Developing tomorrow's school leaders: The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program

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Developing tomorrow's school leaders: The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program

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Developing tomorrow’s school leaders: The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program

A qualitative, collective case study

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Abstract

The Aspiring Principals Program is a two-year principal preparation program convened by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia. The program targets selected primary school assistant principals and secondary school deputy principals aspiring to principalship of Western Australian Catholic schools. The eight aspirants who commenced the program in January 2011 and graduated in December 2012 participated in the research. The purpose of the research was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four aspirant perceptions were explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship.

The research was qualitative in nature and used interpretivism, specifically symbolic interactionism, as its theoretical perspective. Collective case study was chosen as the research methodology. Three qualitative, semi-structured interviews (pre-program, mid-program and end-of program) were the primary instruments used to collect data for the research. Data analysis took the form of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis.

The research suggested that the program assisted aspirants to develop a holistic understanding of Catholic principalship role components and requisite capabilities; clarify their attraction to the role; identify, experience and mitigate disincentives; and confirm or achieve high self-efficacy to commence principalship. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences.

However, the research revealed seven program deficiencies. Firstly, the program did not adequately address the requirement of the principal, as leader of the role
component, Catholic identity, to develop the school as a faith community by providing opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental and liturgical celebrations. Secondly and thirdly, the program provided aspirants with a superficial understanding of the role components, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. Fourthly, the program omitted to emphasise vital responsibilities associated with the role component, school improvement such as the need for the principal to distribute leadership to develop staff leadership capacity. Fifthly, although the program was effective in equipping aspirants with the knowledge and understanding required to effectively lead and manage the role components, stewardship of resources and school improvement, it largely ignored that pertaining to Catholic identity, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. Sixthly, the program did not address the principles of strategic planning, important when ‘charting the course’ for the achievement of school vision. Finally, the program did not prepare aspirants for disincentives emanating from the reality of principalship appointment. This was especially the case for aspirants preparing to depart Perth to commence principalship of Catholic schools in country and remote areas.

As a result of the research, an integrated model of principal preparation was proposed for the consideration of local, national and international program designers. The model, designed to achieve the goal of enhanced aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship, is comprised of three integrated pieces: program design principles; program theory; and active learning experiences. The research also culminated in six recommendations, three suggested areas of further research and six possible, although highly contextualised, additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.
Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from any thesis submitted for previously completed degrees. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree at another tertiary institution. No other person’s work has been used without due acknowledgment. All research procedures detailed in this thesis received the approval of The University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) Research Ethics Committee.

I acknowledge the generosity, assistance and support of the members of the Western Australian Catholic education community who contributed to this research. Specifically, I pay homage to the eight aspirants from the 2011 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program who agreed to participate in the research and selflessly and wholeheartedly shared their perceptions of Catholic principalship. I extend my gratitude to aspirant principals who supported their participation in the program and the research. I thank the facilitators of program modules, especially CEOWA support staff, program coaches and guest principals who willingly volunteered their time and openly shared their experiences with aspirants. I acknowledge the members of the CEOWA peer-review group who worked unselfishly with me to ensure that the research was conducted ethically and with precision. I thank the CEOWA Executive who emphatically supported the research, especially the Executive Director, Dr. Tim McDonald, the Director of Religious Education, Dr. Debra Sayce and the Director for School Improvement, Dr. Tony Curry. I also acknowledge the former Executive Director, Ron Dullard for his initial support of the research. Finally, I express my appreciation to my CEOWA colleagues who supported and encouraged me, notably Helen Brennan, Kayci Carpenter, Christine Garstin, Jim Green, Frank Italiano, Shaun Mayne, Trish Miller, Marnie Platt, Kelly Smith, Brendan Spillane, Jonathon Woolfrey and Georgie Wynne.

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Shane Anthony Glasson

16 December 2014
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Glossary

Acting principalship
An active learning experience whereby an assistant principal or deputy principal from the Aspiring Principals Program assumes the role of principal for a period of time, usually as a result of the incumbent principal undertaking leave. Periods of acting principalship are usually enacted in aspirant schools.

Aspirant
An assistant or deputy principal participating in the Aspiring Principals Program who desires future appointment as principal of a Western Australian Catholic school.

Assistant principal
Second in charge to the principal in Western Australian Catholic primary schools. In most primary schools, the assistant principal is both teacher (80%) and administrator (20%). Most primary schools employ at least one assistant principal. The number of assistant principals employed per school, however, depends upon student enrolments. That is, the higher the number of students enrolled in a school, the greater the number of assistant principals employed.

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standard for Principals (AITSL Standard)
A document used to inform the content and activities of the Aspiring Principals Program. The AITSL Standard describes the responsibilities of the principal and is endorsed by Australian State and Territory Ministers for Education for use in all Australian government, Catholic and independent systems, sectors and schools.

Coach
A practicing Western Australian Catholic school principal who works with an aspirant to develop leadership capability improvement goals and achievement strategies based on 360-review data compiled prior to the commencement of the Aspiring Principals Program. The aspirant then implements, evaluates and refines strategies as they enact
their leadership role and lead a QCS school improvement project during the program’s second year. Prior to undertaking this role, principals receive coach training and are accredited by an external body.

*Deputy principal*
Second in charge to the principal in Western Australian Catholic secondary schools. In most secondary schools, the deputy principal is both teacher (20%) and administrator (80%). Most secondary schools employ at least two deputy principals. As is the case for assistant principals in primary schools, the number of deputy principals employed in a secondary school depends upon student enrolments.

*Disincentive*
A factor or influence that diminishes aspirant interest in applying for Western Australian Catholic principalship vacancies.

*‘Inside Leadership’*
A semi-structured question and answer session convened by a practicing principal at the conclusion of each face-to-face module associated with the Aspiring Principals Program. The program convenor encourages guest principals to discuss their conception of the role, successful and challenging leadership experiences and resultant learning. Guest principals are male and female; novices through to significantly experienced; sourced from country, remote and metropolitan schools; and are drawn from both co-educational and single-gender schools.

*Internship*
An active learning experience whereby an aspirant from the Aspiring Principals Program ‘shadows’ the principal of a school for a period of time. Internships are usually organised for aspirants seeking appointment as principals of Western Australian Catholic schools in remote locations.

*Leadership vision statement*
A program activity whereby aspirants use a series of 10 questions to identify and reflect upon their leadership values. Aspirants then use responses to formulate a statement that
encapsulates a vision for their leadership. Structured activities over the course of the program provide opportunities for aspirants to reflect upon, share and refine their leadership vision statements.

*Life Styles Inventory (LSI)*
The psychometric tool used within the Aspiring Principals Program to provide aspirants with 360-degree data regarding their leadership capabilities. The LSI is completed at two points: prior to commencement and upon completion of the program. Aspirants, between these two points, use LSI data when working with coaches to formulate capability improvement goals and develop, implement, evaluate and refine achievement strategies.

*Principalship*
The work of the principal, the senior leader and manager of Western Australian Catholic schools.

*Self-efficacy*
An individual’s belief in his or her ability to accomplish a stated goal. In the context of this research, self-efficacy refers to an aspirant’s belief in his or her ability to commence Catholic principalship.

*Self-efficacy sources*
Sources that bolster aspirant belief in ability to commence Catholic principalship. There are four self-efficacy sources defined by Bandura (1986): mastery experiences; control of resultant physical and emotional reactions; vicarious experiences; and social persuasion. Mastery experiences occur as aspirants repeat effort to overcome challenging situations and, in doing so, experience success. Controlling the physical and emotional reactions that arise during mastery experiences such as stress can assist aspirants to recognise and modify reactions and, over time, mitigate their impacts. Vicarious experiences occur as aspirants observe colleagues achieving goals through perseverance and, as a result, form the belief that they too have the capacity to succeed in comparable situations. Social persuasion occurs when aspirants receive praise from
others and, as a result, form the belief that they have the capability to achieve stated goals.

Support networks
Enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. In the context of the research, three support networks exist: ‘collegial’, ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ support networks. Collegial support networks, comprised of program colleagues, aspirant principals, coaches and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals, are potential sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Top-down support networks, comprised of Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) support staff with specialist knowledge or line management authority that facilitate program modules, are potential sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Bottom-up support networks, comprised of staff, students, their parents and members of the broader school community, are potential sources of social persuasion. Aspirants build collegial and top-down support networks as they participate in the program. Bottom-up support networks are established and developed as aspirants enact their leadership roles and experience periods of acting principalship or internship.

The Aspiring Principals Program
A two-year principal preparation program convened by the CEOWA and funded by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) School Personnel Committee. The program is the main succession-planning mechanism of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The program aims to develop a pool of role-ready, resilient principal aspirants for Western Australian Catholic primary and secondary schools.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Western Australia (The Bishops’ Conference)
The body responsible for the formulation of system vision, provision of quality Catholic education to achieve it and system governance. The Bishops’ Conference is comprised of the Archbishop (Tim Costelloe) and Auxiliary Bishop (Donald Sproxton) from the Archdiocese of Perth and the Bishops of Bunbury (Gerard Holohan), Geraldton (Justin Bianchini) and Broome (Christopher Saunders).
The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (The CECWA)
The ‘board of management’ of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The CECWA is comprised of 17 people appointed by the Bishops Conference. The CECWA receives delegated responsibility from the Bishops Conference for system governance including legislative compliance. Compliance is achieved through the generation of policy statements and procedures governing the operation of all 161 Western Australian Catholic schools. The CECWA is also responsible for guiding the achievement of system vision.

The CECWA standing committees
The CECWA generates 38 policy statements and procedures governing the operation of all Western Australian Catholic schools through six standing committees, the members of which are selected for their expertise in specific fields. The standing committees are The Catholic Education Aboriginal Committee; the Finance Committee; the Parent Advisory Committee; the Religious Education and Curriculum Committee; the School Personnel Committee; and the School Resources Committee.

The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA)
The Executive arm of the CECWA. The CEOWA is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the 38 CECWA policy statements and procedures in all Western Australian Catholic schools. The CEOWA also provides principals with policy-related advice and support to assist them to achieve the vision of the Bishops’ Conference at the level of the individual school. The CEOWA also performs an essential compliance function by reporting, on behalf of schools, to local, state and federal government authorities as required.

The Leadership Framework for Catholic Schools in Western Australia (The Leadership Framework)
A document used to inform the structure, content and activities of the Aspiring Principals Program. The Leadership Framework describes the work of Western Australian Catholic school principals through four, interrelated domains: Catholic identity; stewardship; education and community. The Leadership Framework also
describes four capabilities required of principals when leading and managing through these domains: personal; professional; relational and organisational capabilities.

The Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015
A document written by the Bishops’ Conference that articulates their vision for the Western Australian Catholic education system.

The Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool
A framework and tool mandated by the CECWA School Personnel Committee for use in all Western Australian Catholic schools to evaluate and improve all processes, activities and the quality of services offered to the school community. The QCS Framework and school improvement tool also informs the content and activities of the Aspiring Principals Program.

The Western Australian Catholic education system (the system)
Comprised of the Bishops’ Conference, the CECWA, the CEOWA and 161 Western Australian Catholic schools. Catholic schools are geographically located in the Archdiocese of Perth and the Dioceses of Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome. The system educates 73,000 students and is serviced by 5,500 teachers and 3,500 non-teaching staff.
Chapter One: Research Defined

1.1 Introduction to the Research

The Western Australian Catholic education system (the system) faces a problem. Of the 161 Catholic school principals that comprise the system, 70 or 43% will reach or exceed retirement age by 2020 (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2013). The problem, however, lies not in the retirement plans of existing principals. Rather, the problem relates to the capacity of the Executive arm of the system, the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA), to create a pool of role-ready, resilient aspirants to replace existing principals as they leave.

The system faces four complications with regard to the development of this aspirant pool. The age profile of some traditional aspirants, assistant principals in primary schools and deputy principals in secondary schools, is similar to that of the existing principal group (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2013). The CEOWA Executive anticipates that retirement of assistant and deputy principals at the same rate as existing principals will dilute the aspirant pool (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2013). Moreover, some potential aspirants are simply not interested in principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2013; d’Arbon, 2006; Pritchard, 2003). Additionally, some potential aspirants consider aspects of the principalship unattractive and, as a consequence, experience diminished interest in the role (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2005b; d’Arbon, 2006). These unattractive role aspects, also referred to as disincentives in the literature (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2005a; d’Arbon, 2006), include the multi-faceted, intense and stressful nature of the role that demands leadership and management of an array of technical and administrative tasks that must often be completed in time and resource-poor environments (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, & Crawford, 2003; Pounder, Galvin, & Shepherd, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). Finally, some potential aspirants actively pursue and attain principalship with no formation other than that provided by the apprenticeship experience of their assistant or deputy principal roles. A possible consequence for this group is unpreparedness for a complicated and demanding role that requires the consistent application of leadership capabilities to ensure success. Ultimately, for some beginning principals in this category, premature exit from the
profession is the outcome (Clarke & Wildy, 2010; Sayce & Lavery, 2010; Wildy & Clarke, 2008).

To further explain the consequences associated with the apprenticeship model of development as the sole pathway to principalship, it is important to highlight five research conclusions. Firstly, for some aspirants, beginning principalship in this way creates a turbulent period of adjustment associated with the move from a role that is comfortable and familiar to one that is foreign and unpredictable (Browne-Ferrigno, 2003; A. Walker & Qian, 2006; Wildy & Clarke, 2008; Wildy, Clarke, & Slater, 2007). Secondly, beginning principals may encounter a role that is more complex than anticipated and experience consternation when faced with the tensions and dilemmas emanating from principal-level decision-making (Wildy & Clarke, 2008; Wildy et al., 2007). Thirdly, beginning principals may be confronted by the challenges created by role intensification in a time-poor environment (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; Pounder et al., 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). Fourthly, beginning principals may experience isolation from both former and new peers (Wildy & Clarke, 2008; Wildy et al., 2007). Finally, beginning principals may be adversely impacted by negative encounters with staff, parents and school community members (Riley, 2014; Wildy & Clarke, 2008; Wildy et al., 2007).

One measure devised and implemented by the CEOWA to mitigate the issues associated with the anticipated en masse retirement of existing principals by 2020 is the Aspiring Principals Program. This two-year principal preparation program aims to create a pool of aspirants with the knowledge, skills and networks required to rapidly adjust to the rigours of novice principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). The program attempts to achieve this aim in four ways. The program strives to provide aspirants with a thorough understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Important in the development of these understandings is the use of a 360-degree psychometric tool to identify aspirant leadership capabilities. Aspirants, equipped with data provided by the tool, work with a trained coach to form capability improvement goals. To achieve these goals, strategies developed within coaching sessions are enacted through the role of the aspirant before being evaluated and refined. Moreover, the program guides aspirants through a process to develop a
leadership vision statement. Amongst other outcomes, the vision development process challenges aspirants to identify their leadership values and clarify their attraction to principalship. Program activities also provoke aspirant reflection regarding principalship disincentives before exploring mitigation strategies. Finally, the program attempts to enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship by, amongst other measures, providing opportunities to build support networks. These networks comprise aspirant principals, program colleagues, coaches and CEOWA support staff with line management authority or knowledge pertinent to principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of the research was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four aspirant perceptions were explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. Data for the research were collected from the eight aspirants who commenced the program in January 2011 and graduated in December 2012.

1.3 Researcher Motives

I am employed by the CEOWA as a Learning and Development Consultant. In this role, I work with other consultants to design and deliver nine leadership programs that cater for the needs of CEOWA and school-based leaders at every level of the system. One of these programs is the Aspiring Principals Program. I was motivated by the prospect of using research findings and conclusions to refine the program’s structure, content and activities, thereby enhancing its quality as a medium for the preparation of Western Australian Catholic school principals. By making improvements, I hoped to improve the capacity of the system to meet the demand for well-formed, resilient aspirants triggered by the anticipated en masse retirement of existing principals by 2020. Additionally, I hoped that research findings and conclusions would assist local, national and international designers of
principal preparation programs considering modification of existing or design of new programs.

1.4 Specific Research Questions

Four specific research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

2. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

4. What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

1.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The research was qualitative in nature and used interpretivism, specifically symbolic interactionism, as its theoretical perspective. Collective case study was chosen as the research methodology. Qualitative interviews were the primary tools used to collect data for the research. Specifically, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the eight aspirants from the 2011 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program. The first interview was conducted prior to the start of the program (January 2011). The second interview was conducted at the end of the program’s first year (December 2011). The third interview was conducted at the conclusion of the program (December 2012). Four additional materials, listed in Table 1.1, were collected from aspirants and used to triangulate interview data during the data analysis process.
The data analysis process used for the research was the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis. Specifically, when analysing collected data, three interactive stages were used: data reduction; data display; and drawing and verifying conclusions. The data display stage involved the creation of tables reflecting the draft themes emerging from the initial analysis of data and eight ‘thickly described’ (Geertz, 2000; Lincoln, 1995) case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Case study narratives, presented in Chapter Five: Research Results, are largely comprised of the ‘natural language’ (Saldaña, 2013) of aspirants in the form of quotations extracted from interview transcripts. Each case study narrative is organised using sub-headings representing the four specific research questions used to guide the study. Data tables and aspirant case study narratives were then subjected to cross-case analysis (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), the results of which are examined in Chapter Six: Discussion. The cross-case analysis process used a number of ‘tactics’ recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) including comparison and contrast of identified themes with the established body of knowledge provided in Chapter Three: Literature Review. A description of the study’s theoretical framework, including data collection and analysis methods, is detailed in Chapter Four: Research Plan.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triangulation materials</th>
<th>Collection point</th>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher field notes generated during aspirant interviews</td>
<td>• Interview one: Pre-program (January 2011)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interview two: Mid-program (December 2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview three: End-of-program (December 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirant journals</td>
<td>• Journal one: Mid-program (December 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Journal two: End-of-program (December 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirant leadership vision statements</td>
<td>• Collected at the end of the program (December 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspirant cover letters and application forms for principalship vacancies</td>
<td>• Collected as aspirants applied for principalship vacancies during the latter half of the program’s second year</td>
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</table>
1.6 Significance of the Research

The research is significant for three reasons. Firstly, from the perspective of the CEOWA Executive, the research is important for enhancing system succession planning capability and therefore deserves study “in its own right” (Punch, 2014, p. 122). Specifically, the findings and conclusions of the research have the potential to refine the program, thereby enhancing the capacity of the system to prepare a pool of role-ready, resilient aspirants to replace existing principals as they transition, en masse, to retirement by 2020. Secondly, research findings and conclusions may assist local, national and international designers of principal preparation programs considering modification of existing or design of new programs. Thirdly, the results and conclusions of the research have the potential to contribute to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.

1.7 Limitations of the Research

The study has two limitations. Both limitations are the result of the researcher being a CEOWA employee responsible for the design and delivery of the Aspiring Principals Program. Firstly, there existed potential for development of a ‘power differential’ (Grbich, 2012; Stangor, 2011) or a relationship of unequal power between the researcher and the eight aspirants involved in the study. Specifically, because principals are appointed by the CEOWA, the researcher was concerned that his system-level role may generate perceptions amongst aspirants that he may enhance or adversely affect their promotional prospects as a result of comments tendered during the data collection phases of the research. Secondly, because of the dual program designer-convenor and researcher roles, there existed potential for readers of this thesis to perceive researcher bias.

Consequently, four measures were adopted to mitigate power differential and researcher bias. Firstly, the researcher strictly adhered to the ethical requirements of both The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee. Secondly, a neutral and experienced qualitative researcher was contracted by the CEOWA Executive to conduct interviews, transcribe audio recordings and ‘member check’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) transcripts with aspirants prior to forwarding them to the researcher for analysis. Thirdly, the researcher participated in a rigorous
CEOWA peer-review process with senior members of the organisation over the course of the study. The peer-review process was designed to ensure the quality and integrity of the research, especially the data collection and data analysis processes. Fourthly, aspirant case study narratives, one of the forms of data display (Miles & Huberman, 1994) used during the data analysis phase of the research, were subjected to a member checking process to ensure that aspirant perceptions were accurately represented. A complete description of the measures adopted to mitigate both research limitations is provided in Chapter Four: Research Plan.

1.8 Thesis Outline and Chapter Summaries

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters, an overview of which is provided in Table 1.2.

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<td>Chapter Seven:</td>
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This is Chapter One: Research Defined. This chapter detailed the purpose of the research, reasons for undertaking the study, the four specific research questions used to guide the project and an overview of the methods used to collect and analyse data to respond to these questions. The significance of the research, research limitations and the measures applied to mitigate limitations were also introduced. Finally, an outline of thesis chapters was presented.

The upcoming chapter, Chapter Two: Context of the Research, is comprised of three dimensions, designed to familiarise the reader with the setting in which the study was conducted. The first dimension focuses on the geographical and structural
overview of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The second
dimension discusses the purpose and structure of Western Australian Catholic
education leadership programs and locates the Aspiring Principals Program within
this structure. The third dimension traces the development of the Aspiring Principals
Program from its inception in 1999 through to its current version. Additionally, this
dimension provides an overview of the current version of the program including its
theoretical underpinnings, selection process, structure and components.

Chapter Three: Literature Review is comprised of four sections. Each section
presents literature relevant to one set of aspirant perceptions explored by the
research. The four sections are: Catholic principalship role components and the
capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in
principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to
commence principalship. The literature presented in this chapter culminates in the
formulation of the four specific research questions that, collectively, were used to
guide the study.

Chapter Four: Research Plan explains the methodological components that
informed and directed the conduct of the study. Specifically, this chapter presents the
theoretical framework for the research including its epistemology, theoretical
perspective, methodology and methods. Additionally, the research participants,
measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and data analysis
processes are described. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the ethical
considerations associated with the research and a design summary.

