	2%
	Synthesis	8%
Learning to Do 17%	Community	11%
	Endeavour	2%
	Happiness	4%
Learning to Live together 13%	Other	6%
	Diversity	1%
	Dialogue	1%
	Sharing	0%
	Conscience	1%
	Solidarity	4%

The Four Pillars of twenty-first century learning codes in relationship to the independent research documents have been analysed in greater detail because it goes to the heart of the thesis question. Because of the nature of this aspect of the

documentation and the fact that the responses are sourced from interviews, the information provides a range of personal responses and the possibility of discovering casual links in the responses made by the students.

To Be

Self: This coded strongly in the independent research documents with fourteen occurrences. It indicated that the students had a strong sense of self which could make them independent and affect their choices for help when issues of concern arose. The researcher reported that students could integrate their own account of faith into an accompanying values system. A number of students reported that they wanted to choose careers that helped people or to participate in social justice activities. Students have reported they had reflected on their relationship with God and the role that people, place, religion and prayer had played in the development of this relationship. Students commented on the contribution school had made to their spiritual development and named these influences such as significant teachers, religious education classes, retreats and the profiling of outstanding Christians.

Participation: This element coded at eleven times. Students noted that their school encouraged them “to be good people.” This conception of good focused on care, honesty, respect and friendliness. Students noted that their schools encouraged them to be actively involved in ways to address issues of social concern and to change their behaviour in relation to environmental issues. In terms of participation in religious or spiritual activities a significant number of students (75%)²⁴ stated they participated in prayer. A smaller group indicated they felt they had a relationship with the Church.

To Belong: This element also coded highly with eighteen references. When asked what students valued in life, friends and family rated most highly. A significant number of students reported that they experienced a relationship with God and a smaller group felt connected to the Church. Students indicated that the Catholic school had benefited them in terms of their relationship with God and the Church. One student reported that he/she felt more Catholic because of attendance at a

²⁴ The additional percentages that are not listed in Table 19 were cited in the original research commissioned by the CEAS.

Catholic school. 75% of respondents identified as being Catholic and felt a sense of belonging to this community. Of this group 75% indicated they thought they would have some long-term connection with the Church especially if they have a family themselves.

Learner: This area rated poorly with only two occurrences, as the questions were not specific in this area. The first focused on the fact that the students felt free and supported to try things at school. The second related specifically to religious education where some students indicated that they enjoyed learning both about Christianity and other faiths.

Human: The concept of gaining the wisdom to become more fully human was coded six times. This was indicated by the students' response that they believed that there was a spiritual dimension to life and that a religious life made a contribution to providing students with values for life. They knew that the moral values that the Catholic school instilled in them were a distinguishing feature and the teaching of religion on God and Jesus impacted on them.

To Know

Right and Duties: This descriptor coded five times. Students indicated that they knew that the Church taught and required people to be caring, respectful and considerate. The students reported that they were highly aware of the Church stance on social issues such as poverty and Aboriginal reconciliation. They identified that the Church provided people with values and support in challenging times and that the Church developed a sense of community.

Processing: This area did not code at all. This may have happened as a result of the style of questions asked by the researcher which did not encourage students to consider life beyond the present school experience.

Production: Coded twice in this research report. Again responses focused on traditional religious education classes rather than the broader curriculum. Students indicated that they knew the teachings the Church had about Jesus Christ and their understanding of God focused on unconditional forgiveness.

Synthesis: This descriptor coded reasonably highly with eight occurrences. Most of the coding focussed on the students' ability to articulate how core Catholic beliefs relate to contemporary life. These statements incorporated beliefs about God and forgiveness, the humanity and divinity of Jesus, and the relationship of the Church's social justice teaching to local and world issues and their responsibility to make some personal response to these issues.

To Do

Community: this descriptor rated very highly with eleven responses. Students valued being part of family and friendship communities. The codes also indicate that the Catholic school had provided students with a sense of community. Students acknowledged that their school instilled in them "that they should love their neighbour" and this flows from the values of respect and human dignity which the school actively promoted. Students noted that they were actively encouraged to build a more equitable community through social justice activities and 24% of students indicated they had taken up this invitation.

In considering all four areas together, the students rate *Learning to be* and *Learning to live* together much more highly than *Learning to know* and *Learning to do*. This is in keeping with the shift of how meaning is constructed in the twenty-first century as set out in the model proposed in Chapter Six. In this model all four areas are more in balance. Knowledge and the implementation of knowledge do not dominate and the capacity to develop a sense of self and the capacity to live in harmony with others is important in a world where Church and state no longer dominate the creation and maintenance of personalised meaning-making system.