Chapter Five: Research Results is comprised of eight, thickly described case
study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Aspirant narratives
reflect the draft themes identified through the data analysis process described in
Chapter Four. Case study narratives are largely comprised of the natural language of
aspirants in the form of quotations extracted from interview transcripts and are
organised using sub-headings representing the four specific research questions used
to guide the study.

Chapter Six: Discussion offers an examination of the themes emerging from
the cross-case analysis of aspirant case study narratives and data tables generated
through the data analysis process. Specifically, each of the four sections of this
Chapter discusses the themes associated with one set of aspirant perceptions explored by one specific research question. The discussion uses a number of ‘tactics’ recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) including comparison and contrast of themes with the established body of knowledge provided in Chapter Three: Literature Review.

Chapter Seven: Review and Conclusions provides a response for each of the four specific research questions used to guide the study. Research conclusions, based on these responses, are then presented along with a proposed integrated model of principal preparation for the consideration of local, national and internal program designers. The model has the potential to be generalised to other contexts with the caveat that it be subjected to research to determine its efficacy. Finally, six recommendations, three suggestions for further research and six potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation are made.

1.9 Chapter Conclusion

The CEOWA Executive anticipates that by 2020, 43% of existing principals will reach or exceed retirement age. This situation tasks the system to ensure that aspirants, the next generation of principals, have the knowledge, skills and networks required to cope with the challenging and multi-faceted nature of the role that is often enacted in time and resource poor environments. One measure implemented by the CEOWA, to achieve this aim is the Aspiring Principals Program. Despite the existence of the program since 2000, research is yet to be undertaken to determine its efficacy as a medium for the preparation of principal aspirants. It is hoped that exploration of aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship as they experience the phenomenon of the program will provide findings and conclusions necessary to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the program. Additionally, these findings, conclusions and subsequent recommendations may contribute to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation and assist program designers in other systems and sectors as they seek to design new or modify existing programs.
Chapter Two: Context of the Research

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research, stated in Chapter One, was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four aspirant perceptions were explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. This chapter presents three dimensions of context associated with the research. Context refers to a description of the setting in which the research was conducted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Flick, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Punch, 2014). An overview of this chapter is provided in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1
Overview of Chapter Two: Context of the Research

2.2 Context Dimension One: The Western Australian Catholic Education System

2.3 Context Dimension Two: Western Australian Catholic Education Leadership Programs

2.4 Context Dimension Three: The Aspiring Principals Program

2.4.1 History.
2.4.2 Structure and components.
2.4.3 Theoretical underpinnings.
2.4.4 Selection process.
2.4.5 Year one.
2.4.6 Year two.

2.5 Chapter Conclusion

The first dimension of context focuses on the geographical and structural overview of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The second dimension discusses the purpose and structure of Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs and locates the Aspiring Principals Program within
this structure. The third dimension traces the development of the Aspiring Principals Program from its inception in 1999 through to its current version and describes the program’s theoretical underpinnings, selection process, structure and components.

A chapter dedicated solely to the context of the research was drafted for two reasons. Firstly, because collective case study was chosen as the research methodology, it was considered important that the boundaries of the case be established for prospective readers (Punch, 2014; Stake, 1995). Secondly, and related to the first reason, it was determined a well-defined context would enable other researchers to make informed decisions regarding the generalisability or transferability potential of study findings and conclusions (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

2.2 Context Dimension One: The Western Australian Catholic Education System

Perth is the capital city of Western Australia, the largest state in Australia. The state, illustrated in Figure 2.1, covers an area of more than 2,500,000 square kilometres, has 12,500 kilometres of coastline, stretches 2,400 kilometres from north to south and occupies a third of the continent (Playford, Cockbain, & Low, 1976, p. 12).

*Figure 2.1*: The state of Western Australia (Playford et al., 1976, p. 26)
The Western Australian Catholic education system is comprised of 161 Catholic schools (112 primary schools, 28 secondary schools and 21 composite schools) spread across four dioceses (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a). The four dioceses and respective school numbers are depicted in Figure 2.2.

*Figure 2.2: Western Australian Catholic dioceses and schools (The National Council of Priests in Australia)*

The system educates 73,000 students and is staffed by 5,500 teachers and 3,500 non-teaching staff (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a, p. 4). The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Western Australia (the Bishops’ Conference) leads the system. The Bishops’ Conference is comprised of the Archbishop and Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Perth and the Bishops of the Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome dioceses. The Bishops’ Conference is responsible for formulation of system vision, the provision of quality Catholic education to achieve this vision and system governance (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a). The governance structure of the system is illustrated in Figure 2.3.
The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Western Australia (The Bishops’ Conference)

The Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015
Details the vision of the Bishops for the Western Australian Catholic education system

The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (The CECWA)

The CECWA standing committees
Generates policy statements and procedures governing Catholic school operations

- The Catholic Education Aboriginal Committee
- The Finance Committee
- The Parent Advisory Committee
- The Religious Education & Curriculum Committee
- The School Personnel Committee
- The School Resources Committee

The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA)
Leederville head office, Diocese of Bunbury, Geraldton and Broome regional offices
Oversees implementation of CECWA policy statements and procedures in all Catholic schools and provides policy-related advice and support to principals

161 Catholic schools

Figure 2.3: The governance structure of the Western Australian Catholic education system (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009)
The Bishops’ Conference articulates its vision for the system through the document: The Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015. This vision focuses on the holistic development of students and, in doing so, provision of support for the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). Holistic development refers to the formation of students as ‘whole persons’ through the nurturing of the intellectual, spiritual, social, physical and emotional dimensions (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Educating students in this way involves the principal and staff modelling the Gospel values of Jesus Christ in word and action, direct instruction through the Religious Education curriculum and the integration of Gospel values, where possible, through other curricula (Convey, 2012). The aim of such modelling and instruction is the development of student values systems based on that of Jesus Christ and the ability to think and act counter-culturally when faced with situations that oppose these ideals (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009).

The Bishops’ Conference delegates its authority to the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (the CECWA). The CECWA is the ‘board of management’ for the system and is comprised of 17 people including one Bishop and the Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia. The CECWA is responsible for the legislative compliance of the system and achieves this through the generation, review and amendment of 38 policy statements and procedures governing school operations. The CECWA generates policy statements and procedures through six standing committees. Standing committee members are selected by the CECWA for their expertise in specific fields and to ensure that the diverse nature of the Western Australian Catholic education community is represented (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a).

The CECWA uses its Executive arm, the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA), to implement policy statements and procedures generated by the CECWA standing committees (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a). The CEOWA employs 245 staff distributed between its head office in Perth and three regional diocesan offices in the cities of Broome, Bunbury and Geraldton (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a, p. 27). The CEOWA also performs a compliance function by reporting as required to local,
state and federal government authorities on behalf of Western Australian Catholic school principals. The CEOWA, in addition to monitoring compliance, provides policy-related advice and support to Catholic school principals (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014a).

2.3 Context Dimension Two: Western Australian Catholic Education Leadership Programs

Leadership programs are responsible to and funded by the CECWA School Personnel Committee. To facilitate achievement of the vision articulated by the Bishops’ Conference, leadership programs aim to develop the leadership capacity of Catholic school and CEOWA personnel at all levels of the system (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014d). Within the suite of leadership programs offered by the CEOWA, illustrated in Figure 2.4, the Aspiring Principals Program is the sixth of nine programs.

![Figure 2.4: Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014d)](image-url)
The structure, content and activities of leadership programs are based on two key documents: the Leadership Framework for Catholic Schools in Western Australia (the Leadership Framework) and the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014d). The Leadership Framework was developed by the CEOWA throughout 2007 and launched in January 2008. The Leadership Framework, illustrated in Figure 2.5, describes Western Australian Catholic school principalship through four, interrelated domains: Catholic identity; education; stewardship; and community. When leading and managing through each domain, principals are required to model the example of Jesus Christ in word and action and consider the future impact of their decisions. The Leadership Framework also articulates four leadership capabilities required of principals when enacting their roles through each domain: personal; professional; relational; and organisational capabilities (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b).

*Figure 2.5: The Leadership Framework for Catholic schools in Western Australia (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b)*
Catholic principals use the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool to review and improve all aspects of school operations. The Framework and tool were developed by the CEOWA throughout 2009 and 2010 and mandated by the CECWA for use in all 161 Western Australian Catholic schools commencing January 2011. The QCS Framework and tool consists of 24 components, listed in Table 2.2, grouped according to the domains of the Leadership Framework. Principals are required to oversee the review of four components per year and complete a full cyclic review every six years (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009).

Table 2.2
Leadership Framework Domains and the 24 Components of the QCS Framework and School Improvement Tool (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catholic identity</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision and mission</td>
<td>Student Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelisation</td>
<td>Vision for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic life and culture</td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice and action</td>
<td>Learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation and planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewardship</td>
<td>Student achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and compliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School improvement process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with families</td>
<td>Student Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with parish and church</td>
<td>Students with special learning needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider partnerships</td>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student wellbeing and pastoral care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each component contains descriptions for low, moderate and high performance. For each component review process, principals are expected to form and, where practicable, lead a review team. The composition of the team depends upon the component being reviewed and may include teachers, support staff, students, their parents and carers or members from the broader school community.
(Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). The purpose of the review team is to determine the performance of the school against the component descriptors, source evidence to confirm its rating and, if necessary, formulate and implement a component improvement plan. Moreover, the principal is expected to integrate the component improvement plan with the school strategic plan. In the context of the research, it is important to note that the CECWA School Personnel Committee determined that the Aspiring Principals Program would be used as a medium through which to train future principals in the use of the QCS Framework and school improvement tool (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009).

Since January 2012, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Standards for Teachers and Principals have also been used to inform the structure, content and activities of Catholic education leadership programs (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014d). AITSL is a public company, founded in 2010 and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL provides national leadership for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. The AITSL Standards explicitly state what teachers and principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. The AITSL Standards were endorsed by all Australian State and Territory Ministers for Education in July 2011 and, commencing January 2012, applied to all Australian teachers and principals (Education Services Australia, 2014).

2.4 Context Dimension Three: The Aspiring Principals Program

The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program is a two year principal preparation offered by the CEOWA to selected primary school assistant principals and secondary school deputy principals aspiring to principalship. The following section traces the development of the program from its inception in 1999 through to its current version and describes the program’s theoretical underpinnings, selection process, structure and components. A comprehensive description of the current version of the program is provided in Appendix A.
2.4.1 History.

In 1999, the CEOWA Executive noted a decline in the volume and quality of applications for Western Australian country and remote school principalship vacancies. After considering the situation, the CECWA School Personnel Committee requested the design and implementation of a principal preparation program to attract and form aspirants with interest in country and remote school principalship (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia School Personnel Committee, 1999). This program, the Aspiring Principals Program, was designed in the latter half of 1999 and launched in January 2000 with the caveat that graduating aspirants apply for country or remote school principalship vacancies. The program’s original version involved five aspirants completing a theoretical program comprised of 10, day-long, face-to-face classes over a two-week period. Program content and activities were based on the four areas of Catholic school leadership that existed at the time: theological; educational; pastoral; and administrative leadership. After completing the theoretical program, aspirants participated in a five-day internship where they ‘shadowed’ the principal of a country or remote school. To conclude the program, aspirants summarised their learning in a presentation to the program convenor and their peers (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2000).

The program continued in this form until December 2009. Throughout 2009, the program was redesigned before being launched in its current, two-year format in January 2010 without compulsion to apply for country or remote school principalship vacancies. Five factors triggered the redesign. Firstly, aspirant feedback revealed the poor facilitation skills of program personnel and lack of program rigour, especially with regard to the use of contemporary leadership theory. Secondly, feedback suggested that the caveat of compulsory country or remote school principalship discouraged application from high-calibre aspirants seeking leadership development but, for a variety of reasons including family commitments, were unable to commit to this condition. Thirdly, research involving first-time Western Australian Catholic school principals conducted in 2008 concluded that the program inadequately prepared aspirants for the management of school finances, human resources and systemic accountability requirements (Sayce & Lavery, 2010). Fourthly, the program lacked alignment with the newly launched Leadership Framework. Finally, the development of the QCS Framework and school
improvement tool and the decision by the CECWA School Personnel Committee to use the program as a QCS training opportunity for future principals justified the redesign (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia School Personnel Committee, 1999).

2.4.2 Structure and components.

The CECWA School Personnel Committee funds aspirant participation in the Aspiring Principals Program. Program commitment involves 23 days of face-to-face professional learning: 14 days in year one and nine days in year two, complemented by workplace and at-home activities (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). The following section provides an abridged version of the program’s theoretical underpinnings, selection process, structure and components.

2.4.3 Theoretical underpinnings.

The first year of the Aspiring Principals Program is predominantly based on a constructive transactional model of leadership as it applies to Western Australian Catholic principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). This form of leadership focuses on the management of an organisation’s systems and staff to achieve clearly defined goals (Avolio, 2010; Lowe, Avolio, & Dum dum, 2013; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Specifically, aspirants are encouraged to apply constructive transactional capabilities when managing staff by setting goals, clarifying desired outcomes, consulting with staff as they execute their roles and suggesting improvement strategies. Aspirants are also encouraged to provide feedback, praise and recognition when warranted and exchange rewards for accomplishments (Avolio, 2010; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005).

Constructive transactional leadership is also used to frame an in-depth study of the managerial aspects of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance as expressed through the four domains of the Leadership Framework (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). Aspects of transformational leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013) are also introduced in the latter part of the program’s first year.
The program’s second year aims to enhance aspirant understanding of their leadership style, behaviours and capacity to lead others using two theoretical models: transformational and transcendental leadership. As the term suggests, transformational leaders strive to transform or inspire staff to move from a mindset of egocentricity to one that considers the needs of colleagues and achievement of shared organisation vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Although all transformational leaders are different, they generally achieve this shift using a combination of four strategies: individual consideration; intellectual stimulation; inspirational motivation; and idealised influence (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). Transcendental leadership is a relationship-focused model that seeks to nurture contribution-based exchanges between leaders and staff (Beckwith, 2011; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012). In the context of these exchanges, transcendental leaders not only use their relational capabilities to connect with people, they attempt to develop non-hierarchical unity and a reflective, values-centred culture through the use of genuine, collaborative dialogue (Beckwith, 2011; Cardona, 2000; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). These capabilities are not only appropriate for leading school improvement through the domains of the Leadership Framework, they reflect the actions of Jesus, the role model of the Catholic principal (Lavery, 2011).

2.4.4 Selection process.

In any given year, approximately 10 aspirants, eight assistant principals and two deputy principals, are selected by the CEOWA Executive to participate in the program. Cohort size and composition, however, is ultimately determined by the anticipated number of beginning principals required to replace those due to leave the system through retirement or attrition. Program completion does not guarantee aspirants appointment as principals nor is it a prerequisite for the role (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Program entry is comprised of a three-stage process. The first stage involves submission of a written application. The application requires candidates to provide demographic data and respond to a series of questions. Specifically, candidates are asked to reflect upon and describe their reasons for seeking principalship, their
leadership style and leadership experiences with regard to the four domains of the Leadership Framework (Catholic identity, stewardship, education and community). When addressing this part of the application, candidates are required to state their understanding of each domain, provide examples of initiatives led and subsequent outcomes. The second stage is a written endorsement of responses by candidate principals. The third stage involves a selection panel, comprised of a CEOWA representative, a primary school principal, a secondary school principal and a parish priest, reviewing all applications and shortlisting candidates for an hour-long interview. When preparing for interviews, panellists conduct thorough checks of both listed and non-listed referees including candidate parish priests and current and former principals (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

2.4.5 Year one.

The program’s first year is comprised of six components delivered through 14 days of face-to-face professional learning. Aspirants are also required to participate in workplace-based activities and complete tasks at home (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). An overview of the program’s first year is provided in Figure 2.6.

The first component involves aspirants undertaking a 360-degree review of their leadership capabilities using the Human Synergistics, Life Styles Inventory (LSI) psychometric tool (Human Synergistics, 2014). In addition to responding to 240 online, multiple-choice questions regarding their leadership style and behaviours, aspirants are required to select and invite eight data sources from their schools to complete the same questions. Data sources comprise aspirant principals, three assistant or deputy principal colleagues and four subordinates such as teachers or support staff (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). After debriefing resultant LSI, 360-degree data with a consultant external to the CEOWA, aspirants participate in five, hour-long, confidential coaching sessions throughout the year with a trained and accredited coach. Coaches are practicing Catholic school principals. Aspirants and coaches use LSI data to develop capability improvement goals and strategies. Specifically, goals are designed to amplify aspirant leadership capability strengths and minimise weaknesses identified through the LSI. Aspirants implement, evaluate and refine strategies to achieve stated goals as they enact their
leadership roles in the context of their respective workplaces (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Figure 2.6: The Aspiring Principals Program: Year one (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e, p. 7)

The second component is a 14-day, face-to-face theoretical program. The purpose of this program component is aspirant familiarisation with Catholic principalship role components, expressed through the four domains of the Leadership Framework, and constructive transactional capabilities required for effective performance. Conflict resolution theory and tools also form part of the theoretical program. Facilitators of the theoretical program are trained in the use of adult learning principles and include CEOWA support staff with specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship. CEOWA support staff include finance, capital development, human resource, industrial relations and legal consultants. A practicing
principal is also invited to host an ‘Inside Leadership’ session at the conclusion of each day associated with the theoretical program. During ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions, principals interact with aspirants through a semi-structured question and answer session and share stories of leadership success, challenge and resultant learning (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The third component, development of a leadership vision statement, begins early in the program’s first year and continues until the end of the program. The vision statement development process has two broad aims. Firstly, the process is designed to assist aspirants to clarify their leadership values, important for the effective leadership of Catholic school communities. Secondly, the process enables aspirants to identify the attractive aspects of Catholic school principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The fourth component requires aspirants to participate as observers on their school boards for the duration of the program. Aspirants are also required to participate as members of their school board’s finance and capital development (building and facilities construction) sub-committees. These experiences are designed to expose aspirants to three managerial aspects of the role with the potential to cause consternation for beginning principals: school board leadership; school financial management; and overseeing the planning and construction of new or refurbishment of existing school facilities (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The fifth component, leader-to-leader interviewing, invites aspirants to reflect upon three aspects of Catholic principalship before engaging in professional conversations with their current and a guest principal and sharing learning online with program colleagues. The first activity examines aspirant understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. The second activity explores the factors enhancing aspirant interest in principalship. The third activity assesses the factors diminishing aspirant interest principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The final component requires aspirants to progressively construct and submit a 2,500-word journal. Journaling is designed to assist aspirants to reflect upon their experience of program modules, activities and perspectives regarding Catholic
principalship. Aspirants are encouraged by the program convenor to portray their perceptions using a combination of narrative text, images, photographs or other forms of expression (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

2.4.6 Year two.

The program’s second year is comprised of six, integrated components delivered through nine days of face-to-face professional learning. Aspirants are also required to participate in workplace-based activities and complete tasks at home (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). An overview of the program’s second year is provided in Figure 2.7.

*Figure 2.7: The Aspiring Principals Program: Year two (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e, p. 13)*

The first component involves continuation of the coach-aspirant relationship established during the program’s first year for an additional six, hour-long sessions.
As occurred throughout the program’s first year, the coaching relationship involves generation of capability improvement goals based on aspirant LSI data and achievement strategies. During this year, coaches also assume the role of ‘critical friend’ to aspirants as they complete the second component, a year-long school improvement project. Aspirants are encouraged by their coaches to implement, evaluate and refine strategies apposite for goal achievement in two ways: through their leadership of the project and the day-to-day execution of their respective leadership roles (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The school improvement project requires aspirants to lead the review of one QCS component at their schools. The project begins with aspirants, their coaches and principals collaborating to identify a QCS component for review. Aspirants then form a component review team and work with team members to rate school effectiveness against QCS component descriptors before sourcing evidence to confirm team conclusions. Aspirants then lead the formulation, implementation, evaluation and refinement of a component improvement plan. As the improvement process is enacted, aspirants are expected to work with their principals and school board members to integrate the goals, actions and success measures from the component-improvement plan with the school strategic plan. Mid-way through the program’s second year, aspirants work with the program convenor and their coaches for a full day to collectively review project successes and challenges and recalibrate as required (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The third component is a seven-day, face-to-face theoretical program. Four days associated with this program, entitled ‘Transforming leadership’, involve aspirant exploration of transformational and transcendental leadership theory and tools. Aspirants are expected to use theory and tools presented during these days when working with their coaches to develop, implement, evaluate and refine strategies to achieve capability improvement goals. As occurred during the program’s first year, aspirants interact with practicing Catholic principals through ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions convened at the conclusion of each day associated with the theoretical program (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

As most aspirants consider applying for principalship at this point in the program, they also participate in a full-day theoretical module entitled ‘Applying for
principalship.' This module is dedicated to the exploration of the Western Australian Catholic education principal appointment process. On this day, aspirants receive guidance with regard to the use of transformational and transcendental leadership language within both the application and interview processes (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The final component of the theoretical program is a two-day, overnight, reflective practice retreat. During the retreat, aspirants explore their inner and outer leadership journeys. As part of the exploration process, reference is made to constructive transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership capabilities and experiences (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

To continue development of constructive transactional leadership capability, component four requires aspirants to continue serving as school board observers and participants on their board’s finance and capital development sub-committees (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). Prior to the conclusion of the program’s second year (November), aspirants participate in component five, a second 360-degree review of their leadership known as an LSI retest. Where possible, aspirants invite the data sources that contributed to the formulation of their original profiles to participate in the retest. Once data is processed, aspirants meet with a consultant, external to the CEOWA, to debrief results. During the debrief, the consultant compares and contrasts the final LSI with that completed prior to program commencement, the purpose of which is assessment of the leadership capability change process (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The final program component is aspirant submission of a 2,500-word journal. As was the case with the program’s first year, journals are designed to encourage aspirant reflection with regard to their experience of program modules, activities and perspectives regarding Catholic principalship. Aspirants are encouraged by the program convenor to portray their perceptions using a combination of narrative text, images, photographs or other forms of expression (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).
2.5 Chapter Conclusion

To familiarise the reader with the setting in which the research was conducted, this chapter presented three dimensions of context. The first contextual dimension focused on the geographical and structural overview of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The second dimension discussed the purpose and structure of Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs and located the Aspiring Principals Program within this structure. The third dimension traced the development of the Aspiring Principals Program from its inception in 1999 through to its current version and described the program’s theoretical underpinnings, selection process, structure and components. The upcoming chapter, Literature Review, is comprised of four sections. Each section presents literature relevant to one set of aspirant perceptions explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. The literature presented in this chapter culminates in the formulation of the four specific research questions that, collectively, were used to guide the study.
Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four aspirant perceptions were explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. Considering this purpose, literature relevant to these four perceptions was examined using the conceptual framework provided in Figure 3.1.