Findings

A number of findings can be drawn from the coding of documents emanating from the CEAS. The first thing that can be concluded is that it is possible to develop meaning-making descriptors that allow research to be undertaken that traces activities which build spiritual capital and contribute to the meaning-making capacities of young people. These descriptors allow further research to be undertaken. These descriptors can be used to trace activities undertaken by schools

and school systems that build Spiritual Capital and that contribute to the meaning-making capacities of young people. Some may contest that the parameters and the specific descriptors of the codes used in this chapter have been created from the models presented in Chapter Six are not universal. The codes developed however, focus on tracing how schools in this study resource students in their journey within and their journey out. The coding of these documents has shown how the CEAS has supported the building of spiritual capital within individual students and consequently the development of spiritual capital upon which the broader Catholic community can draw. They therefore provide a possible framework that could be used, with adaptation, to measure other educational documents.

Another implication that can be drawn is that the documents indicate that there are different priorities in regard to the support of the meaning-making capacities within the CEAS. The policy documents firstly indicate that the system sees that spiritual capital is built through a strong focus on mission and vision and through investing in activities that allow students and staff to align their values to that of the Church and the system. In terms of the teleological meaning codes the policy documents focus strongly on building a sense of citizenship within the institution of the Church but also support activities that support the building of wisdom. The Religious Education documentation in terms of spiritual capital is strongly focused on mission and vision and everything else is secondary. In terms of the teleological meaning codes the Religious Education curriculum focuses on membership in the Church which has components of citizenship, cultural template and vocational identity. This difference in emphasis can be seen in the meaning codes that are viewed from the perspective of the Four Pillars of twenty-first Century learning where the Religious Education curriculum document is heavily focused on *Learning to Know* and *Learning to Do* which perhaps were more appropriate in a pre twenty-first century model of education. The policy documents indicate a balance between the Four Pillars of twenty-first century learning which is a more contemporary approach to supporting the development of the meaning-making capacities of students.

While the results of this coding are not statistically significant because the documentary case study examines the documentation of one CEAS in a limited fashion it is nevertheless significant. It demonstrates that a method can be

developed to trace how effectively a system supports the meaning-making capacities of young people. Based in theory, a method can be developed which allows stakeholders to make inferences about the effectiveness of the organisation. This should allow the writers of documents to be more intentional in providing direction which would ensure that meaning-making could become a key pedagogical aim of Catholic schooling with a resulting means of tracing their success in this area.

Finally it is evident that the priorities of the CEAS in terms of the development of meaning-making capacities are different to those of the students as reflected in the independent research documents. The students have indicated that they are interested in exploring issues related to the human condition and the building of wisdom over knowledge of the cultural template. The documents of the CEAS indicate they prioritise the institutional concerns of the Church, and while to some extent the CEAS prioritises the building of wisdom in students it does not emphasise this area as a free exploration of the human condition.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the extent to which the theoretical model developed in Chapter Six could provide a form of analysis for the documents of Catholic Educational Authorities. This three tier level of analysis has provided information about how Catholic schools build spiritual capital and prioritise the support of certain aspects of students' meaning-making capacities. It affirms aspects of present Catholic schooling but raises questions with respect to meaning-making. Chapter Eight considers the relevance of this research and identifies possible areas of further research and possible developments in Australian Catholic secondary schooling.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions and recommendations

The educational landscape in the third millennium

This chapter reflects on the findings of this thesis and its contribution to Catholic education. The genesis of this thesis was in the last century on the eve of the third millennium. The early years of this millennium have seen the continued debate over the nature and purpose of education which is at the core of this thesis. This research has highlighted the influence of the changing social and economic context on the pedagogical models of schooling. It highlights a significant aspect of the changing social context which is the capacity for human beings to find and make meaning in a world that continually is in a state of flux. The thesis has reviewed the educational literature that focuses on the role that schools in general, and Catholic schools in particular, are able to play in resourcing students' capacity to make meaning. The thesis drew on the themes emerging from the literature on meaning and specifically the work of Delors (1996) and Carneiro (2003), and combined it with contemporary research related to learning to construct a model that describes how schools can contribute to students meaning-making capacities in a twenty-first century context. It argues that meaning-making is an emerging pedagogical paradigm emphasising the current issues and challenges and suggests some possible ways forward.

The influence of the changing context on the dominant educational model

As described in Chapter Three the Australian education system like all other western education systems and indeed the education systems of previous historical eras reflects the aspirations of the society within which it functions. The historical time in which this thesis is set could be considered one of those times where technological and economic circumstances have acted together to put pressure on Australian schooling to consider whether educational institutions are meeting the aspirations of young people and of society.

The changes on the technological front have mostly focused on the interconnections provided by web based technologies and the economic and social implications of

bio-technologies. On the economic front, the forces of change have flowed from the dominance of capitalism. This is witnessed by the power of trans-national companies that are in some cases more powerful than nation states and the capacity these have to influence international politics, trade and the growth of the personal wealth of the top one percent of western societies. In this environment Australian schools are challenged to provide young people with knowledge, skills and capacities to compete with other workers in the global village. This requires young people to develop the capacity to discern what is in the best interest of the country as well as discovering meaning and purpose for themselves.

As the thesis was coming to its conclusion a new Federal Labor government was elected in November 2007. It recognised the new global context and repackaged the responsibilities that schools have in providing young people with the skills to navigate the challenges that the globalised world provides and titled it an “Education Revolution.” The Federal government identified an increased role for technology as being crucial to the success of this revolution. This thesis proposes a pedagogical model that will support this revolution. The model focuses on meaning-making as a core aim of schooling in today’s context. An important aspect of this proposed model is a new focus on the aims of education.

Context: The international perspective on the role of Catholic schools and meaning

In its analysis of Church documents and recent research into Catholic schooling this thesis has emphasised that the Christian tradition and the Catholic Church have had ultimate meaning at the heart of their existence for over two thousand years. To some extent the answer to what brings ultimate meaning to the Catholic Christian is very simple but on a deeper level as for all human beings, it is a life long quest. The Church has always considered from various positions the great human questions that each generation has to face in their own context and times.

This thesis has argued that the great resource that the Church provides in the area of issues of meaning needs to be acknowledged and made more accessible to young people. For this resource to become more accessible to young people, the Church

needs to reconsider how it presents its views to young people in the media, in the parish but more importantly in the school setting. Any new approach that incorporates issues of meaning more predominantly would benefit from being rooted in freedom. By this it is meant that the Church needs to take up the challenge to announce, uphold and explain the tradition while recognising the tradition is a gift that is freely given and allowing young people to accept this gift in freedom. Acceptance or rejection of the gift should not be equated with the success or failure of the school if understood within a life cycle of Church membership.

The Church internationally writes liberally and aspirationally about the aims of schooling. In its documents it acknowledges the diversity of backgrounds from which students come, the challenges faced by young people and the responsibility that teachers and the Church have for the emotional, academic and spiritual developments of students. The Church acknowledges that Catholic education is a gift freely offered to students through which they can make decisions about their own spiritual life. This view is supported by the Church commitment to offering Catholic education in countries where Catholics are a minority and the students of other faiths make up the majority of the school population.

Context: Australian Catholic schools

This liberal view of Catholic schooling is in contrast to the current discourse surrounding Catholic schools in an Australian context. This discourse is marked by tension surrounding Catholic identity and its manifestation in Sunday Mass attendance. This is evidenced in the recent Bishops' letter to Catholic school communities of N.S.W. and the A.C.T. This letter did not focus on the spiritual needs of the individual students but on the identity of the Catholic school and its relationship to the institutional Church through its interactions with parishes. This researcher argues that the schools that are truly grounded in the Catholic tradition; provide a strong spiritual and academic culture which contributes to the spiritual development of students individually and collectively. An educational document that does not specifically place the individual needs of students at the core of the aims of schooling is at odds with the contemporary approach to education. This thesis has argued that Catholic secondary schools in Australia need to reconsider

their stated aims for Catholic schooling. These aims may then describe the role of Australian Catholic schooling in the broadest sense, focusing on the short and long term needs of students, rather than being driven by concerns about the falling participation of young people in Sunday worship, or influenced by institutional concerns such as attendance at World Youth Day.