As detailed in Chapter One, the four sections of the literature review were considered important because each influenced the formulation of one specific research question.
that, combined, were used to guide the study. The structure of the literature review, based on the conceptual framework, is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Overview of Chapter Three: Literature Review

| 3.2 Section One: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance |
| 3.2.1 The unique identity of the Catholic school. |
| 3.2.2 Role component one: Catholic identity. |
| 3.2.3 Role component two: Teaching and learning. |
| 3.2.4 Role component three: Stewardship of resources. |
| 3.2.5 Role component four: Community engagement and development. |
| 3.2.6 Role component five: School improvement. |
| 3.2.7 The capabilities required for effective performance. |
| 3.2.8 Section one summary. |

| 3.3 Section Two: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship |
| 3.3.1 Internal rewards. |
| 3.3.2 External rewards. |
| 3.3.3 High self-efficacy. |
| 3.3.4 Exposure to positive role models. |
| 3.3.5 Personal qualities and professional competencies. |
| 3.3.6 Engagement with professional learning. |
| 3.3.7 Age. |
| 3.3.8 Section two summary. |

| 3.4 Section Three: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship |
| 3.4.1 Personal disincentives. |
| 3.4.2 School and system disincentives. |
| 3.4.3 Community and society disincentives. |
| 3.4.4 Section three summary. |

| 3.5 Section Four: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship |
| 3.5.1 Principal self-efficacy and role effectiveness. |
| 3.5.2 Sources of self-efficacy. |
| 3.5.3 Principal preparation programs and aspirant self-efficacy. |
| 3.5.4 Section four summary. |

| 3.6 Chapter Conclusion |
3.2 Section One: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance

The first section of the literature review describes the role components of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance. Specifically, this section examines five possible, interrelated role components through which the Catholic principal leads and manages and three suggested capabilities that could be applied when doing so. The role components are Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. The capabilities are vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence.

Some of the detail provided in this section of the literature review was drawn from one local, eight national and eight international Catholic and secular leadership and capability frameworks. The frameworks examined are provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Literature Review Section One: Leadership and Capability Frameworks Reviewed


A significant framework examined was the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standard for Principals (the AITSL Standard). AITSL is a public company, founded in 2010 and funded by the Australian Government. AITSL provides national leadership for the Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. The AITSL Standard is noteworthy because it was endorsed by all Australian State and Territory Ministers for Education for use in Australian government, Catholic and independent systems, sectors and schools from January 2012. The AITSL Standard explicitly states what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).
3.2.1 The unique identity of the Catholic school.

The Catholic school has a unique identity (Convey, 2012). This identity is characterised by a religious dimension, based on the life and example of Jesus Christ, that permeates all aspects of school life (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). This religious dimension is formed, in part, by the role of the Catholic school in supporting the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). This evangelising mission involves the principal, teachers and support staff meeting the spiritual needs of practicing Catholics from their school communities and encouraging baptised, but unchurched or non-practicing members to experience the teachings, rituals and celebrations of the Church. An equally important aspect of the evangelising mission is encouragement of non-Catholics to experience the ‘good news’ known in Jesus Christ and join the Church through the sacrament of Baptism (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, 2014).

One way that the Catholic school supports the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church is by basing school vision on the development of students as ‘whole persons.’ Formation of the whole person involves “preparation for professional life, formation of ethical and social awareness, and developing awareness of the transcendental and religious education” (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, p. 31). This type of formation, also termed ‘holistic development’, is achieved when teachers nurture the intellectual, spiritual, social, physical and emotional dimensions of their students (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). Catholic students developed in this way have a system of values based on the life, work and teachings of Jesus Christ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000) and are capable of thinking and acting counter-culturally when confronted with situations that oppose these ideals (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Grace, 2002; Groome, 2002). To achieve school vision based on the holistic development of students, the principal must ensure that all activity that occurs within the Catholic school ultimately contributes to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values. (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The following role components and
capabilities, effectively led and managed by the principal, ensure achievement of this vision and enable the school to support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church.

### 3.2.2 Role component one: Catholic identity.

The first role component of Catholic principalship is Catholic identity. Catholic identity refers a school’s “ethos, its faith community, which is manifested in what is taught and how, how people relate to one another, what the environment looks like, what celebrations occur and, finally, by its name” (Convey, 2012, p. 211). Catholic identity infuses all aspects of Catholic principalship and is therefore considered an overarching role component (McNamara, 2002).

Four equally important expectations are placed upon the principal when leading and managing through this role component. Firstly, the principal is expected to enhance and promote school Catholic identity. Secondly, and connected with the role component of teaching and learning, the principal is required to oversee the provision of Gospel-based curricula. Thirdly, and connected with the role component of community engagement and development, the principal is obliged to develop the school as a faith community by providing opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental and liturgical celebration. Finally, the principal is expected to sustain a commitment to social justice and action (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Convey, 2012).

With regard to the first responsibility, enhancing and promoting school Catholic identity, the principal is required to understand, embrace and clearly articulate a Catholic perspective when leading and managing (Sergiovanni, 2004). Specifically, the principal is expected to voice the teachings of the Catholic Church with courage, conviction, hope and deep compassion when interacting with staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community (Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 2009; Australian Catholic University, 2004; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005). The principal is also expected to align words with actions (Buchanan, 2013a), in part, by ensuring that policy statements and procedures governing school operations reflect the principles of Catholic social
thought and are applied accordingly (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). These principles include the dignity of the human person, respect for human life, protection of the poor and vulnerable, subsidiarity and the common good (Byron, 1999). Finally, the principal is obliged to develop and implement strategies to promote school Catholic identity (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). One strategy cited in the literature are Christian service learning programs that provide students with opportunities to apply Gospel-based learning in practical ways within and beyond their immediate school communities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Dobzanski, 2001; Krebbs, 2000; Torres-Harding & Meyers, 2013).

The second responsibility associated with the role component, Catholic identity is the provision of Gospel-based curricula that attend to “the immediate needs of youngsters’ moral guidance by preparing them to survive in an amoral youth culture” (Krebbs, 2000, p. 307). Education in this form is primarily delivered through the school Religious Education program, the content of which must “be presented with the same rigor and academic expectations accorded to other subjects in the curriculum” (Convey, 2012, p. 191). This program should be imbued with Catholic Church teachings and traditions and assist students to form a set of values based on the life, work and teachings of Jesus Christ (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). As explained previously, students equipped with these values are capable of thinking and acting counter-culturally when confronted with situations that oppose these ideals (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Grace, 2002; Groome, 2002). Buchanan (2013a) described the disposition required of principals when leading this aspect of the role:

Effective leadership in religious schools requires those exercising leadership to constantly be open to exploring issues and challenges in contemporary society. Leaders need the skills and vision to critique and examine such issues within the context of the religious tradition to which the schools belong and to equip students with values and principles that form them for useful service. (p. 2)
Convey (2012) asserted: “While the religion course must be the central component of the curriculum of a Catholic school, equally important is the integration of Catholic teachings in all aspects of the curriculum” (p. 192). Therefore, the formation of student Gospel values is not only achieved through the formal Religious Education program, but, where possible, through all education programs provided by the school (Convey, 2012; Hunt, Oldenski, & Wallace, 2000; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Ultimately, Gospel-based teaching and learning is imperative for the achievement of school vision based on the holistic development of students.

To achieve holistic student development, the principal must also strive to recruit and develop the best possible teachers (Convey, 2012). With regard to staff development, the principal must ensure that teachers are appropriately resourced and “carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world” (The Sacred Ecumenical Council, 1965, p. 8). Such preparation involves the provision of professional learning that augments teacher faith formation, religious knowledge and practice (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Earl, 2005; Shimabukuro & Fox, 2010). One important form of professional learning are programs that enrich teacher understanding of the interplay between faith, life and culture and the influence of resultant tensions on students (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Nuzzi, 2002; Shimabukuro & Fox, 2010). The development of teachers in this way highlights a connection between the principalship role components of Catholic identity and stewardship of resources.

In addition to religious content, it is essential that the principal oversee educative processes within teaching and learning programs such as assessment and reporting (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). Likewise, the principal has an overarching responsibility to ensure the regular review of the curriculum delivered through all learning areas to confirm that programs, where possible, reflect Gospel values (Australian Catholic University, 2004; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Finally, the principal is expected to develop and nurture rich school-home-parish
partnerships and support diocesan catechesis programs (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009).

The third responsibility associated with the role component, Catholic identity is the development of the school as a faith community (Convey, 2012; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The principal nurtures the faith dimension of a school community through the provision of opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental and liturgical celebration (Convey, 2012; DeFiore, Convey, & Schutloffel, 2009; Klenke, 2007). Specifically, the principal is required to implement diocesan catechesis policy statements, procedures and programs to ensure that celebrations of life and faith are established as regular components of school life (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). These celebrations are vital because they engender amongst school community members a shared understanding of Gospel values and Catholic traditions (Klenke, 2007). These opportunities also nurture the development of a personal relationship with God (Cook & Simonds, 2011; Hunt, Joseph, & Nuzzi, 2004; Nuzzi, 2002). The principal must also be open to personal growth, especially with regard to the spiritual dimension (Buchanan, 2013b) and overtly work to build capacity for prayer, reflection and spiritual development in all members of the school community (DeFiore et al., 2009; Howe, 1998; Hunt et al., 2004). Finally, the principal must ensure that the symbols of the Catholic Church and, where appropriate, those reflecting the charism of the school are visible and incorporated into daily practices including the delivery of curricula (Convey, 2012).

The fourth responsibility requires the principal to sustain a commitment to social justice and action. The Catholic Church, in accord with the life, work and teachings of Jesus Christ, expresses a strong concern for social justice and action and strives to protect the most vulnerable members of the community (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). The Church, by expressing concern for social justice and action, promotes the development of a compassionate and just society (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Grace, 2002; T. H. McLaughlin, 1996). The principal assists the Church to achieve this aim by working with and through school staff to build
awareness of social justice issues in the immediate and wider community before encouraging action.

When working to build student awareness of social justice and action, the principal is required to ensure the provision of theory through the formal and informal curricula (Starratt, 1996) and opportunities to apply learning through a range of activities such as Christian service learning (Dobzanski, 2001; Miller & Engel, 2011; Torres-Harding & Meyers, 2013). With regard to Christian service learning, the capacity of the principal to build a collaborative relationship between the school and parish is vital for the successful conversion of social justice intentions to action. Miller and Engel (2011) stated:

So, not only are churches appealing grounds for school engagement because many people belong to them, they are also appealing because the people who are there tend to have especially tight and influential bonds within these settings. Churches can be engaged, then, not as large, disjointed assortments of individuals, but as unified bands of socially-conscious actors who can be mobilized for action. (p. 32)

Such partnerships and activities have the potential to “foster the personal and spiritual development of students; engage students in responsible participation in the communal life, mission and work of their school community; and empower students to critically analyse and transform their culture and society” (Dobzanski, 2001, p. 323).

Three expectations are placed upon the principal with regard to engaging the school community in the Church’s call for social justice and action. Firstly, the principal is required to use media, such as the school website and newsletter, to communicate and promote a scriptural understanding of social justice and action. The principal, where relevant, should highlight issues of concern from the local, national and global communities as exemplars. Upon identification of issues, the principal is obliged to model appropriate action and encourage others to do the same (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Secondly, the principal is expected to work with the school community to establish a common understanding and appreciation of Australia’s multi-cultural identity, the process of Aboriginal reconciliation (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership,
2011) and the role of the Church in ecumenical activities (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). Part of this educative process sees the principal encouraging the community to acknowledge the plight of marginalised societal groups and work empathetically with them to meet their needs (Carrington, 1999; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Dyson, Howes, & Roberts, 2002). Thirdly, the principal is expected to oversee the regular review, evaluation and refinement of school policy statements and procedures, programs and structures to ensure that they consider and appropriately address the principles of social justice and action (Carrington, 1999; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Dyson et al., 2002).

3.2.3 Role component two: Teaching and learning.

The second role component of Catholic principalship is teaching and learning, also referred to as educational or instructional leadership (Dinham, Anderson, Caldwell, & Weldon, 2011; Dinham, Collarbone, Evans, & Mackay, 2013). Well led and managed by the principal, this role component produces three outcomes. Firstly, effective teaching and learning is placed at the centre of all school endeavours (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013; Elmore, 2000; The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). Secondly, teaching and learning is infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2000; Krebbs, 2000). Thirdly, all involved in the teaching and learning process: the principal, teachers, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community, are encouraged to become independent, enthusiastic and life-long learners (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; J. Harris, Spina, Ehrich, & Smeed, 2013).

To achieve these three outcomes, the principal must engage with the school community to form a collective vision for teaching and learning (J. Harris et al., 2013; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). This vision-creation process produces a set of clear, attainable goals that are subsequently articulated by the principal and supported by the community (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008; Robinson, 2011). When
articulating these goals, the principal is required to set high expectations for teachers and students including appropriate standards of behaviour, attendance, engagement and voice (Blase & Blase, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013; Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012; Victory, 2013). Imperative amongst these expectations is the development of positive teacher-student relationships based on mutual trust and safety (Robinson, 2011; Van Mael & Van Houtte, 2011). Robinson (2011) stated: “If students and staff do not feel physically and psychologically safe, if discipline codes are perceived as unfair and inconsistently enforced, then little progress is likely in the improvement of teaching and learning” (p. 125).

Equally important is the expectation that the principal work collegially with teachers to create an effective, whole-of-school professional learning culture (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; DuFour, 2002; Marzano et al., 2005; The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) focused on the holistic development of students (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). This culture is characterised by the careful and collaborative planning of a diverse and flexible curriculum that meets national (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson, 2011; Victory, 2013) and, where appropriate, Church requirements (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). Likewise, teachers observe one another and engage in collaborative feedback for the purpose of reviewing and improving the effectiveness of their teaching practices and classroom environments (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000; DuFour, 2002; Jenkins, 2009; Robinson, 2011).

The principal, when working to create this culture, must consult with teachers to ensure that they are appropriately resourced, encouraged and developed through internal and external professional learning (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Jenkins, 2009; Marzano et al., 2005; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). However, simply overseeing or coordinating professional learning is inadequate. Rather, Robinson (2011) recommended: “The most powerful way that school leaders can make a difference to
the learning of their students is by promoting and participating in the professional learning and development of their teachers” (p. 104).

As leader of teaching and learning, the principal is also expected to work with teachers to improve understanding and use of assessment frameworks, based on data, benchmarking and observation, to monitor student progress (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005; Lashway, 2002). Equally important is the modelling of praise by the principal when assisting teacher understanding of methods to celebrate and promote positive student achievement (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Marzano et al., 2005; The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). Finally, it is imperative that the principal assists teachers to identify and appropriately challenge student underperformance before applying effective intervention techniques (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

3.2.4 Role component three: Stewardship of resources.

The term ‘stewardship’ has a specific meaning for Catholic principals. The term has a long ecclesiastical history and refers to gratitude shown by people to God for gifts provided (Byron, 1998, 1999; Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Gottlieb, 2004; Smith, 2001). These gifts may be environmental resources, personal talents or those present amongst the members of a community (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b). An essential part of the gratitude process is preserving, nurturing and enhancing these gifts (Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Gottlieb, 2004; Smith, 2001).

The spiritual metaphor of stewardship appeared first in the Old Testament in the book of Leviticus followed by the New Testament (Wenham, 1979). The apostle Paul identified himself as a steward in Corinthians as did Peter. The ‘Parable of the Talents’ (Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27) is referred to as a lesson in stewardship where individuals were asked to nurture their God-given gifts (Gottlieb, 2004; Smith, 2001). In the parable, a master provided talents (gold coins) to three servants for safekeeping. The two servants who used their allocated talents to
procure more for their master were rewarded whilst the servant who hid his talent for fear of loss was punished (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Gottlieb, 2004; Smith, 2001).

With regard to stewardship of resources as a role component of Catholic principalship, Spry and Cunliffe (2008) stated:

The domain of stewardship recognises that policy and organisational structures serve individual and communal development as well as care for the Earth. Stewardship involves policy development, the efficient provision, use and maintenance of the human, environmental, financial and physical resources of the system and appropriate processes to monitor, review, report and provide accountability to Church and government authorities and the wider community. (p. 8)

Considering this definition, the role component of stewardship of resources is comprised of four dimensions: stewardship of human; environmental; financial; and capital resources (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). When leading and managing through these dimensions, the principal is required to consider and apply Gospel values (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Leading and managing resources in this way creates a culture of trust and enhances potential for achievement of school vision and provision of support for the Church’s evangelising mission (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b).

3.2.4.1 Stewardship of human resources.

The principal dedicated to the stewardship of human resources produces three outcomes. Firstly, the principal who cares for and nurtures staff is likely to engender a culture of trust and goodwill (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Within this culture, teachers are encouraged to form professional learning communities focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Australian Catholic University, 2004; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Secondly, the principal who regularly engages staff in informal and formal
performance management establishes high standards and develops leadership capacity (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005). Thirdly, the principal who participates in professional learning and caters for personal health and wellbeing in a sustained way, models appropriate behaviour to staff and enhances their capacity to cope with the role and its demands (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

To achieve these three outcomes, the principal is required to lead and manage the recruitment, induction, development and appraisal of staff (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The principal, when recruiting staff, must use procedurally fair and transparent procedures and provide candidates with accurate duty statements that clarify responsibilities and tasks (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). When inducting new staff, the principal should use both mentoring and coaching approaches to assist acclimatisation to school culture and practices (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; The Hay Group, 2014). Likewise, the principal should use coaching and mentoring approaches when developing staff through informal performance management (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; The Hay Group, 2014). Performance management, in this sense, involves the principal engaging with staff in collaborative, professional conversations. Blase and Blase (2000) stated: “Effective principals ‘hold up a mirror’, serve as ‘another set of eyes’, and are ‘critical friends’ who engage in thoughtful discourse with teachers” (p. 133). The principal can use ‘thoughtful discourse’ when affirming staff strengths, providing timely, accurate feedback regarding areas for practice improvement and recommending professional learning to address these needs (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; The Hay Group, 2014; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).
When formally appraising staff, the principal must ensure that processes for formative (staff development) and summative (termination) appraisal are equitable, transparent and satisfy legislative requirements (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Prior to initiating either form of appraisal, the principal is expected to clearly explain the reason for and purpose of the process to the staff member, make relevant policy statements and appraisal criteria available for perusal and be available to answer questions (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). When conducting the appraisal, the principal must communicate with the staff member and attempt to develop an appreciation of issues that may be adversely impacting performance. When making decisions regarding appraisal outcomes and actions, the principal is required to consider these issues in the light of Gospel values such as the dignity of the human person and social justice and action (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

A potential positive outcome of any appraisal process is the opportunity for the principal to recognise and celebrate staff achievements (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Childs-Bowen et al., 2000). Childs-Bowen, Moller and Scrivner (2000) suggested: “A simple, but powerful strategy is genuine praise, which is more important to most people than money” and “effective principals use rituals, ceremonies and stories to create this culture” (p. 33). Additionally, the appraisal process has the potential to yield for the principal an understanding of staff aspirations and talents. Equipped with such knowledge, the principal is able to distribute leadership for school-based initiatives, thereby providing staff with opportunities to develop their potential and showcase their talents (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; A. Harris, 2008; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). When the principal distributes leadership, he or she “acknowledges the work of all individuals who contribute to leadership practice whether or not they are formally designated or defined as leaders” (A. Harris, 2008, p. 13).

It is also essential that the principal use the outcomes of personal performance conversations and formative appraisal processes to develop and implement a professional learning plan (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern
Ireland, 2005). Such plans should include measures to address adverse health and wellbeing issues generated by the role (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; National College for School Leadership, 2005). The willingness of the principal to share the outcomes of personal performance conversations, appraisal processes and professional learning with staff is a powerful way to engender trust (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; National College for School Leadership, 2005). This strategy also has the potential to encourage staff engagement with professional learning for the purpose of performance improvement (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

### 3.2.4.2 Stewardship of environmental, financial and capital resources.

If a school is to achieve its vision and support the evangelising mission of the Church, it must concentrate all endeavours on the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2000; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). To achieve this aim, the principal must provide staff with the resources they need to teach effectively and a safe environment within which to practice their craft (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Robinson, 2011). With this premise in mind, the second dimension of stewardship emphasises the role of the principal as the leader and manager of school environmental (Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Spry & Cunliffe, 2008), financial and capital resources (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

As steward of environmental resources, the principal is expected to collaborate with staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community to participate in conservation and enhancement initiatives (Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Spry & Cunliffe, 2008). These initiatives may comprise local, national or international environmental priorities. Examples of initiatives include participation in local and national clean up days and implementing school-based electricity, water and soil conservation and recycling programs (Catholic Education Commission of
Western Australia, 2008b). The principal is also required to ensure that the school’s physical and human environments (e.g. grounds, buildings and equipment) are safe for staff, students and visitors. The principal, therefore, is expected to enact relevant policy statements and procedures pertaining to occupational health and safety to ensure that hazards are identified and subjected to appropriate rectification measures (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008a; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013).