This thesis has demonstrated that Catholic schools in Australia have generally been very good at helping young people to build a sense of who they are, while at the same time reminding them of their responsibility to create a better society and to transform the world. One of the ways that Catholic schools engender this sense of responsibility is by creating a model community. These model communities demonstrate and live out the key beliefs and expectations of the particular community. While they reward student excellence in academic, cultural, sporting and spiritual life they are intergenerational in nature through the encouragement of parental involvement, the involvement of ex-students and the enrolment of the children and grandchildren of previous students.

Chapter Six described how this can occur by creating within the school a model society where students are allowed to test out their opinions and their interactions with other people. In this model of schooling students are given feedback on their own interpersonal skills but are also presented with exemplars of people whose beliefs and behaviours affected others. Lastly these communities provide models of just communities. This is done in two ways. The first is through the teaching and the implementation of the Church's social teaching and the second is through the expectation that students, through their interpersonal relationships and interactions respect the rights of others. The religious dimension of the school encompassed in its charism and what the school does in the broader pastoral care and the spiritual development of students contributes significantly to the meaning-making capacities of students and in many ways makes a greater contribution than formal lessons. While this sounds like a Utopic state, all of these elements are present in the average Catholic school but as always, the effectiveness of these key elements of Catholic schooling is a by-product of the commitment of every member of the school to the aims of Catholic schooling.

This thesis proposes that Catholic education could benefit from a clearer focus on how it best serves the individual young person. While Catholic schools have served young people in the process of becoming who they are called to be in Australia for nearly one hundred and fifty years this role has not been effectively named, prioritised or celebrated enough in the life of the Church. This refocusing would allow for a broader view of Catholic school culture rather than a narrow definition that equates its primary purpose as the building of Catholic identity within the institution. A new vision would incorporate a view that sees Catholic school culture having a fundamental influence in the development of young people's capacity to test out and deal with how they are going to live in the world. One way for Australian Catholic schooling to develop a clear focus on the needs of the individual student is to review the aims of Catholic education. This review would be mindful of the challenges provided by our current social and economic context and would work to establish a set of priorities within these aims that ensure that the school meets its responsibilities to civil and ecclesial authorities but prioritises the needs of young people.

An emerging pedagogical paradigm

To meet the needs of the young people of the third millennium this thesis focuses on developing in students the capacity to be life long learners, to be critical consumers and producers of information, to discern meaning and purpose for themselves, to be active contributors to the communities they belong to and to be seekers of spiritual truth. To succeed in all these areas a Catholic school needs to construct a broader understanding of itself and its role in society. To effectively move to this model school communities need to be more aware of and actively work towards, the aims of Catholic schooling that contain within them a pedagogical principle for meaning-making.

The aims of education

This thesis clearly distinguishes the differences between education and schooling which are often used interchangeably in contemporary discussions. This thesis maintains that schools are the vehicles by which the aims of education are enacted (Gregory 2002) and schooling is the manner of managing educational processes. It

also maintains that individual schools and school systems should reflect the aspirations of the society in which they are situated.

As identified in this thesis there are conflicting aims of education. In the Australian context there are both stated and unstated aims of education and these at times differ from each other. The stated aims of education in the MCEETYA document (1999) focus on the ability of students to problem solve, communicate effectively, develop employment related skills, use technology in creative ways, and be socially just and self confident. The unstated aims focus on the role that the institution of the school plays in Australian society. The institution of school, which has provided social stability for over a hundred years, has deep historical and social roots in Australia. Schools are still perceived to be one of the few institutions in society that function effectively in passing on and upholding community standards which are sometimes equated with values of a past era.

Some in society place a high value on the role of schools in providing a safe place of nurture for young people, where communities are formed, individuals are nurtured and where society's values are taught and upheld. This conception of the school often draws on deeply held beliefs and memories about school. Parents, while wanting their children to have academic success and to develop the skills to compete with workers internationally, frequently want their children's school experience to mirror their own experiences. These views often keep secondary school communities in a time warp as parent bodies pressurise schools to maintain a model of schooling that was known and of value to them but may not be the best model to address the needs of the future. This is manifested by the popularity of elite private schools which are sought by parents for academic success but are also praised by parents for social conservatism, the maintenance of community standards and their ability to enforce dress and personal appearance standards that for most of society have been relaxed or abandoned over the past ten to twenty years.

This research indicates that the third millennium requires aims of education that are broad and simple. Using Beutow's (1988) work as a basis, this thesis argues that the aims of education in the third millennium should include and have a greater emphasis on what it means to be a "good person", how to live and construct a

“good life” and how to contribute to building a “good society”. To provide answers to these open ended and life long questions this thesis used the work of Carneiro (2003) and his image of the “journey within” (the spiritual journey) and the “journey without” (citizenship) and the process of both these journeys to lead to a broad based sense of meaning and purpose. The answers to these key questions and addressing these two aspects of life require the skill of discernment and the maturity of perseverance. Adults in a society have the responsibility to support young people to answer these questions for themselves in their search for meaning. At the beginning of the third millennium where there has been a demise in the influence of the family and the Church much of this adult responsibility has been delegated to schools.

The aims of education therefore lie in supporting young people to find answers to these questions while undertaking these two key interconnected journeys. By this it is meant that the education system should equip young people with skills to help them discern and have a sense of who they are, who they want to be and how they will deal with the challenges posed by the world in which they currently live while also looking towards the world of the future. The questions that focus on how one can become a good person and contribute to a good society can be framed in terms of citizenship. Students can be challenged to consider how they will live out their citizenship in the community, the Church, the nation and the world. This exploration could lead to a positive challenge to students concerning how they will make a contribution to the economy, to a just society and to the wise use of resources.

Meaning-making as a model

As discussed elsewhere in this thesis all human beings innately have the capacity for meaning-making. In previous generations meaning was less contested as individuals were consumed with dealing with the challenges of famine, war and disease or they were satisfied with the package of meaning provided by the Church the monarch or the nation state. In an era in western society where the food supply is assured, most disease has been conquered and the power of Church and state to frame the boundaries of meaning for its adherents and citizens has been rejected the

individual is more responsible for determining what provides a sense of meaning and purpose than at any other point in history.

In this climate the Church in fact has had to become a strong advocate for keeping issues related to what it means to be human on the public agenda, as rigorous public debate on issues of substance has declined and at times been replaced with what entertains or distracts. The Catholic Church provides one of the great resources to those who are concerned with issues of meaning. This resource is built from the Church's historical roots, its universal nature, its commitment to scholastic and intellectual rigour, the depth and breadth of its spiritual and mystical traditions and its stability of structure which has helped it survive the challenges of war, modernity, post modernity, corruption and self interest.

This thesis proposes that Catholic education could benefit by describing itself in terms of how it best serves the individual young person. A new description would focus on a broader view of Catholic school culture rather than a narrow definition that equates its primary purpose to building the Catholic identity. It could incorporate a view that sees Catholic school culture taking a fundamental role in the development of young people's capacity to test out how they are going to live and deal with the reality of living in today's world.

In the proposed model the Catholic school system would have a responsibility to broaden its understanding of how it serves young people as well as meet its civil and ecclesial responsibilities. This gives the Catholic school system an opportunity to re-conceptualise its role in the life of young people by focusing on and exploring how it can support the process by which young people construct meaning. This provides a justification for having more young people in Catholic schools that have no particular religious affiliation as it provides them with a way of dealing with the complexity of life. The quality of the experience and teaching of the Catholic school has the potential to present the Church to the young person as a relevant resource in both their search for meaning and their capacity to contribute positively to society.

Emerging themes

Much of the writing on meaning-making is in its infancy because while schools have always supported students in this domain it has been a by-product of the educational process rather than a specific stated aim of the educational endeavour. As the theoretical base for meaning-making is still being formalised there is still some imprecision in the use of the term. As well as this imprecision a number of different terms are still used to describe the process by which humans discern meaning. This thesis identified some recurring themes. These include the role of schools as a resource agent, the importance of pedagogical principles and spiritual capital. This broader vision begins with a simple awareness that Catholic schools can and do contribute to the meaning-making capacities of young people.

Resource agent

This thesis has emphasised that schools could become more effective resource agents to develop the meaning-making capacities of young people. This thesis recommends that this concept needs to be more fully explored by Catholic educational authorities and schools. A good resource agent in the area of meaning-making provides young people with the opportunity to consider issues of meaning and the tools by which these issues can be analysed. These tools would include investigation of the philosophical understandings of what it means to be human, the historical background to some philosophical positions (conceptions of the good) and different spiritual and religious horizons of meaning. Professional development in this area could help teachers understand what it means for schools to move the focus from being a provider of information to becoming an effective resource in support of young people.