As steward of financial resources, the principal is required to operate within the fiscal framework established by the employing authority and the school board (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). Specifically, the principal must ensure that the school’s annual budget is carefully and thoroughly designed, taking into account a number of factors. These factors include staff salaries and on-costs such as leave provisions and superannuation. Other factors include the fixed and variable costs associated with day-to-day school operation of the school, provision for the mid-term and long-term maintenance of school buildings and facilities and savings required to fund strategic planning priorities (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). Post-implementation of the school budget, the principal is expected to regularly monitor expenditure against projections and, when necessary, modify the budget to correct anomalies and restore balance. Equally important is the reporting of expenditure against budget projections by the principal to the school board, employing authority and government authorities as required (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

As steward of capital resources, the principal has three specific responsibilities. Firstly, the principal is responsible for planning and directing the construction of new school buildings and facilities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Secondly, the principal is expected to plan and manage the maintenance or refurbishment of existing amenities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic
Thirdly, the principal is required to lead and manage staff responsible for the procurement and servicing of capital items housed within new and existing school buildings and facilities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

To assist with the stewardship of capital resources, the principal is required to formulate and maintain a school capital master plan and a capital development plan (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The master plan illustrates the location and dimensions of existing school buildings, facilities and other infrastructure. A capital development plan is the result of new building and refurbishment priorities identified in the school strategic plan and is comprised of architectural drawings, cost projections and a savings plan linked to the school budget (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

The strategic plan is a short-term to mid-term (two to five year) blueprint for the school, developed by the principal in consultation with representatives from all strata of the school community (Davies, 2003; Davies & Ellison, 2003; Davies & West-Burnham, 2003; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). The strategic plan contains a series of priorities that are ultimately designed to enhance the provision of high quality teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The strategic plan identifies activities that will be implemented to achieve priorities and contains details regarding responsible personnel, timelines, milestones and key performance indicators that will be used by the principal to assess progress and measure performance (Davies, 2003; Davies & Ellison, 2003; Davies & West-Burnham, 2003; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013).

### 3.2.5 Role component four: Community engagement and development.

The fourth role component of Catholic principalship is community engagement and development. There are four potential benefits associated with fruitful school-community partnerships. The first benefit, linked to the role component of Catholic
identity, is the development of a faith community that enables the school to achieve the holistic development of students and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Church (Convey, 2012; Klenke, 2007; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The second benefit is improved student attendance, participation and achievement, essential for developing students holistically. The third benefit is enhanced community support for school improvement initiatives. The fourth benefit is the generation of innovative ideas to address challenges faced by the school (Datnow, Lasky, Stringfield, & Teddlie, 2005; Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sheldon, 2007). In addition to the principalship responsibilities associated with the development of a faith community described previously, these benefits are the result of four principal-led actions.

Firstly, the principal oversees the development and maintenance of structures and processes to permit effective communication between the school and its community (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Epstein, 2007). These structures not only ensure the effective promotion of endeavours and achievements from the school to the community, they provide the school with a mechanism through which to receive timely feedback (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Epstein, 2007). Used well, feedback has the potential to improve all facets of the school, especially the quality of teaching and learning (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Effective communication structures and processes can also be used to nurture school-home-community partnerships that deliver benefits to all parties, especially students (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Department for Education and Skills, 2004). As stated previously, Christian service learning is one example of a positive school-community partnership that provides students with opportunities to apply Gospel-based knowledge learned in the classroom to reality (Dobzanski, 2001; Kemp, 2010; Miller & Engel, 2011).

Secondly, the principal is required to value the principles of inclusion (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). These principles are applied when the principal encourages the development of trusting, collaborative relationships
between teachers and parents to enhance student educational outcomes (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). One specific example of effective school-parent collaboration is the use of linguistic and cultural resources present in the school community within the teaching and learning process (Epstein, 2007). With regard to cultural recognition, the principal is required to promote an understanding and appreciation of indigenous reconciliation amongst school community members. In Australia, this action also involves principal-led strategies to develop authentic, collaborative partnerships between the school and the members of local aboriginal communities (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2004; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; J. M. McLaughlin, Whatman, Ross, & Katona, 2012).

A priority for the Catholic principal is student safety and continuity of high quality teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Thus, action three relates to the duty of the principal to cooperate and work with relevant agencies to protect and support student attendance and physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Specifically, when the principal is made aware of complex challenges arising in the home environment that threaten student wellbeing, legislative responsibilities such as child protection procedures must be enacted (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014b). Additionally, the principal, in the spirit of Jesus, is required to think, speak and act through the lens of social justice and action by caring for the marginalised, be they students, their parents and carers or family members (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Equally important is the willingness and capability of the principal to support staff experiencing personal and/or professional crises (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

Finally, the principal is expected to contribute to the enhancement of the education system within which the school is located (Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). When enacting this dimension at a practical level, the principal
encourages and oversees the sharing of teaching and learning facilities, resources and effective practices with neighbouring schools, regardless of system or sector. Harris (2008) stated:

In the past, schools tended to work in relative isolation with relatively few links to other schools or organisations. While this way of working might have been appropriate a decade or so ago, there is now increased pressure on schools to establish partnerships with other schools, agencies or professionals. (p. 101)

The aim of such collaboration is the development of an integrated approach to education to enhance student learning outcomes across the community (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; A. Harris, 2008).

3.2.6 Role component five: School improvement.

The final role component of Catholic principalship is school improvement. School improvement “involves school staff examining information and assessing the performance of their school; developing plans to address areas where the evidence tells them improvement is most needed; and putting their plans into effect and checking they have had the intended impact” (Department of Education and Training, 2014, p. 2). The principal enacts this role component in three ways.

Firstly, the principal is an agent for change, especially with regard to leadership of teaching and learning infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). Therefore, the principal is expected to continuously encourage teacher use of creative, innovative practices when striving to enhance student learning. These practices include the use of existing, new and emerging technologies in the classroom (Ainscow et al., 2013; Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Davies & Ellison, 2013). Secondly, the principal is expected to reflect upon their personal leadership and management through the role components of Catholic identity, teaching and learning, stewardship of resources and community engagement and development before implementing measures to improve proficiency (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney,
Thirdly, the principal is expected to remain abreast of contemporary literature regarding school improvement and use this knowledge in concert with the system-approved tool to continually review and improve aspects of the school deemed deficient (Ainscow et al., 2013; Davies & Ellison, 2013; Department of Education and Training, 2014). The result of these three actions is enhancement of the quality of services provided to students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community and achievement of school vision (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).

When leading school improvement, the principal is expected to distribute leadership (A. Harris, 2008). Distributed leadership occurs when the principal identifies staff with interest in school improvement, not necessarily those employed in designated leadership roles, and encourages them to lead the review and improvement process (A. Harris, 2008). This practice not only enables individual members of staff to develop their leadership capabilities, it simultaneously deepens the leadership capacity of the school and system or sector to which it belongs (Ainscow et al., 2013; Davies & Ellison, 2013; A. Harris, 2008).

The principal, after leading or overseeing the use of the system approved school improvement tool to identify school strengths and weaknesses, is required to work with and through staff to develop improvement action plans (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006, 2011; Department of Education and Training, 2014; A. Harris, 2012). Prior to making final decisions with regard to these plans, the principal is required to consult with members of the school community to ascertain their perspectives (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006; A. Harris, 2012; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Once agreement is reached, the principal is obliged to integrate school improvement action plans with the school strategic plan (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).

When implementing the strategic plan, the principal is expected to clearly articulate to the school community its purpose and importance (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney,
As the strategic plan is a living document, it is incumbent upon the principal to provide the community with regular updates. Updates may include progress reports regarding the achievement of priorities, delays encountered, reasons for delays and planned rectification measures. New priorities, identified through the school improvement process, associated actions and proposed timelines for completion must also be communicated as appropriate (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006; Davies & Ellison, 2013).

3.2.7 The capabilities required for effective performance.

The term ‘capability’ refers to the extent of an individual’s ability in a given domain or endeavour (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). The literature suggests that effective Catholic principals use three broad capabilities when leading and managing through the role components of Catholic identity, teaching and learning, stewardship of resources, community engagement and development and school improvement. These capabilities are vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

3.2.7.1 Vision and values.

The Catholic principal must have the intellectual aptitude to understand the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009). Based on this understanding, the principal is required to demonstrate competence when working with staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community to form, articulate and drive achievement of school vision (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009). School vision must focus on the holistic development of students (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) including the formation of systems of values based on those modelled by Jesus (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000). This vision is achieved when the principal focuses all role components and school activities on the delivery of high quality teaching and learning infused, where
possible, with Gospel values (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

It is also imperative that the words and actions of the Catholic principal are based on Gospel values (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996) and are aligned when leading and managing (Buchanan, 2013a). Prime amongst these values is a penchant for social justice and action (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The principal also needs to value, model and promote the pursuit of life-long learning and set high standards for themselves and those they lead (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

3.2.7.2 Knowledge and understanding.

To effectively lead the formulation and achievement of school vision and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Church, the Catholic principal must thoroughly understand the responsibilities associated with the five suggested components that comprise the role (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b). The following examples are stated for illustration purposes. When leading and managing Catholic identity, the principal must sustain an up-to-date understanding of Catholic social teaching (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). When leading and managing teaching and learning, the principal is required to ensure the provision of Gospel values through the religious education program and, where possible, subjects associated with other learning areas (Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2000; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). The principal is also expected to be cognisant of the latest research and legislative developments influencing curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and student wellbeing (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013).
When leading and managing the stewardship of resources to ensure the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning, the principal is required to be aware of new, and changes to existing, legislation governing school operations promulgated by local, state and federal authorities (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). These requirements may relate to the domains of occupational safety and health, environmental conservation, human resource management, financial management and capital development planning (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b). Despite the system or sector to which the school belongs assuming responsibility for legislative compliance through the creation and refinement of policy statements and procedures, the principal is expected to understand, correctly interpret and integrate statements and procedures into school operations (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).

When leading and managing community engagement and development, especially its faith dimension, the principal must understand the importance of reflection, prayer and sacramental and liturgical celebration and ensure that opportunities are integrated into the daily life of the school including teaching and learning programs (Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2004; Hunt et al., 2000; Nuzzi, 2002). The principal must also appropriately lead and manage the school board and other bodies (e.g. the Parents and Friends Council) when attempting to build collaborative school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008). To effectively lead and manage this role component, the principal must have a genuine desire for communication and consultation with the school community (Epstein, 2007). Especially important in the communication and consultation process is currency of principal knowledge with regard to marketing techniques including the use of technological advances to improve proficiency (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).

Finally, it is essential that the principal have school improvement and strategic planning proficiency (Davies & Ellison, 2013; A. Harris, 2012). Such proficiency
enables the principal to lead the identification of areas of school strength and deficiency and determine and implement improvement action plans to enhance the quality of services offered to the school community, especially students (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006; Davies & Ellison, 2013; A. Harris, 2012). Additionally, the principal must remain abreast of contemporary developments in the field of school improvement when leading and managing improvement through each role component (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; A. Harris, 2012). Equally important is principal knowledge and understanding regarding the use of any system-approved school improvement tool to generate improvement action plans (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). Finally, the principal is expected to demonstrate proficiency with regard to the integration of improvement action plans with the school strategic plan (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).

3.2.7.3 Leadership competence.

Leadership competence “refers to a leader’s track record and ability to get things done” (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 8). When discussing the ability to ‘get things done’ in the context of principalship, AITSL (2011) emphasised the requirement of the principal to “regularly review practice and implement change in leadership and management approaches to suit the situation” (p. 7). That is, for the principal to cope with the diverse range of situations presented through the daily discharge of the role, he or she must have the ability to understand and precipitously apply contemporary leadership theory apposite for the circumstance (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009).

In the context of Catholic principalship, three appropriate and interrelated theories are transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership (Lavery, 2011). Liu (2007) stated: “Transactional, transformational, and transcendental leadership are located in nested hierarchy, with the transcendental leadership incorporating and extending the former two” (p. 4). Other researchers assert that transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership are ranked along a
continuum from managerial control at one end through to spiritual holism at the other (Avolio, 2010; Fairholm, 2004; Gardiner, 2006).

Lavery (2011) referred to the need for the principal to have the capability to establish school vision and that “such a role suggests a transformational understanding of leadership” (p. 1). Lavery (2011), when discussing the capabilities required of principals to drive achievement of school vision, referred to the ability of the principal to ensure “that appropriate processes are in place for the organisation to function” and that “this managerial approach embraces a transactional notion of leadership that focuses on structure and organisation” (p. 1). Transcendental leadership moves beyond the application of transactional-transformational capabilities and involves the leader inspiring amongst followers a consideration of “the impact their collective actions have upon the rest of humanity” (Zacko-Smith, 2010, p. 4). In Catholic school environments, a similar concept is servant leadership “where the focus is less about oneself and more concerned with the requirements of others” (Lavery, 2011, p. 1).

Transactional leadership applies primarily to managerial situations and is relational in that it involves an exchange process between the leader and staff (Burns, 1978). In the context of this relationship, the leader invites staff to complete duties and tasks in exchange immediate, tangible rewards (Avolio, 2010; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). In Catholic schools, the first stage of transactional leadership occurs at appointment when a staff member signs an employment contract in exchange for salary and other benefits. In return, the staff member becomes accountable to the principal for the professional execution of the role they are employed to perform (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2012a, 2012b).

When recruiting staff, the principal is required to adhere to policy statements and procedures generated by the governing system (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b). When inducting new staff, the principal is expected to assist recruits to understand their roles, performance expectations, rewards for exceptional performance and penalties for poor performance (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2012a, 2012b). When supervising staff, the principal may adopt three possible forms of transactional leadership: management-by-
exception-passive; management-by-exception-active; and constructive transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The preferred form for the Catholic principal is constructive transactional leadership (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). The principal, as a constructive transactional leader, clarifies expectations of staff, works collaboratively to set appropriate goals, consults with staff as they perform their roles, suggests strategies for improvement, provides feedback, praise and recognition when warranted and exchanges rewards for accomplishments (Avolio, 2010; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005). Managing in this way, the principal is likely to inspire staff achievement of goals, the result of their direct involvement in the management process (Avolio, 2010; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013).

The application of transactional capabilities by the principal has the potential to deliver benefits to the Catholic school. Lavery (2011) stated:

The strength of the transactional model of leadership is that clear managerial structures are detailed whereby people know exactly their roles and what is expected of them. Schools benefit significantly from good organisation and clear lines of communication. (p. 4)

However, transactional capabilities also have limitations in that school structures, policies and procedures “may develop into the endpoint of leadership rather than as the process of leadership” (Lavery, 2011, p. 4). The risk for the school in this situation is that leadership “becomes rigid, whereby change and development are extremely difficult to enact” (Lavery, 2011, p. 4).

The Catholic principal uses transformational leadership capabilities when attempting to transform or inspire staff to move from a mindset of egocentricity to one that considers the needs of colleagues and achievement of shared vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Although all transformational leaders are different, they generally achieve this shift using a combination of four strategies. These strategies are individual consideration; intellectual stimulation; inspirational motivation; and idealised influence (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013).
Individual consideration refers to the willingness and capacity of a leader to mentor marginalised staff members (Bass, 1990). Affected staff appreciate the care and guidance offered by their leader and are more likely to follow them as they drive achievement of shared vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). Intellectual stimulation occurs when a leader encourages staff to apply new solutions to existing problems without criticising the history of the issue or the mistakes of individuals (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). This strategy has the potential to intellectually stimulate staff and inspire the discovery and application of hidden knowledge and skill that may then be applied to achieve shared vision (Marzano et al., 2005). Inspirational motivation is a strategy most often employed by a leader who is naturally charismatic. Inspirational motivation occurs when a leader communicates high performance expectations through dynamic presence, confidence and projection of power (Marzano et al., 2005). Communication in this manner has the potential to generate optimism amongst staff, commitment to the organisation and enthusiasm for vision achievement (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). Finally, idealised influence is exercised by a leader who models behaviour sought from staff including exemplary personal achievement, ethical words and actions, appropriate risk taking and consideration of the needs of others before self (Marzano et al., 2005).

Despite the potential for achievement of positive outcomes through the application of transformational leadership capabilities, there exist four potential disadvantages. Firstly, even the most adept transformational leader may receive unfavourable reactions from staff despite positive reception by the majority, the effect of which can be loss of traction toward achievement of vision (Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Secondly, although a transformational leader may be capable of inspirational motivation, he or she may be a poor manager of people and incapable of articulating the steps required to achieve the vision they paint for their school. The result of these shortcomings is a highly motivated, but unstructured and directionless workplace (McCrimmon, 2008). Thirdly, the large reserve of enthusiasm possessed by a transformational leader, relentlessly applied, may exhaust staff and create dissatisfaction (Rodriguez, 2010). The final disadvantage relates to the ethical
disposition of the transformational leader. With regard to the unethical transformation leader, passion and confidence may be used to mask the unhealthy reality of a workplace. Such leaders may also drive staff to achieve their personal vision and not that of the organisation or enact change for the sake of change when, in reality, the organisation requires little modification (Rodriguez, 2010).

At other times, the Catholic principal is required to utilise transcendental leadership capabilities, especially when leading the role component, school improvement (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Transcendental leadership is a relationship-focused disposition adopted by the leader who seeks to nurture contribution-based exchanges between themselves and the staff they lead (Beckwith, 2011; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012). In the context of these exchanges, the transcendental leader not only uses transformational leadership capabilities to form relationships with staff, he or she attempts to develop non-hierarchical unity and a reflective, values-centred culture through the use of genuine, collaborative dialogue (Beckwith, 2011; Cardona, 2000; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). The transcendental leader also engages in regular reflective practice, is deeply aware of leadership strengths and weaknesses, is quiet but fully present, open in mind, body and heart, listens unconditionally and models leadership that places service of others before self (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). As a result of these behaviours, the transcendental leader may assist staff to lead on their own, make decisions and accomplish goals. Perhaps most importantly, staff may develop a transcendent motivation to serve others (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007; Rebore & Walmsley, 2009). As stated previously, this leadership disposition is particularly relevant for Catholic principals because it emulates the form of leadership modelled by Jesus Christ (Lavery, 2011).

3.2.8 Section one summary.

This section of the literature review examined five, interrelated role components through which the Catholic principal could lead and manage and three capabilities that may be applied when doing so. The role components were Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. The capabilities were vision and values;
knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. The review of literature in this section influenced the formulation of specific research question one: What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3.3 Section Two: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship

A review of the literature identified seven factors with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship. These factors are internal rewards; external rewards; high self-efficacy; exposure to positive role models; personal qualities and professional competencies; engagement with professional learning; and age. These seven factors frame this section of the literature review.

3.3.1 Internal rewards.

In their study of New South Wales Catholic school aspirants, d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002) identified two categories of rewards with the potential to enhance interest in principalship. These categories were internal or intrinsic rewards and external or extrinsic rewards. The researchers concluded that of the two reward categories “it was apparent that external rewards were not as influential in encouraging a person to apply for a principalship” (p. 479).

There are six internal rewards associated with principalship. The first internal reward is the opportunity to lead instruction and enhance student learning (d’Arbon, Duignan, & Duncan, 2002). This form of leadership involves shaping educational vision and inspiring teachers to improve their practice and the quality of learning environments and is driven by a love for children and a desire to positively impact their lives (Bickmore, Bickmore, & Raines, 2013; Coggshall, Stewart, & Bhatt, 2008; Lacey, 2003; McNeese, Roberson, & Haines, 2008; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). The second internal reward is the opportunity, as principal, to influence school improvement (d’Arbon et al., 2002; Fraser & Brock, 2013; McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, & Murphy, 2011; McNeese et al., 2008). The third internal reward is the authority provided by the principalship to build a competent and committed leadership team capable of the prudent management of resources and inspiring staff,
student and parent achievement of school vision (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). The fourth internal reward is the opportunity provided by the principalship to improve the lives of staff and life chances of students (Bickmore et al., 2013; d'Arbon et al., 2002; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). The fifth internal reward relates to the ability, as principal, to influence educational reform (Bickmore et al., 2013; Cranston, 2007; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). The sixth internal reward relates specifically to Catholic school aspirants; the opportunity offered by the principalship to contribute to Catholic education and the mission of the Church (d'Arbon et al., 2002; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003).

3.3.2 External rewards.

d’Arbon, Duignan & Duncan (2002) identified five external or extrinsic rewards with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship. These rewards were the possibility of success as principal leading to further career opportunities; role autonomy, power and prestige; enhanced job satisfaction compared with that derived from current role; principalship as a natural career step; and enhanced remuneration. McNeese, Robertson and Haines (2008) also found that “pay was important, but not the primary reason” (p. 29) driving aspirant interest in principalship. Other researchers identify the developmental promise of the principalship as an important external reward (Bezzina, 2012; Bickmore et al., 2013; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Lacey, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011; A. Walker & Kwan, 2009). That is, aspirants “are more likely to apply if they see the work as challenging and interesting and are keen to learn new skills” (Bezzina, 2012, p. 22). A final external reward is the urge to seek challenge beyond classroom teaching, a conclusion highlighted in the Staff in Australia’s Schools 2010 report (McKenzie et al., 2011). This report highlighted the results of national research into the level of satisfaction and career intentions of 4,599 Australian primary teachers, 10,876 secondary teachers, 741 primary leaders and 838 secondary leaders. 80% of Australian primary and secondary leaders surveyed for the research cited “I wanted challenges other than classroom teaching” as an important or very important consideration influencing their decision to seek promotion (McKenzie et al., 2011, p. 94).
3.3.3 High self-efficacy.