Pedagogical principles

Chapter Five of this thesis used the work of Michael Grimmitt (2000a) to define pedagogical principles as substantive hypotheses about teaching and learning from which classroom activity flows. It has argued that with the complexity of the world in which young people live, the demise of traditional sources of meaning, and the focus on the development of personalised meaning there are greater demands on young people to discern meaning. The thesis therefore presents their need for a greater level of support from adults in this area and notes that the Catholic school is

in a privileged place to support young people in the area of spirituality. A pedagogical principle, as proposed, could improve current curriculum debates and provide meaning-making as a balance to the dominance of the principles of economic rationalism.

Spiritual capital

The concept of spiritual capital, as used in this thesis, flows from the work of economists on investigating what contributes to social capital. This acknowledges the impact that connected groups of human beings working together have on themselves and the broader community. Coleman's research (1988) on social capital indicated that religious beliefs accounted for half the social capital identified in his study. This research noted a significant link between religiosity and cultural capital. The major religious traditions are perceived to develop in their adherents values and dispositions, which include good faith, trust, stewardship and moral and ethical behaviours. These characteristics in turn, have been identified as spiritual capital and are a major source of charitable giving, community service, volunteer work and community engagement.

So membership in a religious tradition or close association with individuals or organisations that have religious ideals can contribute to the spiritual capital not just of the individual but also of the broader society. From the indicators provided by Caldwell (2007) Catholic schools contribute to the spiritual capital of individuals and society. The activities of the Catholic school described in this thesis as activities that support the meaning-making capacities of students also build the spiritual capital of individuals and the community.

Areas of priority in Catholic secondary schooling

The vision of Catholic schooling emerging from this research does not involve a great deal of change to the current practice of Catholic schools. Catholic schools do a very good job in creating communities that meet the diverse educational, social and spiritual needs of students. To be more effective in incorporating the pedagogical principle of meaning-making Catholic schools could benefit by having a broader understanding of their purpose and a clearer statement of vision. This vision could incorporate an awareness and understanding of the role that the school

plays in helping young people to conceive meaning. This broader vision has many dimensions from the very simple to the quite complex. Some of the areas of priority in the model presented by this thesis include increasing the focus on educational philosophy, intentionality, structural change and the role of religious education.

Educational philosophy

Many of the conclusions drawn in this thesis focus on Catholic schools having stronger philosophical conceptions of the aims of Catholic schooling. Australian educators have been excellent practitioners with regard to the implementation of syllabi and building strong educational communities but they do not easily participate in the conversation and debate that forms the policy direction of Australian schools. Traditionally, Australian educators who are themselves the products of the pragmatic nature of Australian culture have lacked an interest in the philosophical dimensions of education and the pedagogical principles that guide the formation of schools. The tertiary institutions that have been responsible for developing the next generation of teachers do not have the same commitment and funding to offer substantial courses on the philosophy of education in the same way that universities in Europe and Great Britain do.

This lack of interest on the part of teachers and lack of support on the part of universities have denied Australian educators access to the tools that allow them to easily enter into the debate that clarifies the contemporary purposes of schooling. In a Catholic context the aims of Catholic schooling, while drawing on secular aims are, affected by theology and Church policy surrounding education. A lack of knowledge of theology and religious education can exclude teachers from fully entering into discussion addressing the purpose of Catholic schooling. By choosing not to participate or by not having the skills needed to contribute to the strategic direction of schooling teachers have left the direction of policy and practice to government bureaucrats, university staff and educational administrators. While these groups all have expertise in their own right, a lack of engagement on the part of teachers leads to a slow take up of change and a lack of commitment and resulting ownership of any change which might take place.

Intentionality

Another area of priority that flows from the theoretical exploration undertaken in this thesis focuses on intentionality. Intentionality is about the relationship between thought and enacting these thoughts in the real world (Jacob, 2003). Organisational theory states if we are not intentional about an activity it remains in the area of theory and does not manifest itself in the world of practice. Intentionality also allows organisations to identify and link behaviours to the philosophical position from which they flow, rather than perceiving human behaviour as totally haphazard. The area of how schools currently support the meaning-making capacities of students falls into the category of haphazard behaviour. For schools to become better resource agents in this area they need to become more intentional about how they support young people to make meaning in their lives.

Meaning-making is already occurring in Catholic schools as a pedagogical reality. Already there are dimensions of the Catholic school experience which enable students to identify wisdom, truth and values for themselves. This is critical pedagogy in action. This thesis proposes that intentionality be acknowledged in the policies and addressed through professional development. Schools could then specifically identify what they are already doing in the academic and pastoral programmes of the school which contribute to the meaning-making capacities of students. After the identification of the key areas of school life that help young people to conceive meaning there is opportunity to identify and celebrate the contribution that the school is making in the lives of its students.