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2). In simpler terms, self-efficacy refers to belief in ability to accomplish a stated goal (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Versland, 2009). In the school context, principals with high self-efficacy are considered by their peers to be highly successful, usually as a result of dogged persistence and adaptability when setting and pursuing goals (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). With regard to aspirants, high self-efficacy is considered a factor with the potential to enhance interest in principalship (Bezzina, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). In their research, McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon and Murphy (2011) asserted that 93% of primary and 96% of secondary staff aspiring to assistant/deputy principal roles or principalship considered confidence in their ability to perform the role a significant factor influencing their decision to apply for vacancies (p. 94).

Bandura (1986) asserted that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to invest effort when striving to achieve specific outcomes whilst attributing failure to factors within their control rather than blaming others. Individuals with high self-efficacy are also capable of quick recovery after setback and, as a result, are more likely to achieve stated goals. Likewise, other researchers assert that leaders with high self-efficacy display characteristics including enhanced aspiration, goal setting prowess, effort, adaptability and persistence when pursuing goals (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Moreover, the benefits of high self-efficacy are not limited to the leader and have the potential to positively influence the attitudes and role performance of followers (Bezzina, 2012; Chemers, Watson, & May, 2000; Luthans & Peterson, 2002). Importantly, workplaces staffed by personnel with high self-efficacy perceptions are more likely to achieve shared organisation vision (Chemers et al., 2000).

3.3.4 Exposure to positive role models.

One factor with the potential to influence aspirant self-efficacy perceptions and enhance interest in principalship is exposure to positive experiences during what Gronn (1999) referred to as the ‘accession phase’ of leadership. The accession phase
forms part of Gronn’s life history framework that encapsulates four broad phases through which school leaders commonly pass. These phases are formation or the period from birth to young adulthood; accession or grooming and rehearsal for leadership roles; incumbency or attainment of the principalship and subsequent experiences; and divestiture or preparation for role departure and retirement (Gronn, 1999).

During the accession phase, aspirants are more likely to seek principalship if they are exposed to positive, encouraging role models. These role models are usually principals who believe in the leadership capacity of aspirants, develop their talents through shared leadership practices and professional learning and encourage application for principalship vacancies (Bickmore et al., 2013; A. Walker & Kwan, 2009). In their research, McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon and Murphy (2011) drew similar conclusions when they reported that 89% of Australian primary and 90% of secondary teachers aspiring to assistant/deputy principalship or principalship asserted that successful experience in other leadership roles provided by their principals significantly influenced their decision to seek promotion (p. 94). Likewise, the researchers concluded that 79% of primary and 72% of secondary aspirants cited encouragement and support from their principals as significant factors influencing career decision-making (p. 94). Aspirants are also more likely to form positive perceptions of the principalship, and experience enhanced interest in the role as a result, if their principals lead in a manner congruent with aspirant leadership values (Bezzina, 2012; Draper & McMichael, 2003). An equally important research conclusion asserts that aspirants who observe their principals expressing high satisfaction whilst performing their roles on a daily basis are more likely to desire promotion (Bickmore et al., 2013; Lacey, 2003).

3.3.5 Personal qualities and professional competencies.

In 2001, Day and Leithwood initiated the International Successful School Principal Project. One of the research goals was the identification of personal qualities and professional competencies common to effective school principals. The project concluded in 2007 with the writing and analysis of over 60 case studies of Australian, Canadian, Chinese, Danish, English, Norwegian, Swedish and American principals. The three qualities and competencies identified by the research were not
only developed and refined by individual principals over time, they fed role desire during the accession phase (Gronn, 1999) of their careers. Likewise, some researchers contend that aspirants with these qualities and competencies are likely to be attracted to principalship (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2008).

The first quality and competency was the ability of the principal to bracket the relational demands associated with the role (Bezzina, 2012; Daresh & Male, 2000; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2008; A. Walker & Kwan, 2009). Stated simply, principalship is complex, in part because of the constant need to address decision-making dilemmas (Wildy & Clarke, 2008). Effective principals, when attempting to resolve dilemmas, have the willingness and capability to make difficult decisions that may inadvertently marginalise people. Aspirants who feel uncomfortable with this reality, especially where prevailing cultural norms emphasise group-orientation, belonging and collectivism, are unlikely to seek promotion (A. Walker & Kwan, 2009). In contrast, aspirants who have the ability to effectively and efficiently balance interpersonal relationships and school effectiveness are more likely to apply for principalship (Bezzina, 2012; A. Walker & Kwan, 2009).

The second quality and competency common to successful principals was passion and enthusiasm for the teaching, ensconced in an ethic of care and concern for the principles of social justice (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Linked with the positive influence of high self-efficacy described previously, these principals had the capacity to set achievable goals to ensure the achievement of student educational outcomes before pursuing and achieving them with optimism, vigour and persistence (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Further, these principals were deemed effective because they were visible and accessible to staff, students and their parents during times of need and were ‘gifted’ with the capacity for emotional sensitivity (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2008).

The third quality and competency common to successful principals was an inherent passion for developing and caring for people, especially the staff they led (Day & Leithwood, 2007). These principals collaborated with staff to ascertain development needs before working to provide appropriate professional learning (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Additionally, some principals also used the gift of intellectual
stimulation to encourage staff to generate new ideas before providing support for initiatives to bring them to reality (Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Day & Leithwood, 2007; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). These principals were also described by staff as caring, reflective and genuine and were known for aligning their words with actions that, in turn, mirrored the values of the school and its context (Day & Leithwood, 2007).

3.3.6 Engagement with professional learning.

Walker and Kwan (2009), in their research involving 331 vice principals in Hong Kong, discovered strong correlation between aspirant involvement in professional learning and enhanced interest in principalship. Walker and Kwan (2009) stated: “Frequent involvement in continuous professional learning might in turn help vice principals feel confident enough to apply for principalships so they can put their learning into practice” (p. 607). The forms of professional learning identified by the researchers as most influential were not those related to the day-to-day operation of schools, but future-orientated programs that were often paid for by the aspirant in terms of both money and time (A. Walker & Kwan, 2009). Linking again with the positive influence of high aspirant self-efficacy on interest in principalship, it is surmised that involvement in professional learning may enhance confidence to apply for vacancies (Bezzina, 2012; A. Walker & Kwan, 2009).

3.3.7 Age.

The chronological age of aspirants may be a factor that enhances aspirant interest in principalship. Walker and Kwan (2009) concluded that aspirants aged between 45 and 54 expressed greater desire for principalship than their younger and more senior colleagues (p. 610). The researchers surmised that the “lack of interest in the position expressed by younger vice principals may be attributable to their feeling that they are not yet ‘senior enough’ for the top post in a school” (p. 608). These feelings may also be influenced by prevailing cultural factors including the preference in Chinese society for seniority as opposed to merit-based promotion. An equally indifferent attitude expressed by vice principals older than 55 may be attributed to impending retirement at 60 (p. 610). The researchers suggested that subjects in this age bracket might be more focused on retirement planning than
promotion. The researchers also concluded that vice principals older than 55 may have made a conscious decision earlier in their careers to commit themselves to the role because of its suitability to their competencies and capabilities (p. 610).

### 3.3.8 Section two summary.

This section of the literature review presented seven factors with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship. Factors one and two focused on the potential of the role to meet the internal and external needs of aspirants respectively. The third factor was the influence of high self-efficacy on aspirant desire for principalship. The fourth factor was the positive effect of principal role models on aspiration. The fifth factor was aspirant desire to enact personal qualities and professional competencies through the principalship. The sixth factor was enthusiasm for principalship generated through engagement with professional learning. The seventh factor with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship was the effect of chronological age. The review of literature in this section influenced the formulation of specific research question two: *What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?*

### 3.4 Section Three: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship

A review of the literature identified 15 factors with the potential to diminish aspirant interest in principalship. These factors are referred to as ‘disincentives’ in the literature (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2005a; d’Arbon, 2006). Within this section, disincentives are presented in three categories. The categories are personal disincentives; school and system disincentives; and community and society disincentives (Bezzina, 2012). Personal disincentives include low self-efficacy; clashes between the role of the principal and aspirant values; negative career experiences; the detrimental impact of role intensification; gender inequality; and race-based issues. School and system disincentives include inadequate remuneration compared with role demands; issues emanating from the typical pattern of novice principalship in the Western Australian Catholic education system; issues with the principalship recruitment processes; and inadequate provision of resources to
facilitate role effectiveness. Community and society disincentives include challenging and unsupportive parents; the negative public perception of schools; complexities created by diverse student populations; difficulties associated with parental engagement; and the need for principals to deal with complex social issues.

### 3.4.1 Personal disincentives.

As the term suggests, the personal disincentives associated with principalship refer to aspects of the role that have a direct and immediate impact on the aspirant (Bezzina, 2012). There are six personal disincentives identified in the literature. The first disincentive is the result of low aspirant self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, defined in the previous section of this literature review, refers to belief in ability to accomplish a stated goal (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Versland, 2009). With regard to the influence of self-efficacy on desire for principalship, aspirants who doubt their experience, expertise and capability to commence principalship and cope with role demands are less likely to apply for vacancies (Bezzina, 2012; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). Several researchers conclude that low self-efficacy most often finds a home in female (Bezzina, 2012; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009) and indigenous aspirants (Bezzina, 2012; Chabaya, Rembe, & Wadesango, 2009).

The second personal disincentive is the clash between the role of the principal and aspirant values (Bezzina, 2012). Beginning principalship can be a lonely experience for novice principals (Fraser & Brock, 2013). Novice principalship may require adjustment from a comfortable, familiar role to one that is uncomfortable, uncertain and requires the ability and willingness to make difficult decisions that may not engender the admiration of others (Fraser & Brock, 2013; Wildy et al., 2007). For some aspirants, the need to make hard, unpopular decisions may be distasteful and diminish enthusiasm for promotion (Bezzina, 2012; Daresh & Male, 2000). The literature also emphasises the potential for promotion to principalship to adversely affect existing collegial relationships and the development of new ones, a reality that some aspirants find disconcerting (Bezzina, 2012; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Wildy et al., 2007).

Another disincentive created by a clash of values is the mismatch between the leadership ideals of the aspirant and the reality of principalship (Bezzina, 2012). For example, some aspirants desire to be instructional leaders, keen to drive the
continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Others aspirants aim to be transformational leaders, motivated by the thought of influencing those they lead to achieve school vision (Avolio, 2010; Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). Regardless of preference, there exists potential for both ideals to jar against the reality of a role that is dominated by technical, administrative and compliance tasks and responsibilities (Cranston, 2005a, 2005b; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Mulford, 2007; Pascoe, 2007; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011; Watson, 2009).

A third personal disincentive is grounded in the professional experiences of aspirants immediately preceding principalship (Bezzina, 2012; Draper & McMichael, 2003). Given that, in Western Australian schools, most novice principals arrive at the role post-assistant or deputy principalship, the quality of experiences in these roles and their perceived match with the reality of principalship is crucial (Bezzina, 2012). For aspirants who have not experienced quality, shared leadership with their principals during their time as assistant/deputy principals, it is likely that they will not seek promotion (Bezzina, 2012; Draper & McMichael, 2003; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003).

Strangely, although generally considered a factor that can enhance aspirant desire for promotion, principals who wholeheartedly share leadership with their assistant or deputy principals and develop them professionally may inadvertently discourage aspiration. Bezzina (2012) explained:

The experience of the current role is a significant factor in informing aspirant choice. The increasing prevalence of shared leadership practices can be argued to have the effect of allowing senior school staff to engage in significant levels of influence and decision-making without having to take the final step to principalship. (p. 22)

Likewise, Lacey (2003) concluded that principals who delegate responsibility for instructional leadership to assistant or deputy principals in an effort to cope with the time-consuming, technical elements of the role actually enhance aspirant job satisfaction. James and Whiting (1998) determined that if aspirants are satisfied with their current role, there exists little motivation to seek promotion to principalship.

Bezzina (2012) considered the detrimental impact of role intensification a fourth personal disincentive. That is, by observing their principals in action, some
aspirants reach the unpalatable conclusion that principalship is the victim of ‘greedy work’, a term coined by Gronn (1999). Greedy work, also called ‘role intensification’ (Fraser & Brock, 2013), refers to the constantly changing nature of principalship in terms of breadth and complexity. Role intensification involves leadership of teaching and learning in addition to the management of an array of technical and administrative tasks that must often be completed in time and resource-poor environments (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; Pounder et al., 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). 15 years later, research conducted by Riley (2014) into the health and wellbeing of 2,621 Australian principals from government, Catholic and independent schools highlighted the continued prevalence of role intensification and its impact as a disincentive. He determined that the sheer quantity of work, closely followed by a lack of time to focus on teaching and learning were areas of significant concern for principals.

For Catholic school principals, role intensification may be more pronounced than that experienced by their secular equivalents (Fraser & Brock, 2013). That is, the system to which the school belongs and Church documents expect Catholic principals to lead curriculum, pedagogical, financial, capital development, human resource and community-relations functions in addition to the faith dimension of their schools (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; d’Arbon, 2006; Fraser & Brock, 2013). This additional dimension may present another disincentive for aspirants, in part because it requires the promotion of the Catholic faith to students and parents who are increasingly secular in their beliefs (Belmonte & Cranston, 2007; Dorman & d’Arbon, 2003a, 2003b; Fraser & Brock, 2013). Likewise, Catholic aspirants are well-aware that promotion to the principalship may involve the management of complex school-parish relationships (Australian Catholic Primary Principals' Association, 2005; Pascoe, 2007).

Role intensification leads many aspirants to perceive principalship as highly stressful, especially when they observe their principals suffering poor physical and mental health, relationship breakdowns and conflict with staff and members of the school community (Bezzina, 2012; Chapman, 2005; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a). Aspirant
perceptions regarding the stressful nature of principalship are confirmed by Riley’s (2014) research:

Principals score less than the general population on all positive measures: self-rated health; happiness; mental health; coping; relationships; self-worth; and personal wellbeing and higher on all negative measures: burnout; stress; sleeping troubles; depressive symptoms; somatic stress symptoms; and cognitive stress symptoms. (p. 14)

Given these conclusions, it comes as no surprise that aspirants would be concerned about the impact of the role. For aspirants considering starting a family or for those who already have young children, the complexity of the role, associated time-demands and subsequent stress do little to encourage aspiration (Bezzina, 2012).

Gender-based issues represent a fifth personal disincentive that particularly impinges upon the career choices of female aspirants. Bezzina (2012) and McLay (2008) suggested that some in society consider leadership to be the sole domain of men. Confirming this deep-rooted, cultural script are Australian and international statistics indicating that the majority of teachers are female, yet the majority of school-based, senior leaders are male (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2005a, 2005b; d’Arbon et al., 2002; d’Arbon, Duignan, Dwyer, & Goodwin, 2001; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003). This trend, in part, is the result of traditional expectations that women will take time away from their careers to be the primary care givers of children (Bezzina, 2012).

Female aspirants who make the choice to disrupt their careers to raise children are disadvantaged when resuming their roles. Bezzina (2012) asserted:

Another aspect of family with relevance to decisions to take on principalship is the responsibility of caring roles such as parenthood, which are taken up disproportionately by women. This causes career interruptions, which in turn disadvantages women who might be seeking principalship. (p. 23)

One disadvantage associated with this choice is the need for female aspirants to compete for principalship appointment against colleagues who have maintained continuous service (Bezzina, 2012; Chabaya et al., 2009; McLay, 2008; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a). Moreover, because of the male-dominated nature of the senior leadership tier in the Australian education sector, some female aspirants perceive
gender bias when it comes to the appointment of principals as men are, more often than not, the panellists who make the final decision (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b). Bezzina (2012) and Neidhart and Carlin (2003a) also concluded that a negative consequence of the limited numbers of female principals is an absence of female mentors for female aspirants that, in turn, adversely impacts self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Some researchers conclude that the professional experiences of some male and female aspirants immediately preceding principalship are different (Bezzina, 2012; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; McLay, 2008). Specifically, because some principals perceive females to be more nurturing than males, there exists a tendency to promote women from teaching and middle-leadership roles to pastoral assistant or deputy principal roles. Some aspirants in these roles feel ‘pigeonholed’, the consequence of which is restricted development (Bezzina, 2012). Further, because some panellists consider pastoral-based leadership roles ‘softer’ that their traditional assistant or deputy principal counterparts in fields such as teaching and learning, the chances of females in these roles being promoted to principalship are further diminished (Bezzina, 2012; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; McLay, 2008).

With regard to the sixth personal disincentive, race and its impact on achievement of principalship, literature is sparse (Bezzina, 2012). Several researchers point to difficulties experienced by members of minority groups, especially indigenous aspirants, when it comes to attaining assistant or deputy principalship and operating effectively post-appointment. Reasons for difficulties include the compliance barriers associated with qualification attainment, the financial burden this creates and the sense of being a pioneer for the cultural group and the unwanted ‘spotlight’ this attracts (Auva’a, 2008; Bezzina, 2012; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003). Considering that the Western Australian Catholic education system requires principal aspirants to have a track record of success as an assistant/deputy principal (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2012), this requirement may present a disincentive for members of minority groups.

### 3.4.2 School and system disincentives.

The literature identifies four disincentives posed by schools and their governing systems. The first disincentive is inadequate remuneration, cited in the

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literature as a factor with the potential to diminish aspirant interest in principalship (Bezzina, 2012; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). As described previously, in recent years, the scope and intensification of the principalship has dramatically increased in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States (Fraser & Brock, 2013; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011; Whitaker, 2002). These changes are the result of multiple reforms, requisite accountability requirements and increased parent demands that, combined, have impeded the capacity of principals to lead other important role components such as teaching and learning. However, when compared to role changes, remuneration increases are poor (Fraser & Brock, 2013; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011; Whitaker, 2002). Salary, in particular, is singled out as inappropriate compared with role dimensions and demands (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011).

The second school and system disincentive is the result of the typical pattern of novice principalship in the Western Australian Catholic education system. That is, most first-time principals commence their roles in regional or remote schools in the Bunbury, Geraldton or Kimberley dioceses (Clarke, Wildy, & Pepper, 2007). Whilst school size in these areas is small compared with their metropolitan counterparts, beginning principals in these contexts face six significant challenges with the potential to diminish aspirant interest.

Firstly, some aspirants consider a lack of employment opportunities for their spouses in regional or remote locations a disincentive (Clarke et al., 2007; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003). Secondly, isolation from family and established professional support networks, important for managing stress associated with the ‘newness’ of the role and its challenges, is unattractive for many aspirants (Clarke et al., 2007; d'Arbon et al., 2002; d’Arbon et al., 2001; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003a, 2003b; Fraser & Brock, 2013). Thirdly, uprooting and resettling primary school-aged children and finding appropriate schooling options for those in secondary school (e.g. boarding school options) presents financial and logistical challenges (Pritchard, 2003). Fourthly, the process of packing and renting or selling the family home and locating to often inferior accommodation is a disincentive (Pritchard, 2003). Fifthly, some aspirants are challenged by recruitment and retention difficulties present in
regional and remote settings. That is, attraction and employment of suitable staff in these locations, particularly those with leadership experience, is problematic (Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). In these locations, beginning principals may also be confronted by staff with limited knowledge regarding the use of educational technologies, contemporary teaching practices and/or cultural and community awareness (Clarke et al., 2007; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009). Finally, some aspirants are uncomfortable with the dual role of principal-resident, a reality in small country towns and remote communities (Clarke & Stevens, 2009; Halsey, 2011; Wallace & Boylan, 2007). Residing in community requires the need to be contextually literate at all times, the result of living in the ‘fish bowl’ where the words and actions of the principal and staff may be subjected to the constant scrutiny of parochial and conservative community members (Halsey, 2011; Wallace & Boylan, 2007). The result of this reality are feelings of restriction and amplification of emotions that may, in turn, intensify community scrutiny (Halsey, 2011; Wallace & Boylan, 2007). Halsey (2011), with regard to working and living in regional or remote communities, also advised beginning principals to delineate boundaries between personal and professional commitments to prevent being inundated by community demands and expectations.

The third school and system disincentive present in the literature is an underlying suspicion of the principal recruitment process. Neidhart and Carlin (2003), in their study regarding leadership succession in Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian Catholic primary and secondary schools, commented:

Recruitment problems include: concern about the transparency and fairness of the selection process; lack of constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates; perception that males are advantaged; and concern regarding the knowledge and experience panel members have to make appropriate recommendations. (p. 12)

As expressed previously, there exists a sense, particularly amongst female aspirants, that appointment panels carry an inherent gender bias, the result of the ‘old boys’ network formed as a consequence of the over-representation of males in leadership roles (Bezzina, 2012; McLay, 2008). Adding to aspirant concerns regarding the recruitment process are disincentives associated with a lack of quality feedback for unsuccessful applicants. That is, poor quality feedback confuses aspirants and creates
a sense of uncertainty with regard to application for subsequent vacancies (Bezzina, 2012; d’Arbon et al., 2002; d’Arbon et al., 2001; Gronn & Lacey, 2004; Pritchard, 2003).

The fourth school and system disincentive relates to a perceived lack of resources and support for principals during both their novice years (Bezzina, 2012) and later in the principalship (Bezzina, 2012; Chabaya et al., 2009). Specifically, some aspirants fear that because principals are responsible for all aspects of school operations, they would not receive systemic support in areas where they are untrained or feel unprepared such as school financial management (Pritchard, 2003). Aspirant concerns are often the result of direct observation of their principals experiencing role stress whilst operating in a high accountability environment governed by the employing authority (Bezzina, 2012; Quinn, 2002; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011).