Once these activities are claimed as meaning-making activities the school has a responsibility to become more intentional about the support and growth of the role of the school as a meaning-making resource agent. One way to become more intentional about this purpose is to have it included in the stated aims of Catholic schools and included in some way into the mission and vision statements of individual schools. From these statements, which technically are a source of pedagogical principles, policy needs to be developed that gives direction to the implementation of the principles into classroom activities.

Once there is stated policy that focuses on supporting the meaning-making activities of young people the intentionality in itself will promote the possibility and effectiveness of meaningful education. This can also occur through the inclusion of statements focused on meaning-making in the school mission statement and the stated aims of the school, through its inclusion in school policy and school programming as well as reflecting the responsibility for meaning-making through the role descriptions and performance review processes for key personnel in the school. Intentionality can be embedded into all pastoral and academic programmes. A comprehensive way of doing this could be the method recommended by Caldwell (2007) in his spiritual codes (*cf* Chapter 7 pp. 171-172).

This thesis recommends specific reference to how meaning is constructed and supported in the mission and vision statements, the policies, plans and curriculum, and through the publications and presentations of school communities and educational authorities. This approach requires the leadership of schools to be committed to the role the school plays in helping students to develop their capacity to make meaning and to trust the value of student mentoring. This active promotion of meaning-making would hopefully make some observable differences in the alignment of actions with the values of students and staff. In the long term this should lead to an increased sense of well-being within the community.

Structural change

This clear statement of intentionality can address the concerns of society that young people lack a sense of direction in the area of morals, values and meaning. The methods by which meaning-making can be explored, developed and supported described in this thesis have been based on a belief that schools have a crucial role in supporting young people in the journey of them becoming who they are called to be. This belief is based on a sense of hope in the goodness of young people, a sense of trust in the depth and power of the Christian tradition and a commitment to education as a true liberating force in the lives of young people.

A greater focus on supporting meaning-making can make a difference to both the community of the school and the broader community by further developing the capacities for individuals to discern who they are. This allows a community to

more deeply explore the key values of a community. This exploration allows for an evaluation of the power of long held mythic beliefs, the place of heroes, issues of personal and communal identity and the direction the community wishes to take. All these activities of reflection and discernment allow the individual to deepen and extend their sense of Catholic and Australian identity. The building of these skills in individuals and the community contributes to the development of resilience which is the capacity of communities and individuals to stay connected and emotionally healthy in times of stress and challenge such as personal tragedies like the death of a family or staff member, the challenges of family breakdown and global events such as September 11th.

Implications for religious education

This thesis noted (*cf* Chapter 3, p.68) that the prevailing models of religious education focus on the induction of students into the tradition (new evangelism) or are dominated by ensuring that the programmes provided are structured and taught in the manner used in other school subjects in New South Wales (McGrath, 2005). Issues therefore such as the development of learning outcomes, the use of text books, meeting primary school targets in primary religious education tests and the attainment of religious literacy dominate the discourse of religious education.

This thesis identified that the key difference between religious education and other school syllabi in New South Wales is that the Board of Studies syllabi incorporates a constructivist view of education. This view of education encourages students to construct their own meaning out of what is studied. However the current religious education syllabi used in New South Wales Catholic schools give students very little space to construct their own stance in relation to the material taught and the introduction of one standardised textbook across many dioceses in New South Wales and Victoria contributes to a didactic approach. The pedagogical principle of meaning-making proposed in this thesis gives religious education a different voice in this discourse which could incorporate a more constructivist and open ended approach.

Recommendations

This thesis makes the following recommendations to enhance the role that Catholic secondary schools can play in supporting the meaning-making capacities of students and thus respond positively to the emerging paradigm.

Meaning-making as a stated aim of Catholic education

It is recommended that more could be done by Catholic Educational Authorities to engage Catholic secondary school teachers in reflecting and engaging in debate on the aims of Catholic schooling. This process needs to be supported by appropriate professional development opportunities that review and evaluate the current aims of Catholic schooling and that argue the case for inclusion of the pedagogical principle of meaning-making as one of the stated aims of Catholic schooling. This professional development could also explore the various pedagogical activities that could be incorporated into the existing curriculum to support this pedagogical principle and more importantly support the meaning-making capacities of young people.