3.4.3 Community and society disincentives.

The literature identifies five disincentives emanating from school communities and, more broadly, from the society in which the school is located. The first disincentive relates to working with challenging parents. Fraser and Brock (2013) identified increased demands from parents together with threats of litigation stemming from principal failure to provide a safe environment for their children, poor support for school programs and abuse of staff as disincentives. Cusick (2003) reported a similar phenomenon in the United States. His research suggested high levels of principal satisfaction when working with teachers and students, but disproportionately high levels of dissatisfaction when working with disgruntled, litigious parents:

What do parents want from the school? Everything. And they expect to get it. And why don’t teachers want the principal’s job? Because your neck is out there all the time. It’s Thanksgiving, you’re the turkey and there are 100 axes. There’s no support. The district will sacrifice you rather than take a black eye from a parent. (p. 23)

Apart from the unpleasant nature of demanding parents, the time taken to resolve minor issues that, in all probability, would not have been raised by the parents of students from previous generations reduces the limited time available for the
principal to attend to other role aspects (Bezzina, 2012; Cusick, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). The second disincentive, closely linked with negative parental attitudes, is the perception amongst school staff that parents do not respect them as professionals. Moreover, from a broader societal perspective, the public perception of schools is largely negative (Bezzina, 2012; Fiore, 2002; McNeese et al., 2008; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000).

The third school community and society disincentive is the result of increasingly diverse student populations, a sub-set of which are students with disabilities, included in mainstream classrooms as a result of moral and legislative compulsion (Bezzina, 2012). An historical example of research in this area is that of Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) who conducted a meta-analysis of the literature. In their study, the researchers examined the attitudes of more than 10,500 teachers and principals regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The research concluded that although participants agreed philosophically with the principles of inclusion, two thirds were only prepared to work with students who did not require the acquisition of significant additional skills or increased time demands. Although the researchers attributed opposition to a variety of factors, as stated previously, the erosion of time available to lead other role aspects was the primary disincentive (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Almost two decades later, a large body of research continues to highlight significant levels of resistance when it comes to the inclusion of students with severe intellectual disabilities, emotional and/or behavioural disorders (Foreman, 2001; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Khochen & Radford, 2012).

Bezzina (2012) identified a lack of parental engagement with schools as the fourth community and society disincentive. One potential consequence of parental disengagement is the need for teachers to assume the role of parents with regard to morals and values formation (Bezzina, 2012). However, other researchers offer contrary conclusions to those offered by Bezzina (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Epstein, 2008; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). These researchers assert that the overwhelming majority parents are keen to support their child’s learning and the school and highlight the positive correlation between parent involvement in their child’s education and higher attendance rates, positive attitudes
and academic success. Some researchers, however, contend that the disincentive for both principals and aspirants is developing a school culture where involvement of parents is considered a valuable priority (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007).

Creating a school culture characterised by quality school-parent relationships is difficult because of the existence of six parental barriers. These barriers are lack of know-how when it comes to assisting children with homework (Christenson & Reschly, 2010; Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012); negative attitudes regarding school as a result of their own experiences; lack of time and money; single parenthood; non-English literacy; and cultural gaps (Ingram et al., 2007; J. S. Lee & Bowen, 2006). For principals, aspirants and teachers, the barriers include inadequate or lack of training to enhance parent involvement; negative attitudes toward parents; and inaccurate assumptions about parental intentions (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Epstein, 2007, 2008).

Bezzina (2012) identified the range and complexity of social issues impacting schools as the fifth community and society disincentive. Raised previously, a disincentive associated with social issues is the time taken to resolve resultant conflict that, in turn, detracts from the ability of the principal to lead other role aspects (Bezzina, 2012). One contemporary example of an adverse social issue impacting schools is cyber bullying. The widespread availability of mobile communication technology amongst students has dissipated the boundary between school and private life. The dissolution of this boundary has enabled face-to-face conflict to continue online by parties both directly involved and peripheral to the conflict (Von Marées & Petermann, 2012). As a consequence, some parents and members of the broader community expect schools to develop and implement prevention and intervention efforts (Englander, 2012; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Spears, Slee, Owens, & Johnson, 2009). Von Marées and Petermann (2012) concluded:

Based on empirical evidence, researchers suggest that programs for the prevention of cyber bullying should be incorporated in school curricula and include thorough instruction on internet safety and online conduct. (p. 472)
Teachers and principals feel frustrated by the perception that some parents appear to abdicate their responsibility to monitor their child’s use of information and communication technology at home and expect the school to assume responsibility for the teaching of responsible digital citizenship (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012).

3.4.4 Section three summary.

This section of the literature review presented 15 disincentives in three categories with the potential to diminish aspirant interest in Catholic principalship. The three categories were personal disincentives; school and system disincentives; and community and society disincentives. The review of literature in this section influenced the formulation of specific research question three: What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3.5 Section Four: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship

Self-efficacy, defined previously, refers to belief in ability to accomplish a stated goal (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Versland, 2009). In the context of this research, self-efficacy refers to an aspirant’s belief in his or her ability to commence Catholic principalship. Sections two and three of this literature review also identified aspirant self-efficacy perceptions as a factor with the potential to both enhance and diminish interest in principalship. That is, aspirants with high self-efficacy are more likely to be interested in principalship whereas those with low self-efficacy may doubt their capacity to perform the role and decline promotional opportunities (Bezzina, 2012).

As examined in section one of this literature review, the role of the Catholic principal is complex and demanding. If aspirants transitioning to principalship are to experience success, healthy self-efficacy is vitally important because it provides them with the confidence they require to set and pursue goals and respond in an appropriate and timely manner to diverse and demanding situations (Versland, 2009). Principals with high self-efficacy, when confronted with these situations, are more likely to effectively draw upon and use prior experiences, professional knowledge
and skills than their counterparts with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).

This section of the literature review addresses three specific dimensions of self-efficacy. Firstly, literature pertinent to principal self-efficacy and role effectiveness is described. This literature provides insight into the potential future leadership behaviours and effects of aspirants with both high and low self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Secondly, the four sources of self-efficacy defined by Bandura (1986) are presented because they have the potential to nurture aspirant self-efficacy perceptions. Thirdly, five elements of exemplary principal preparation programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy are identified. With regard to literature examining the topic of aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship, several researchers acknowledge that the field remains largely unexplored (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Considering this assertion, the findings and conclusions of this study may contribute to an improved understanding of the topic.

### 3.5.1 Principal self-efficacy and role effectiveness.

Principals equipped with a robust sense of self-efficacy view change as an evolutionary process and understand that time and persistence are essential for goal achievement (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Despite this conclusion, principals with high self-efficacy are not *laissez-faire*. Rather, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) observed that principals “with a strong sense of self-efficacy have been found to be persistent in pursuing their goals and are also more flexible and more willing to adapt their strategies based on contextual conditions” (p. 5). That is, principals with high self-efficacy pursue goals with vigour and are gifted with the ability to adapt strategies for achievement to suit the needs and conditions present in their respective schools (McCormick, 2001; Paglis & Green, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Wood & Bandura, 1989). When strategies applied for goal achievement are unsuccessful, principals with high self-efficacy do not hesitate to abandon them before proactively exploring, adopting and implementing alternatives (Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Osterman & Sullivan, 1996). These principals, rather than viewing unsuccessful strategies as failures, consider them learning experiences (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).
Typically, principals with high self-efficacy are known for their calm and confident presence with some employing humour to mitigate stress in volatile situations (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). These principals use a combination of ‘expert power’, ‘informational power’ and ‘referent power’ when problem solving and striving for or leading others toward goal achievement (Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Expert power refers to the use of professional experiences, skills or knowledge by leaders when working to achieve goals (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992). Informational power refers to the capacity of leaders to locate, present and use sources of information appropriate for task (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992). Referent power refers to the ability of leaders to unite and inspire staff to achieve goals, the result of trust and mutual respect generated over time (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992).

In contrast, principals with low self-efficacy “perceive an inability to control their environments and fear change” (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005, p. 5). The consequence of these perceptions is reduced capacity to set appropriate goals and solve problems (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). When striving to achieve goals, principals with low self-efficacy tend to select strategies inappropriate for the task and when faced with failure, rigidly persist with their original course of action rather than make appropriate adjustments (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). During times of challenge or failure, principals with low self-efficacy are more likely to blame others as opposed to maintaining a calm, composed persona characteristic of their counterparts with high self-efficacy (Osterman & Sullivan, 1996). Further, principals with low self-efficacy tend to be failure-focused and are characterised by anxiety, stress and overt displays of frustration (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Rather than adopt work practices based on expert, informational and referent power, principals with low self-efficacy employ external, institutional power bases including ‘coercive power’, ‘positional power’ and ‘reward power’ (Lyons & Murphy, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). As the term suggests, coercive power involves the use of force by leaders to achieve goals, the result of which, more often than not, is compliance (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992). Positional power refers to the tendency of leaders to use their rank over others to impose their will (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992).
Reward power refers to the willingness of leaders to grant favours to staff in exchange for compliance (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992).

Principal self-efficacy perceptions also influence the self-efficacy perceptions of the staff they lead (Chemers et al., 2000; Luthans & Peterson, 2002). With regard to teachers, principals with high self-efficacy are likely to inspire a sense of common purpose, model expected behaviours, provide timely, appropriate and effective feedback and reward exceptional performance (Hipp & Bredeson, 1995). A culture of positivity may be generated as a result of these leadership behaviours and when combined with a focus on quality teaching and learning, teacher self-efficacy flourishes (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Principals, within such cultures, provide teachers with the authority to make decisions regarding their classroom environments and practices (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Moore & Esselman, 1992), minimise student behavioural issues and filter activities that would otherwise distract teachers from practicing their craft (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; V. E. Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991).

3.5.2 Sources of self-efficacy.

Bandura (1986) proposed four sources of self-efficacy: “mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; social persuasion; and the monitoring of somatic (physical) and emotional states” (p. 400). Of these four sources, mastery experiences are considered the most potent influence on self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Mastery experiences occur when “an individual repeats effort in an attempt to overcome challenging situations and experience success” (Versland, 2009, p. 20). Vicarious experiences occur when “an individual observes colleagues achieving goals through perseverance and, as a result, forms the belief that they too have the capacity to succeed in comparable situations” (Versland, 2009, p. 20). Social persuasion occurs when “an individual praises the ability and efforts of colleagues and, as a result, convinces them that they have the capability to successfully master given activities” (Versland, 2009, p. 21). Monitoring physical and emotional states occurs when “an individual is subjected to experiences that generate emotional reactions” (Versland, 2009, p. 21). Controlling resultant physical
Vicarious experiences and social persuasion have the greatest impact early in learning when fewer mastery experiences are available (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). However, once mastery experiences accumulate and present opportunities to monitor resultant physical and emotional states, the other two sources are less likely to prompt self-efficacy reassessment (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Principal preparation programs represent one medium through which aspirants may be provided with opportunities to enhance self-efficacy perceptions. Programs that deliberately expose aspirants to the four self-efficacy sources are considered most effective in enhancing self-efficacy perceptions (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009).

3.5.3 Principal preparation programs and aspirant self-efficacy.

Orr and Orphanos (2011) determined that established principals who participated in high-quality preparation programs prior to commencing principalship exhibited higher self-efficacy than their colleagues who commenced principalship without formation. Likewise, other researchers assert that aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship is strongly correlated with participation in principal preparation programs considered exemplary (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). With regard to exemplary principal preparation programs, numerous researchers identify five features with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions (Orr & Orphanos, 2011).

Firstly, exemplary programs are characterised by a rigorous, coherent and systematic curriculum, aligned to national professional standards and a well-defined process for school improvement (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young, Crow, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009). A significant component of any effective school improvement process is enhanced capacity for leadership of teaching and learning (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). With regard to educational leadership content within exemplary programs, aspirants are taught strategies that may be applied to
create a shared set of teaching and learning beliefs amongst staff (J. Harris et al., 2013; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). To bring these beliefs to life, aspirants are encouraged to develop, resource and support structures promoting collaborative discussion amongst teachers, the purpose of which is the sharing and improvement of pedagogical practices (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; DuFour, 2002; Jenkins, 2009; Robinson, 2011). An outcome of these discussions is the opening of classrooms for peer observation and provision of quality feedback and advice with regard to the monitoring and improvement of student achievement (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005; Lashway, 2002). The principal, as educational leader, is also responsible for the promotion of formal and informal teacher development including involvement as a participant in the learning (Robinson, 2011). The final aspect of educational leadership highlighted in the literature relates to the role of the principal in ensuring the provision of an orderly and supportive environment for teachers (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). In addition to an emphasis on educational leadership content within exemplary programs, several researchers highlight the importance of two additional content fields: organisational development; and change leadership (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). A comprehensive understanding of both fields is considered essential for leadership of schools that are characterised by constant change (Orr, Silverberg, & LeTendre, 2006).

The presentation of content within exemplary programs in and of itself, however, is inadequate (Orr et al., 2006). Rather, the second feature of exemplary programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions is “active learning experiences that integrate theory and practice and stimulate reflection” (Orr & Orphanos, 2011, p. 22). These experiences may take the form of activities at aspirant schools, designed to stimulate reflection on an aspect of program theory, or longer periods of leadership experience (Davis et al., 2005). With regard to extended leadership experiences, several researchers recommend the internship as a means through which to provide aspirants with an authentic experience of principalship
(Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin, & Wilson, 1996). The internship is also a way for aspirants to experience Bandura’s four self-efficacy sources, especially mastery experiences and the monitoring and control of resultant physical and emotional reactions (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). The internship may involve a period of ‘shadowing’ or observation of a principal in action, a co-principalship experience alongside an established principal or time as an acting principal in an aspirant’s current or different school (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 1996).

Several researchers recommend the use of mentor principals in conjunction with internship experiences. These researchers highlight the potential of the mentor to assist aspirant adjustment to the reality of the role and act as a source of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Versland, 2009; Young et al., 2009). Mentor relationships often involve a more experienced person providing a protégé with advice or immediate solutions to problems encountered (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004; The Hay Group, 2014). However, to facilitate learning and development of aspirant self-efficacy, several researchers highlight the importance of a coach-mentor approach (Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003; Rowley, 1999).

Coaching differs from mentoring in that the process involves extraction of aspirant-generated solutions for given situations as opposed to the provision of immediate instructions or answers (GROWTH Coaching International, 2009; The Hay Group, 2014). Specifically, when acting as coach, the principal uses questioning techniques to encourage aspirant formation of goals before guiding strategy identification and implementation to achieve them (GROWTH Coaching International, 2009).

The decision by the principal to adopt a mentoring or coaching approach depends upon the situation. Usually, mentoring is appropriate for high-risk, time-poor situations where an immediate decision or implementation of a course of action is required to avert a crisis (Ehrich et al., 2004). Coaching is best employed in situations where time is available and reflection and deep learning is the goal (Bloom et al., 2003; Ehrich et al., 2004; GROWTH Coaching International, 2009; Rowley, 1999; The Hay Group, 2014). Finally, with regard to the selection of principal coach-mentors for internship experiences within exemplary programs, the pairing of an expert with an aspirant is discouraged because of the experience void between the
two (Ehrich et al., 2004; The Hay Group, 2014). Rather, it is recommended that a competent professional be paired with an aspirant because of the closeness of their realities (Ehrich et al., 2004; Woodd, 1997).

The third feature of exemplary programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions is the development of support networks (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Support networks are important because they have the potential to expose aspirants to two valuable self-efficacy sources: vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). There are three types of support networks identified in the literature: ‘collegial’, ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ support networks. Collegial support networks are generated as aspirants form and deepen relationships with a range of people connected with their program such as the program convenor, facilitators, colleagues, their current principals and program-appointed coach-mentors (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). Vicarious experiences occur as the members of collegial support networks discuss their leadership experiences with aspirants in the context of structured program activities (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Aspirants, as a result of these discussions, may form the belief that they have the capacity to achieve goals in comparable situations (Bandura, 1986; Versland, 2009). The program convenor, facilitators, colleagues, current principals and program-appointed coach-mentors may also provide aspirants with social persuasion in the form of formal and informal verbal encouragement, convincing them of their capacity to commence principalship and cope with role demands (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009).

Top-down support networks are generated when aspirants form relationships with expert program facilitators, especially central office support staff with line management authority or specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship that is foreign to the aspirant (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Such knowledge, for example, includes the management of school finances, project management of school building construction and conflict and legal issue resolution (Orr et al., 2006). As aspirants engage with top-down support network members and listen to and reflect upon stories regarding career challenges
and successes, they are exposed to vicarious experiences that may enhance self-efficacy perceptions (Versland, 2009). Equally important in the context of these exchanges is the provision of social persuasion from facilitators as they affirm aspirant strengths (Versland, 2009). The development of this professional support network also presents aspirants with a third self-efficacy benefit, reassurance in the form of access to specialist advice and support upon commencement of the principalship (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Knowing whom to contact for support and when to do so is particularly comforting for novice principals who often experience dislocation from previous assistant or deputy principal networks and lack of acceptance from the established principals’ network (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005).

Bottom-up support networks are comprised of relationships between the aspirant and school community members, especially staff, students and their parents and carers (Versland, 2009). With regard to development of aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship, these relationships represent an important source of social persuasion (Versland, 2009). Reflecting this finding are those of Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) who studied 558 elementary, middle and high school principals in Virginia. The researchers concluded that principals who felt supported by teaching and support staff had a robust sense of self-efficacy compared to those who felt the opposite. Of interest in this study was the conclusion that principals with high self-efficacy are also more adept at garnering support of teachers and support staff.

Perceived support of students and their parents by principals is also considered an important self-efficacy enhancer because it is an indicator of leadership quality (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Parent and student support are also closely linked, suggesting that when parents are engaged in schools as supportive, constructive partners, students are likely to be similarly engaged. Conversely, when principals fail to earn the support of students, they are unlikely to achieve parental support (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). With these conclusions in mind, exemplary programs provide aspirants with strategies to enhance engagement of bottom-up network members, both in the context of their current leadership roles and upon appointment as principals. Aspirants are also provided with opportunities to test these strategies ‘in the field’ through active learning experiences such as internships.
(Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009).

The fourth feature of exemplary programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions involves the use of standards-based assessment tasks (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). These tasks can be used to assess program objectives that are, in turn, designed to achieve program vision (Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Tasks are supplied to aspirants together with a clear set of criteria against which they will be judged. Post-submission of tasks, grades are awarded based on aspirant performance relative to the pre-defined standards, not the performance of others or a pre-determined grade distribution. Standards-based assessment tasks permit the program convenor to make comparisons between aspirants based on achievement of the standards. The use of these tasks also adds rigour to the program and provides aspirants with opportunities to showcase their learning (Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Moreover, standards-based assessment tasks have two self-efficacy benefits. Firstly, aspirants are provided with social persuasion in the form of constructive feedback from the convenor. Secondly, completion of standards-based tasks provides aspirants with opportunities to navigate and control associated physical and emotional reactions such as stress (Hess & Kelly, 2007).

The fifth feature of exemplary programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions is a focus on the continuous review and improvement of program structure, content and activities (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). Within exemplary programs, review data is routinely collected from aspirants, their principals, coach-mentors and program facilitators and acted upon (Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Several researchers recommend the use of third-party evaluators to ensure the confidential collection and unbiased analysis of data (Davis et al., 2005; Orr, 2006; Young et al., 2009). Aspirants who know that their program is the subject of continuous review and improvement are more likely to have faith in the program as a tool for their development and experience higher self-efficacy as a result (Orr & Orphanos, 2011).
3.5.4 Section four summary.

This section of the literature review focused on three aspects of self-efficacy. Firstly, the characteristics of principals with high and low self-efficacy were described to highlight a possible connection between aspirant self-efficacy perceptions and their effectiveness as future principals. The subsequent effect of the former group on the self-efficacy perceptions of teachers was also examined. Secondly, the four sources of self-efficacy were presented: mastery experiences; vicarious experiences; social persuasion; and the monitoring of somatic (physical) and emotional states. Finally, five features of exemplary principal preparation programs with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions were explored. The review of the literature in this section influenced the formulation of specific research question four: What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

The four sections of this chapter presented literature relevant to aspirant perceptions explored by the research. These sections were: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. The review of the literature related to these sections culminated in the formulation of the four specific research questions that, collectively, were used to guide the study. The upcoming chapter, Research Plan, explains the methodological components that informed and directed the conduct of the research. Specifically, this chapter describes the theoretical framework for the research, research participants, the measures adopted to ensure the study’s trustworthiness and data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with a description of ethical measures enacted and a design summary for the research.
Chapter Four: Research Plan

4.1 Introduction

The review of literature in Chapter Three focused attention on the four aspects of the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. The review of the literature also culminated in the formulation of four specific research questions that the study seeks to answer:

1. What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

2. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

4. What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

To respond to these questions, data were collected from the eight aspirants who commenced the program in January 2011 and subsequently analysed.

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the research including its epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. Additionally, the research participants, measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and data analysis processes are described. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the ethical considerations associated with the research and a design summary. An overview of this chapter is provided in Table 4.1.
4.2 Theoretical Framework

4.2.1 Epistemology.
4.2.2 Theoretical perspective.
4.2.3 Methodology.
4.2.4 Methods.

4.3 Research Participants

4.4 Trustworthiness

4.4.1 Credibility.
4.4.2 Generalisability.
4.4.3 Dependability.
4.4.4 Confirmability.

4.5 Data Analysis

4.5.1 Stage one: Data reduction.
4.5.2 Stage two: Data display.
4.5.3 Stage three: Drawing and verifying conclusions.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

4.7 Design Summary

4.8 Conclusion

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The term ‘theoretical framework’ refers to the choices made by a researcher when planning and executing a study (Crotty, 1998). These choices include decision-making regarding cases to study and data collection and analysis methods (Silverman, 2013). A theoretical framework is comprised of four elements. The first element, ‘epistemology’ refers to the area of philosophy that underpins the research, the purpose of which is creation of knowledge. The second element, ‘theoretical perspective’ refers to the philosophical stance that influences the third element, ‘methodology.’ Methodology is the body of practices, techniques and rules used to conduct the research. The final element, ‘methods’ refers to the procedures used to collect and analyse data related to specific research questions or a hypothesis (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Schram, 2006; Strauss, 1995).
O’Donoghue (2006) recommended the use of four questions when making decisions regarding the theoretical framework for a prospective study. Firstly, “What research paradigm informs our approach to our research area of interest?” Secondly, “What theoretical perspective do we choose within this paradigm regarding our research area of interest?” Thirdly, “What methodology do we choose as a result of our location of the research area of interest within a particular theoretical perspective derived from a particular paradigm?” Finally, “What methods are most appropriate to use in light of our chosen methodology?” (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 13). The theoretical framework for this research, illustrated in Figure 4.1, was determined in the light of these four questions. The remainder of this section describes the elements of this framework.

**Figure 4.1: Theoretical framework for the research**

- **Epistemology**: Qualitative research
- **Theoretical Perspective**: Interpretivism, Symbolic interactionism
- **Methodology**: Collective case study
- **Methods**:
  - Document search
  - Data collection: Three qualitative, semi-structured interviews (pre-program, mid-program, end-of-program) with each of the eight aspirants involved in the research
  - Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis:
    - Step one: Data reduction (including triangulation)
    - Step two: Data display
    - Step three: Drawing and verifying conclusions
4.2.1 Epistemology.

Epistemology broadly refers to the study of knowledge including its generation, validation and application (Brewerton & Millward, 2001; Delanty & Strydom, 2003; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Wiersma & Jurs, 2008). Epistemology may be defined as “a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (Maynard, 1994, p. 10). Other authors describe epistemology as the process through which phenomena are explored and discovered through research (Silverman, 2006; J. C. Walker & Evers, 1988). The two main epistemological approaches used to study phenomena and create knowledge are qualitative and quantitative research (Flick, 2014; Punch, 2014).

The epistemological approach selected for this study was qualitative research. Specifically, qualitative research methods were used to collect and analyse data regarding aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. The underlying epistemology of qualitative research, and hence the present study, is characterised by a number of important foundational principles which are discussed in the remainder of this section.

4.2.1.1 Qualitative research.

Qualitative research is concerned with the systematic gathering, ordering, presentation and interpretation of text-based data (Flick, 2014). Qualitative data may be distilled from conversations recorded in interviews then converted to transcripts, observation of research participants and/or analysis of source documents relevant to the study (Silverman, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) suggested that qualitative research places “an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency” (p. 8). The goal of qualitative research is to study participants in their natural context as they experience a phenomenon of some kind (Punch, 2014). The desired outcome of qualitative research is to make conceptual generalisations from the context of the study to other settings (Flick, 2014). Terms such as ‘trustworthiness’, assessed against the criteria of credibility, generalisability,
dependability and confirmability, are used to judge the quality of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Each of the above contentions applies to this research. The study took place in the natural context of aspirants as they participated in and experienced the phenomenon of the Aspiring Principals Program over a two-year period. The research involved the collection and analysis of text-based data, specifically interview transcripts generated through three qualitative, semi-structured interviews with the eight aspirants involved in the study. As a result of the research, an integrated model of principal preparation with potential for generalisability was proposed for the consideration of local, national and international program designers. The trustworthiness of the study, judged according to the criteria of credibility, generalisability, dependability and confirmability, were considered during the design and conduct of the research and are addressed in this chapter.

4.2.2 Theoretical perspective.

After selecting qualitative research as the epistemological approach for this study, the theoretical perspective was determined. Crotty (1998) described theoretical perspective as the philosophical stance behind the methodology that infuses the reason for the research, its criteria and conduct. Crotty (1998) also proposed five possible theoretical perspectives that may be adopted when conducting qualitative research: positivism; constructionism; interpretivism; critical inquiry; feminism; and post modernism. The theoretical perspective chosen for this research was interpretivism.

4.2.2.1 Interpretivism.

The theoretical perspective of interpretivism, linked to the work of Max Weber (1864-1920), is adopted by researchers interested in Verstehen (Crotty, 1998). Verstehen refers to the attainment of an empathetic understanding of the beliefs, thoughts and behaviours of research participants as they experience a phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). By adopting an interpretivist approach, researchers attempt to “uncover the socially constructed meaning as it is understood by an individual or group of individuals” (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekeran, 2001, p. 74) and “describe it in a way that is meaningful for these research participants” (Saunders, Lewis, &
Thornhill, 2009, p. 84). When adopting an interpretivist approach, researchers engage with the ‘social actors’ involved in the study (Saunders et al., 2009). Interpretivism was considered a suitable theoretical perspective for this research because it required engagement with aspirants, the ‘social actors’ involved in the study, to explore their perceptions regarding Catholic principalship as they experienced the phenomenon of the Aspiring Principals Program.

4.2.2.2 Symbolic interactionism.

Within the interpretivist tradition, there exist several approaches that may be adopted to comprehend the beliefs, thoughts and behaviours of research participants (Bryman, 2012). One approach, chosen as the lens for this study, is symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a framework of sociological theory concerned with the symbolic meaning people develop and rely upon when interacting socially with others (Flick, 2014; O'Donoghue, 2006). Although symbolic interactionism traces its origins to Weber’s assertion that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world, the American philosopher George Herbert Mead introduced this perspective to American sociology over 80 years ago:

The individual enters as such into his own experience only as an object, not as a subject; and he can enter as an object only on the basis of social relations and interactions, only by means of his experiential transactions with other individuals in an organised social environment. (Mead, 1934, p. 225)

Mead concluded that people develop patterns of ritual and behaviour through a process of socialisation (Annells, 1996). Herbert Blumer (1900-1987), a student of Mead’s, refined and extended the sociological theory of symbolic interactionism to a research approach. According to Blumer, when human beings associate with one other, they are involved in interpretive interaction:

Ordinarily, human beings respond to one another, as in carrying on a conversation, by interpreting one another’s actions or remarks and then reacting on the basis of the interpretation. Responses, consequently, are not made directly to the stimulation, but follow, rather, upon interpretation; further, they are likely to be different in nature from the stimulating acts, being essentially adjustment to these acts. (Blumer, 1969, p. 71)

Blumer believed that social life was expressed through symbols, especially language, and that these symbols were intrinsic to symbolic interactionism.
Gray (2013) asserted that symbolic interactionism is underpinned by three principles. These principles are: “people interpret the meaning of objects and actions in the world and then act upon those interpretations”; “meanings arise from the process of social interaction”; and “meanings are handled in, and are modified by, an interactive process used by people in dealing with phenomena that are encountered” (p. 24). Considering these three principles, symbolic interactionism suggests that meanings are not fixed or stable, but change as a result of experiences (Flick, 2014; O'Donoghue, 2006). Blumer (1969) asserted that researchers, in order to understand this change process, must develop an appreciation of the phenomenon being studied from the perspectives of participants. In practice, such study requires the researcher to enter the natural context of participants and actively engage with them (Crotty, 1998; Jeon, 2004). Therefore, research involving symbolic interactionism relies upon the collection and analysis of naturally occurring talk between people (Gray, 2013). Each of these contentions applies to this research that involved ongoing interaction with aspirants over a two-year time period and the analysis of data collected through qualitative interviews.

4.2.3 Methodology.

Methodology refers to the strategy that underpins the choice and use of particular research methods apposite for a study’s desired outcomes (Crotty, 1998). In keeping with the theoretical perspective of interpretivism and the lens of symbolic interactionism, the methodology chosen for this research was case study design.

4.2.3.1 Case study.

The case study, as a method of qualitative inquiry, provides a means through which to develop fresh insights, establish new theories or challenge existing assumptions (Neuman, 2003; Payne & Payne, 2004). The case study requires an investment of considerable time on site to personally engage in the activities and operations of the case and reflect upon the meanings of experiences (Stake, 1995). Therefore, a case study may be described as “a very detailed research inquiry into a single example (of a social process, organisation or collectivity) seen as a social unit in its own right and as an holistic entity” (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 31).
A case study has four characteristics, all of which apply to this research. Firstly, a case study has boundaries that must be delineated “as clearly as possible” (Punch, 2014, p. 122). Secondly, a case study “is a case of something” that must be defined to “give focus to the research, and to make the logic and strategy of the research clear” (Punch, 2014, p. 122). Thirdly, when adopting case study as a research methodology, there must be an explicit attempt made to “preserve the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case” (Punch, 2014, p. 122) usually through the use of clearly stated specific research questions. Finally, a case study typically relies upon the analysis of multiple data sources collected from participants in naturalistic settings (Punch, 2014). There exist seven possible foci with regard to case study methodology: individuals; attributes of individuals; actions and interactions of individuals; residues and artefacts of behaviour; settings; incidents and events; and collectives (Brewer & Hunter, 2006).

With regard to this research, the case study had a clear boundary; it was bounded by the two-year time-period associated with the conduct of the Aspiring Principals Program. The case study was ‘a case of something’; an exploration of aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship and the influences provoking discernible perception changes as they experienced the phenomenon of the program. An attempt was made to ‘preserve the wholeness, unity and integrity of the case’ via the use of four specific research questions appropriate for the study’s purpose. The research ‘relied upon the analysis of multiple data sources’ collected from aspirants in their school settings; notably pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program qualitative interview transcripts and triangulation materials. Finally, aspirant perceptions were examined individually and collectively during the data analysis process.

4.2.3.1.1 Collective case study.

Stake (1995) established three main case study categories. The first category, the intrinsic case study, involves research undertaken to enhance understanding of a particular case. The second category, the instrumental case study, involves examination of a particular case to provide insight into an issue or refine a theory. The third category, the collective case study, involves extension of an instrumental
case study to examine multiple cases where the focus is both within and across cases. Collective case study was chosen for this research.

One of the main characteristics of the collective case study is that, although it deals with several case narratives and presents them collectively, each case narrative is portrayed with its unique features and context (Shkedi, 2005). Several authors attest that the use of the collective case study enhances the potential of the overall study without forgoing the advantages of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). The collective case study yields ‘thickly described’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) individual narratives with comparisons and contrasts drawn between them during the data analysis process (Shkedi, 2005).

Yin (2003) proposed the use of four possible reporting formats for the collective case study. One format involves the use of a multi-case report:

This report will contain multiple narratives, usually presented as separate chapters or sections about each of the cases singly. In addition to these individual case narratives, the report will also contain a chapter or section covering cross-case analysis and results. (p. 147)

Similarly, when discussing possible reporting formats for the collective case study, Gray (2013) asserted:

A more focused approach is to present findings in the form of a question and answer format for each of the individual case studies. Here, the reader is then in a position to go to those questions of particular interest for each of the cases. This can be both efficient in terms of the reader’s time and allow the reader to draw comparisons across each of the studies. (p. 288)

As previously stated, collective case study was chosen as the methodology for this research. This decision was made because of the compatibility of the methodology with the research purpose: the in-depth exploration of aspirant individual and collective perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes.

During the data analysis phase of the research, a thickly described case study narrative was produced for each of the eight aspirants involved in the study to portray their perceptions. As recommended by Yin (2003), aspirant narratives were
presented individually in a separate chapter, Chapter Five: Research Results. Moreover, as recommended by Gray (2013), each narrative was organised using sub-headings representing the study’s four specific research questions to permit reader cross-case comparison. The Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis was then used to conduct cross-case analysis, the results of which are conferred in Chapter Six: Discussion.

Several researchers raise concerns with regard to the use of case study as a research methodology (Bryman, 2012; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003, 2011). The first concern relates to an inability to generalise from research findings, the result of the unique contexts often associated with case studies (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2011). A second concern relates to researcher bias. Specifically, the highly subjective and interpretative nature of case studies lends itself to dismissal as an impure methodology that is value-laden and questionable (Yin, 2003). The third and fourth concerns relate to research quality and methodological rigour respectively (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Aspects of this research designed to address these four concerns are detailed later in this chapter. Specifically, concerns regarding generalisibility are addressed in 4.4.2: Generalisability. Measures enacted to mitigate potential for researcher bias are described in 4.4.1.4: Mitigating potential for power differential and researcher bias. Measures implemented to enhance research quality and methodological rigour are detailed in 4.4.3: Dependability and 4.4.4: Confirmability respectively.

4.2.4 Methods.

There were three methods employed in the conduct of this research. The first method comprised a document search, undertaken to provide a description of the context in which the research was conducted. A description of context is provided in Chapter Two: Context of the Research and a detailed description of the Aspiring Principals Program is provided in Appendix A. The second method took the form of qualitative, semi-structured interviews. Specifically, each of the eight aspirants involved in the research participated in three qualitative, semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted before the commencement of the program, at the conclusion of the program’s first year and upon completion of the program. The third
method involved the use of additional materials during the data analysis phase of the research to triangulate data present in qualitative interview transcripts.

**4.2.4.1 Document search.**

Firestone (1993), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Punch (2014) recommended that a thorough document search be undertaken when embarking upon a research project and emphasised the important role that historical and contemporary documents play in assisting the researcher to define context. With regard to the importance of context in qualitative research, Shenton (2004) stated:

> Ultimately, the results of a qualitative study must be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organisation or organisations and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out. (p. 70)

A well-defined context enables other researchers to make informed decisions with regard to the generalisability or transferability potential of study findings and conclusions (Shenton, 2004). Considering these perspectives, the provision of a context chapter for this research was deemed important. To draft this chapter, documents pertinent to Western Australian Catholic education system, the CEOWA and aspirant schools were accessed and used. A summary of these documents is provided in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2**

*Document Search for the Research*

| a) Catholic Church documents relating to Catholic education (Byrnes, 2004). |
| b) The Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) 2009-2015; A seminal document defining the vision and structure of the Western Australian Catholic education system (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). |
| d) Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) documents relating to the governance structure of the Western Australian Catholic education system (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). |
f) The CEOWA application form for principalship vacancies.

g) 38 CECWA policy documents used to inform the content and activities of Aspiring Principals Program modules (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2014c).

h) The Leadership Framework for Catholic Schools in Western Australia (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b).

i) CEOWA documentation relating to Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014d).

j) CEOWA documentation relating to the Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

k) CEOWA internal documentation relating to the historical development of the Aspiring Principals Program (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia School Personnel Committee, 1999).

l) CEOWA documentation relating to the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009).

m) CEOWA internal documentation relating to Human Resource statistics, specifically principal, assistant principal and deputy principal age statistics and retirement projections (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2013).

n) Local school publications that provided information relating to the context of each aspirant’s school.

4.2.4.2 Qualitative interviews.

Qualitative interviewing is a well-documented and widely used method of data collection that permits engagement with research participants through purposeful and probing conversations (Punch, 2014). Qualitative interviewing is “essentially a technique or method for establishing or discovering that there are perspectives or viewpoints on events other than those of the person initiating the interview” (Farr, 1982, p. 38). The qualitative interview typically involves the researcher establishing trust with participants before asking questions relevant to the study, listening to responses carefully and reflectively and expressing interest in perspectives (Silverman, 2013). Qualitative interviews are usually audio recorded and transcribed for later analysis (Punch, 2014). Consistent with the aims of interpretivism and the lens of symbolic interactionism, the qualitative interview permits the researcher to understand the phenomenon being investigated from the perspective of the social actors who experience it (Saunders et al., 2009).
Punch (2014) used a continuum to describe the variety of interviews available for use in qualitative research. At one end of the continuum exist structured interviews where questions are pre-planned, tightly structured and standardised. At the other end of the continuum are unstructured interviews with several general questions that are used to initiate the interview. With this type of interview, specific questions emerge as the conversation progresses and the participant largely determines the direction of the conversation. In the middle of the continuum are semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview is a conversation guided by a set of well-chosen initial questions asked of the participant by the researcher. These questions focus and channel the conversation. Punch (2014) also suggested that while such questions act as the guides for the interview, the order of conversation is generally not important. Rather, the purpose of the semi-structured interview is for the researcher to remain constantly engaged with the participant and to facilitate discussion rather than dominate it. Further, Punch (2014) asserted that semi-structured interview questions should be prepared and carefully rehearsed prior to the conduct of the interview.

With regard to this research, data were collected through three, semi-structured qualitative interviews with each of the eight aspirants from the 2011 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program. The cohort commenced the program in January 2011 and graduated in December 2012. The first interview was conducted before the commencement of the program (January 2011) and provided baseline data for the research, a starting point for aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship. The second interview was conducted at the conclusion of the program’s first year (December 2011). The third interview was conducted at the conclusion of the program (December 2012). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

One measure adopted to mitigate the study’s limitations described in Chapter One: Introduction to the Research, power differential and research bias, was the employment of an experienced qualitative researcher by the CEOWA Executive. The contractor conducted aspirant interviews, transcribed audio recordings and used ‘member checking’ procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to ensure the accuracy of interview transcripts. To ensure consistency of questioning during qualitative interviews and the collection of data apposite for the study’s four specific research
questions, three interview guides (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) were designed by the researcher and used by the contractor (Appendix B).

Questions for the interview guides were initially piloted with four participants from the 2010 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program and the two members of the CEOWA peer-review group assigned by the CEOWA Executive to oversee the research. Participants were selected for the pilot based on their experiences in primary and secondary schools in country, remote and metropolitan settings. It was considered important that both members of the CEOWA peer-review group be included in the pilot because of their role in ensuring the quality and integrity of the research. One member of the CEOWA peer-review group was a former Catholic primary school principal with metropolitan and country school experience whilst the second member had experience in Catholic secondary schools and university environments and with the conduct of qualitative research. The pilot process resulted in the modification of the original set of questions for each interview that were then subjected to a second round of piloting with two additional participants from the 2010 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program and both members of the CEOWA peer-review group. One participant was a primary school assistant principal and the second was a secondary school deputy principal. The contractor used the final versions of the interview guides to conduct the three interviews associated with the research.

4.2.4.3 Data triangulation.

The research method of triangulation refers to the use of materials to verify trends present in collected data and identify and account for inconsistencies (Flick, 2014; Lincoln, 1995; Miles et al., 2014; Punch, 2014). With regard to triangulation in qualitative research, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) observed:

In effect, triangulation is a way to get to the finding in the first place, by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it from different sources by using different methods and by squaring the finding with others it needs to be squared with. (p. 300)

The purpose of triangulation, however, is not to arrive at consistency across data sources. Rather, inconsistencies revealed through the process are valuable because they provide opportunities to uncover deeper meaning in the data (Patton, 2002).
In the context of this research, triangulation occurred in four ways. Firstly, after coding and categorising interview data from aspirant transcripts, the field notes generated by the contractor employed to conduct interviews were used to verify aspirant perceptions and identify inconsistencies. Secondly, aspirant journals (Appendix C), submitted at the end of the program’s first (December 2011) and second years (December 2012) respectively, were used to triangulate mid-program and end-of-program interview data related to the study’s four specific research questions. Thirdly, aspirant leadership vision statements (Appendix D) developed throughout the program were used to corroborate end-of-program interview data related to specific research question two (factors enhancing interest in principalship). Finally, aspirant cover letters and application forms submitted for principalship vacancies (Appendix E) whilst participating in the program were used to confirm end-of-program interview data related to specific research questions one (Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance) and two (factors enhancing interest in principalship). A specific example illustrating the use of triangulation during the data analysis phase of the research is provided in 4.5.1 Stage one: Data reduction.

4.3 Research Participants

Punch (2014) attested that in qualitative research, participants are selected in a deliberate way, appropriate for the purpose of the study. Amongst the variety of selection approaches available, Gray (2013) discussed the notion of the representative sample whereby the researcher:

…deliberately selects the subjects against one or more traits to give what is believed to be a representative sample. This approach may, indeed, succeed in achieving a true cross-section of the population. (p. 152)

In the context of this research, the entire 2011 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program was invited to participate in the research because, as a group, they represented a typical sample of other program cohorts. Consequently, it was anticipated that research findings and conclusions had the potential to be generalised to successive cohorts. Moreover, it was envisaged that involvement of a complete cohort might galvanise aspirant interest in the research and result in the provision of and capture of high quality interview data for analysis. A summary of participants,
including their chosen pseudonyms and roles, type and location of schools during the research period, is provided in Table 4.3.

### Table 4.3
*Research Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Aspirant role</th>
<th>School type</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff</td>
<td>Deputy principal</td>
<td>Year seven-12 Catholic secondary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>Head of junior school</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year 12 Catholic composite school</td>
<td>Country town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Assistant principal</td>
<td>Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school</td>
<td>Metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.4 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research attempts to build trustworthiness in order to make a claim regarding the methodological soundness of a study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). In this sense, ‘trustworthiness’ refers to the measure of a study’s legitimacy and quality (Silverman, 2013). In qualitative research, trustworthiness is assessed using four criteria: credibility; generalisability; dependability; and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A summary of the measures adopted during the conduct of this research to meet these criteria is provided in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4
*Measures Enacted to Establish the Trustworthiness of the Research*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality criterion</th>
<th>Measures adopted during the conduct of the research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1 Credibility</td>
<td>Utilising established qualitative research methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring related research findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documenting the research context and establishing trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mitigating potential for power differential and researcher bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2 Generalisability</td>
<td>Assisting readers to determine generalisability potential by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• defining research context;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• producing thickly described case study narratives;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• providing detailed cross-case analysis;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• linking research findings to the literature review; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• proposing an integrated model of principal preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3 Dependability</td>
<td>Stating research questions and using them to guide the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting data as required by research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member checking interview transcripts and triangulating data</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating meaningful parallelism across data sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in a CEOWA peer-review process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adopting an ‘auditing approach’ to data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.4 Confirmability</td>
<td>Explicitly stating concerns regarding research limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adopting measures to mitigate research limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicitly detailing research methods and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linking research conclusions with reduced/displayed data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retaining research data for five years post-submission of thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.4.1 Credibility.**

Several authors posit that qualitative research is considered credible when results reflect the perspectives of participants (Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). Four measures were adopted to ensure credibility in the
conduct of this research: utilising established qualitative research methods; exploring related research findings; documenting the research context and establishing trust; and mitigating potential for power differential and researcher bias.