Meaning-making as a stated pedagogical principle

It is recommended that Catholic schools include meaning-making into the aims of Catholic schooling and that this aim could in fact become an accepted pedagogical principle of Catholic schooling. This allows the concept to be explored from an academic perspective so that there are expectations that will guide and inform pedagogical practice in the classroom and this allows for the provision within Catholic schools of a meaningful education for all.

Spiritual capital

This thesis recommends that Catholic secondary schools investigate further the contribution that they make to the spiritual capital of society. These investigations could be used to broaden the understanding of the role that Catholic schools play in society so this role is valued and supported by Federal and State governments and the wider community. This role could be promoted in the broader community so that Catholic schools are valued for the significant civic service they provide in Australian society. A greater understanding of this civic role may ensure appreciation within the broader community of Catholic commitment to principles of justice and equity based on Gospel values and alleviate concerns that Catholic

schools only serve a minority group, are insular in nature and fragment society based on sectarian lines.

Review of the role that Catholic schooling plays in society

This thesis recommends that Catholic educational authorities educate the leadership of the Catholic Church on the role Catholic schools play in the lives of Catholic students and students of other faiths or belief systems and their subsequent contribution to civic society. This information may help broaden the debate on the effectiveness of Catholic schools from one focused on the development on Catholic identity to one that acknowledges the success of Catholic schools in supporting the meaning-making capacities of young people and the development of spiritual capital in the students, staff and families associated with Catholic schools and the communities in which they are situated.

Review of the role of religious education

An outcome of this thesis could be a review of the religious education programmes offered by Catholic secondary schools with a clearer focus on the effectiveness of the current pedagogical models used in Catholic schools. This review could investigate the viability of the incorporation of a more constructivist educational approach that focuses on the inclusion of activities that allow students to examine the formation of *horizons of meaning* as well as the exploration of Church teachings.

Contribution of the thesis

The thesis has highlighted that societal and economic context has and does influence the model school; it has achieved this by examining the key contextual factors in three historical eras to illustrate that major shifts in the contextual factors eventually affect the model school. Using this as a basis the thesis has described the current key contextual factors that are currently impacting on schooling and how Catholic secondary schools are adapting and changing the model of schooling to meet the educational needs of students.

The contribution of the thesis to theory is that it has developed a theoretical model based on the literature that describes how young people construct meaning in the

twenty-first century. This model incorporated the *four pillars of twenty-first century learning* (Delors, 1996) and described role that the school now plays in resourcing students in their quest to make meaning and to develop their meaning-making capacities.

The contribution of this thesis to education is in its integration of a range of different discussion about the nature and purpose of future schooling and its proposal that educational authorities assess the extent to which they emphasise and enact or are intentional in regard to particular pedagogical principles. The thesis has also developed a process by which documents can be analysed using a method that focuses on the key themes of educational theory. These key themes then become the basis for the development of codes and these codes then become the basis for analysing the focus the organisation has on a specific pedagogical principle.

The contribution of this thesis to Catholic education is that it has reviewed the social and economic context in which Catholic secondary schooling is situated. It has provided a new framework to discuss the nature and place of Catholic Education. It has examined the emerging themes in the literature, identified the language used and proposed this as an educational model that incorporates meaning-making into the core educational aims of Catholic schooling. The thesis has done this by providing a new pedagogical model which draws on the influence of the context and calls for schooling systems to readdress the balance between the focus on purely academic pursuits and the role the school plays in being a resource agent to the meaning-making capacities of young people.

Further Research

The researcher acknowledges that more research could be undertaken in the area of developing the meaning-making capacities of young people and the integral role that Catholic schools can play in supporting them in this life long quest. Research could focus more specifically on the application of this model at the level of an individual school or classroom or on the issue of professional development. It could also explore in depth implications for curriculum development in general or religious education in particular.

Conclusion

This thesis has established that:

- the economic and social context in which schools are situated affects the model of schooling provided to students;
- the model of schooling is undergoing a paradigm shift;
- one of the themes in the new model of twenty-first century schooling is meaning-making;
- an underlying pedagogy is appropriate for learning; and
- it acknowledges that Catholic schooling has made a positive contribution to the lives of generations of Catholics.

This thesis has identified areas where this schooling system has been an effective resources agent for the meaning-making capacities of its students and highlighted areas in which it can become more intentional in this role.

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