4.4.1.1 Utilising established qualitative research methods.

Yin (2003) emphasised the use of established research methods when planning and conducting the study of phenomena. Likewise, Shenton (2004) concluded:

The specific procedures employed, such as the line of questioning pursued in the data gathering sessions and the methods of data analysis, should be derived, where possible, from those that have been successfully utilised in previous comparable projects. (p. 64)

Considering these perspectives, a document study was undertaken to inform the research context. Instruments appropriate for the research were devised and used to collect data for analysis. These instruments were interview guides and three qualitative, semi-structured interviews (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) with each of the eight aspirants involved in the research. Data, in the form of interview transcripts, were analysed using the three stages of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis. In stage one, the processes of coding and categorising were used to reduce the data. During this stage, triangulation was used to verify trends in the data and identify and account for inconsistencies. In stage two, data were displayed using a series of tables and eight thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Narratives largely comprised the natural language of aspirants in the form of quotations extracted from interview transcripts. In stage three, data tables and aspirant narratives were subjected to cross-case analysis using selected ‘tactics’ recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) for stage three of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: drawing and verifying conclusions.

4.4.1.2 Exploring related research findings.

The ability of researchers to relate their findings to an existing body of theory is a key criterion for evaluating works of qualitative inquiry (Silverman, 2013). In the context of this research, a review of relevant literature was undertaken for two
reasons. Firstly, the review of literature culminated in the formulation of four specific research questions that, collectively, were used to guide the study. Secondly, the literature review provided a body of knowledge against which themes emerging from the analysis of collected data could be compared and contrasted. Comparison and contrast, a tactic recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), was instrumental for the cross-case analysis process. Such analysis contributed to the formulation of responses for each of the four specific research questions; research conclusions; a proposed integrated model of principal preparation; implications and recommendations for the profession; and potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.

4.4.1.3 Documenting the research context and establishing trust.

Several authors recommend prolonged engagement between the researcher, research participants and where appropriate, their organisations in order to accurately describe the context associated with a research project (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accurately describing context is important because it permits other researchers to make informed decisions regarding the potential for study findings and conclusions to be generalised (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Punch, 2014; Shenton, 2004). Prolonged engagement between the researcher, research participants and their organisations when documenting the research context also increases the probability that trusting relationships will develop. Development of trust is vital for ensuring the provision and capture of high-quality data for analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Considering these conclusions, a review of the context of the Western Australian Catholic education system, Catholic education leadership programs and the Aspiring Principals Program was undertaken. Additionally, the researcher is a long-established member of the system who has served in a variety of school-based and systemic roles over a 25-year period. As such, the researcher was privy to ‘key insider knowledge’ regarding the context and culture of the Catholic education system and schools. That is, because of his role in the organisation, the researcher was able to access information pertinent to the study that may not have been available to parties external to the organisation. Furthermore, as stated in Chapter One: Research Defined, the researcher is also the designer and convenor of the
Aspiring Principals Program. Despite the potential limitations associated with this reality, a benefit was the development of collegial, trusting relationships with aspirants over the two-year period associated with the conduct of the program and the research.

4.4.1.4 Mitigating potential for power differential and researcher bias.

As detailed in Chapter One: Research Defined, there were two interrelated limitations associated with the research. Firstly, there existed a potential power differential between the researcher and the eight aspirants involved in the study, especially during the early stages of the program and the study where there existed little opportunity to establish trust. Secondly, because the researcher held the dual role of program designer-convenor and researcher, there existed potential for readers of this thesis to perceive researcher bias. To mitigate these potential limitations, six safeguards were adopted and applied during the conduct of the research.

Firstly, the researcher strictly adhered to the ethical requirements for conducting research as detailed by both The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee (see 4.6 Ethical Considerations). Secondly, both potential limitations and the researcher’s motivation for conducting the study were explicitly stated during the research proposal and ethics approval phases of the research and in Chapter One: Research Defined (see 1.3 Researcher Motives and 1.7 Limitations of the Research). Thirdly, the CEOWA Executive decided to contract the services of an experienced, qualitative researcher to conduct the three sets of interviews associated with the study. The contractor also transcribed interview audio recordings and member checked resultant transcripts to ensure accuracy. Following the completion of the member checking process, the contractor met with the researcher and his supervisor to examine the field notes, generated during qualitative interviews, and discuss preliminary observations with regard to the data.

Fourthly, the researcher was required by the CEOWA Executive to participate in a peer-review process for the duration of the study (2011-2014) to ensure the quality of the research and mitigate the potential for researcher bias. The CEOWA peer-review group comprised the researcher, his immediate line manager (Team Leader, Leadership and Organisational Development Team) and the Assistant
Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia. The CEOWA peer-review group met monthly to review the progress of the research, discuss the procedural quality of data collection methods and assess the integrity of data analysis methods. The peer-review group also scrutinised responses for the four specific research questions; conclusions; the proposed integrated model of principal preparation; implications and recommendations for the profession; and potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.

Fifthly, the CEOWA peer-review group determined that triangulation would be used during the data analysis process to verify trends detected in collected data and identify and account for inconsistencies. Finally, the CEOWA peer-review group determined that the eight, thickly described case study narratives, produced during the data display stage of the data analysis process, would be subjected to a member-checking regime with aspirants. Member checking occurred as case study narratives were built progressively over the course of the research (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) and prior to their inclusion in the final thesis.

4.4.2 Generalisability.

Generalisability, also referred to as transferability, is concerned with the extent to which the findings of a research project can be applied to other studies (Merriam, 2009). Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) offered the following observations with regard to the generalisability of research conclusions emanating from the case study, the chosen methodology for this research:

We need to know whether the conclusions of a study, a case study in particular, have any larger import. Are they transferable to other contexts? Do they fit? How far can they be generalised? (p. 314)

Likewise, Punch (2014) stated: “A common criticism of the case study concerns its generalisability: ‘This study is based on only one case, so how can we generalize?’ Because this reaction is so common, we need to take this question seriously” (p. 122).

Considering this assertion, Punch (2014) made two recommendations with regard to generalising from the case study. Firstly, he asserted that a case might be “so important, interesting or misunderstood that it deserves study in its own right”
In these situations, it is not the intention of the researcher to generalise, “but rather to understand this case in its complexity and its entirety, as well as in its context” (p. 122). Secondly, the value of the case study approach to research may lie in the opportunity to develop propositions. Punch (2014) stated: “To develop propositions means that, based on the case studied, the researcher puts forward one or more propositions, they could be called hypotheses, which link concepts or factors within the case” (p. 123). Such propositions do not prove generalisability, but rather suggest it with a caveat that testing through further research be undertaken to determine validity (Punch, 2014).

Other authors suggest that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information regarding the study is provided to enable others to make decisions regarding the potential for findings and conclusions to be generalised (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These authors maintain that since the researcher knows only the ‘sending context’ of the study, he or she cannot make inferences regarding the transferability of findings to other contexts. As such, the responsibility lies with other researchers who are considering using findings or replicating the study. Shenton (2004) reached a similar conclusion: “After perusing the description within the research report of the context in which the work was undertaken, readers must determine how far they can be confident in transferring to other situations the results and conclusions presented” (p. 70).

Each of these contentions applies to this research. This study appears to be unique and, from the perspective of the CEOWA Executive, is worthwhile because findings and conclusions have the potential to enhance the quality of the program and system succession planning capability. In this sense, the decision to conduct the research confirmed Punch’s (2014) conclusion that “it deserves study in its own right” (p. 122). Whilst it is acknowledged that the unique nature of the context of this research limits the degree to which findings and conclusions may be transferred to other studies, an integrated model of principal preparation with generalisability potential is proposed. The model is comprised of three, integrated pieces with the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship: program design principles or the ‘building blocks’ of effective programs; program theory; and active learning experiences. It is suggested that local, national or international designers of principal preparation programs could use this model when seeking to
modify existing or develop new programs. Finally, the conclusions of Lincoln and Guba (1985), Firestone (1993) and Shenton (2004) apply to this study. Specifically, it is the responsibility of other researchers to determine whether or not they are able to test the model or use the findings and conclusions of this study when conducting planned research.

Four specific measures suggested by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) were adopted in the conduct of this study to assist other researchers to make decisions regarding the generalisability of findings and conclusions. Firstly, a description of the research context was furnished in Chapter Two: Context of the Research and Appendix A: The Aspiring Principals Program. Secondly, eight, thickly described case study narratives were provided in Chapter Five: Research Results and the results emanating from cross-case analysis were detailed in Chapter Six: Discussion. Thirdly, within this chapter, the themes emerging from data were compared and contrasted with the literature review provided in Chapter Three. Finally, the proposed integrated model of principal preparation, provided in Chapter Seven: Review and Conclusions, contained an explicit statement regarding generalisability potential including the caveat that the model be subjected to research to determine its efficacy.

4.4.3 Dependability.

Dependability refers to the use of techniques that would enable the attainment of similar results if the research were to be repeated in the same context with the same methods (Shenton, 2004). Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) made similar claims when discussing the dependability of qualitative research:

The underlying issue here is whether the process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods. We are addressing issues of quality and integrity: Have things been done with reasonable care? (p. 312)

Similarly, Gray (2013) stated: “Dependability refers to the stability of findings” (p. 184). Therefore, it is important that researchers enact measures to strengthen the dependability of their studies.
Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) posed 10 recommendations for enhancing the dependability of qualitative research, six of which were employed in the conduct of this study. Firstly, the research questions were clearly stated “and the features of the study’s design were congruent with them” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312). That is, the four specific research questions underpinning the study were designed to explore aspirant perceptions before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Each specific research question influenced the design of questions for the interview guides that were subsequently used to conduct the three qualitative, semi-structured interviews (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) with program aspirants. The four specific research questions also directed the data analysis process, the results of which influenced the formulation of responses for these questions, research conclusions; the proposed integrated model of principal preparation; implications and recommendations for the profession; and potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.

Secondly, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) suggested that one way to demonstrate dependability is for the research findings to “show meaningful parallelism across data sources (participants, contexts, times)” (p. 312). The timing and conduct of each set of aspirant interviews is an example of a measure enacted to ensure parallelism. Specifically, all aspirant interviews for the time period (i.e. pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) were conducted consecutively using the same interview guide to ensure consistency of questioning and collection of data apposite for the aims of the research. Thirdly, and related to this recommendation, data for the research was “collected across the full range of appropriate settings, times, respondents, and so on, as suggested by the research questions” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312).

Reflecting the fourth and fifth recommendations of Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), data quality checks were made to mitigate bias and forms of peer or collegial review were enacted. Several measures, described previously, were implemented during the conduct of the research to ensure adherence to these recommendations. These measures included the member checking of aspirant interview transcripts and case study narratives and participation in a CEOWA peer-review process. Finally, an ‘auditing approach’ to the collection of data was adopted.
(Miles et al., 2014). That is, complete records of all phases of the research have been maintained in a form that would enable other researchers to replicate the study if a decision were made to do so post-consideration of contextual factors (Bryman, 2012). It was envisaged that this approach would enable readers to ‘follow the trail’ from potential additions to the existing body of theory backwards through implications and recommendations for the profession; research conclusions; responses to specific research questions; aspirant case study narratives and data display tables; to aspirant categories and codes identified within qualitative interview transcripts.

4.4.4 Confirmability.

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the perspectives of the researcher are grounded in the perspectives of research participants (Gray, 2013). With regard to the issue of confirmability, Shenton (2004) insisted: “Steps must be taken to help ensure, as far as possible, that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher” (p. 72). Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) attested that confirmability “can be framed as one of relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged researcher biases or, at the minimum, explicitness about the inevitable biases that exist” (p. 312). Researchers, therefore, must enact measures to enhance the confirmability of their studies.

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) posed seven recommendations for enhancing research confirmability, five of which were adopted in the conduct of this study. Firstly, the researcher was “as explicit and as self-aware as possible about personal assumptions, values and biases, and affective states, and how they may have come into play during the study” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312). As detailed in Chapter One: Research Defined, the motivations of the researcher were explicitly stated. Further, statements were made regarding the two limitations associated with the study: potential for a perceived power differential between the researcher and participants and researcher bias. To address these limitations, several measures were enacted including the engagement of a contractor to conduct interviews, transcribe audio recordings and member check transcripts. Aspirant interview data were also subjected to triangulation, case study narratives were member checked and a
CEOWA peer-review process was transacted over the research period. Secondly, the study’s general methods and procedures, including those for data collection and analysis (data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions), were explicitly described (see Chapter 4.5 Data Analysis). These methodological and procedural descriptions were provided to guide readers through “the actual sequence of how data were collected, processed, condensed/transformed, and displayed for specific conclusion drawing” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312). Thirdly, it is suggested that these methods and procedures are “detailed enough to be audited by an outsider” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312). Fourthly, responses for each of the four specific research questions used to guide the study, provided in Chapter Seven: Review and Conclusions, are “explicitly linked with exhibits of condensed/displayed data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 312) provided in Chapter Six: Discussion. Finally, the study’s data have been retained and are available for reanalysis by others as required by The University of Notre Dame Australia.

4.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative research may involve the collection of large amounts of text-based data requiring analysis and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data analysis involves four practices: identification of textual codes; categorisation; theme generation; and theory building (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2013). With regard to this research, these four practices were enacted through the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis, illustrated in Figure 4.2.

![Figure 4.2: The Miles and Huberman interactive model of data management and analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12)](image-url)
This model is comprised of three interrelated stages: data reduction; data display; and drawing and verifying conclusions from the data. However, these stages do not represent a sequential process, but an interactive one where “even at the final stage of writing up, gaps or inconsistencies may trigger the need for further data collection” (Gray, 2013, p. 612). An overview of the data analysis process as it pertains to this research is provided in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5
Data Analysis Stages for the Research

4.5.1 Stage one: Data reduction
- Coding interview transcript data
- Categorising
- Triangulating data
- Using categories to create preliminary data tables

4.5.2 Stage two: Data display
- Refining preliminary data tables to identify draft themes
- Drafting thickly described case study narratives
- Member checking case study narratives

4.5.3 Stage three: Drawing and verifying conclusions
- Using refined data tables and case study narratives to:
  - note patterns and themes;
  - see plausibility;
  - cluster;
  - count; and
  - compare and contrast.
- Confirming themes by:
  - differentiating; and
  - subsuming particulars into the general.
- Building a logical chain of evidence and making conceptual/theoretical coherence to:
  - formulate responses for the four specific research questions;
  - present research conclusions;
  - propose an integrated model of principal preparation;
  - pose implications and recommendations for the profession; and
  - suggest potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.
In the context of this research, the first stage, data reduction, involved the compression of interview transcript data through coding and categorisation to make it manageable and coherent (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Post-categorisation, triangulation using additional materials was used to verify categories and search for, identify and account for inconsistencies. The second stage, data display, involved the “organisation of compressed information to permit conclusion drawing and action” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11). Several researchers recommend the use of quotations, narrative text or tables with text rather than numbers in its cells when displaying data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2011). Different display techniques permit the extrapolation of patterns from the data and ensure ease of readability for others (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Data display for this research assumed two forms. Firstly, a series of tables reflecting the three research stages (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) were used to display data. Secondly, eight thickly described case study narratives were created; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Each narrative was organised using sub-headings representing the four specific research questions. The final stage, drawing and verifying conclusions, involved the use of multiple tactics to analytically reflect upon data presented in the previous stage before making and confirming conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2013).

4.5.1 Stage one: Data reduction.

Data reduction involves the compression, sorting and organisation of data to permit conclusion drawing and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data reduction process for this research involved the coding and categorisation of data present in qualitative interview transcripts. The coding and categorisation processes were based on those articulated by Saldaña (2013) in his streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry illustrated in Figure 4.3.

The first data reduction step involved a careful reading of each transcript at least twice whilst listening to the audio recording of the interview. This process occurred each time a set of aspirant transcripts was received from the contractor employed to conduct interviews, transcribe audio recordings and member check transcripts. This practice was enacted as a result of the recommendations of several researchers who suggest repeated ocular and auditory scanning of qualitative data.
sources to identify initial patterns and themes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Upon completion of transcript reading, one hard-copy transcript was selected at random and processed using Saldaña’s (2013) coding method. According to Saldaña (2013), a code is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Therefore, coding involves the identification of words or short phrases from a qualitative data source that capture the essence of a research question (Saldaña, 2013). When engaging in the coding process, a combination of coloured highlighters and symbols were used to identify codes on the hard copy transcript. As the process unfolded, a coding legend was constructed and maintained on a separate Word document to ensure consistency.

*Figure 4.3: A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry (Saldaña, 2013, p. 12)*

Upon completion of transcript reading, one hard-copy transcript was selected at random and processed using Saldaña’s (2013) coding method. According to Saldaña (2013), a code is “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (p. 3). Therefore, coding involves the identification of words or short phrases from a qualitative data source that capture the essence of a research question (Saldaña, 2013). When engaging in the coding process, a combination of coloured highlighters and symbols were used to identify codes on the hard copy transcript. As the process unfolded, a coding legend was constructed and maintained on a separate Word document to ensure consistency.
After coding the first transcript, categorisation occurred. Categorisation refers to the process whereby coded data sharing similar characteristics are grouped together (Saldaña, 2013). This practice involved the use of “tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data ‘look alike’ and ‘feel alike’ when grouping them together” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 9). For example, during the pre-program phase of the research, one aspirant described the role of the Catholic principal as “a pseudo human resource manager responsible for the recruitment, development, appraisal and wellbeing of staff.” In this example, the following codes were applied: ‘Staff recruitment’; ‘Staff development’; ‘Staff appraisal’; and ‘Staff wellbeing’. After considering the relevant body of knowledge presented in the literature review, a decision was made to group these codes together under the category, ‘Human resource management.’

Upon completion of the coding and categorisation process for the first transcript, both processes were repeated for each transcript in the series. As new codes and categories were identified, previously analysed transcripts were revisited to ensure appropriate data coding and categorisation. As the coding and categorisation processes progressed, a series of preliminary data tables were constructed. An excerpt from a preliminary data table is provided in Table 4.6. This table displays the pre-program categories associated with specific research question one: aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. For each of the research phases (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program), tables reflecting the four research questions were produced with categories presented in horizontal rows and aspirant case study numbers placed atop vertical columns. A tick was placed below an aspirant’s case study number if the category was evident in their transcript and a total frequency across all case studies was indicated in the final column.

Upon completion of the coding and categorisation processes for both mid-program and end-of-program interview transcripts, triangulation was used to validate categories and search for, identify and account for inconsistent findings. As explained previously, four additional sources of data were used during the triangulation process: field notes generated by the contractor during each set of interviews; aspirant journals submitted at the end of the program’s first and second years respectively; aspirant leadership vision statements; and aspirant cover letters.
and application forms submitted for principalship vacancies whilst participating in the program.

Table 4.6
Excerpt from a Preliminary Data Table: Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions Regarding Catholic Principalship Role Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing school finances</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishing and nurturing relationships with school community members using Gospel values</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensuring accountability</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading instruction, motivating staff and driving performance</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human resource management</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading school Catholicity using Gospel-based words and actions</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolving legal issues</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing capital development</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Catering for staff wellbeing</td>
<td>✓ ✓ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing industrial relations</td>
<td>✓ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolving conflict</td>
<td>✓ 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anomalies detected through triangulation triggered the re-assessment of data collection methods, the data itself and data reduction processes. In some cases, aspirants were contacted to clarify inconsistencies. For example, the aspirant referred to by the pseudonym, Helen indicated disincentives in her end-of-program journal that were not present in her corresponding interview transcript. Specifically, Helen stated:

Separation from immediate family to commence principalship in a town where I know no one is a disincentive, especially for my young children who are emotionally connected to their grandparents. The loss of family support,
particularly from my mum when it comes to before and after school care for my children, is a significant challenge for me.

After carefully re-examining the aspirant’s interview transcript and listening to the audio recording, Helen was contacted and the anomaly was discussed. As a result of the conversation, Helen’s journal entry was coded and categorised. The process of triangulation was highly valued during the data reduction phase of the research because it provided a “more three-dimensional perspective of the phenomenon” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 300).

4.5.2 Stage two: Data display.

Data display involves the re-assessment, refinement and presentation of categories produced through data reduction to permit decision-making with regard to further analysis or the drawing of preliminary conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Based on the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994), two forms of data display were selected and used during this stage of the analysis process. The first form comprised a series of refined data tables reflecting aspirant responses for the four specific research questions (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program). The second form comprised eight, thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research.

When constructing refined data tables, the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review was used to re-organise preliminary data table categories into draft themes. For example, analysis of aspirant pre-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance revealed a number of categories. These categories included ‘Managing school finances’; ‘Ensuring accountability’; ‘Human resource management’; ‘Resolving legal issues’; ‘Managing capital development; ‘Catering for staff wellbeing’; ‘Managing industrial relations’; and ‘Resolving conflict’. These categories were identified in the literature review as principalship responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Consequently, the categories were regrouped under the draft theme by the same name. An excerpt from a refined data table illustrating this example is provided in Table 4.7. Refined data tables associated with all phases of the research, provided in Chapter Six:
Discussion, were subsequently used during the third data analysis stage, drawing and verifying conclusions.

Table 4.7
Excerpt from a Refined Data Table: Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions Regarding Catholic Principalship Role Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case Study Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Catholic Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading school Catholicity using Gospel-based words and actions</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Teaching and Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading instruction, motivating staff and driving performance</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Stewardship of Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing school finances</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensuring accountability</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human resource management</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolving legal issues</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing capital development</td>
<td>✓ ✓ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Catering for staff wellbeing</td>
<td>✓ ✓ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing industrial relations</td>
<td>✓ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolving conflict</td>
<td>✓ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community Engagement and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishing and nurturing relationships based on Gospel values</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data displayed in this way achieved three aims. Firstly, the tabulation process ensured a consistent approach to the display of data. Secondly, voluminous text-based data from aspirant interviews were distilled and displayed in a concise, readable form. Thirdly, presentation of data in this manner permitted decision-making with regard to further data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Refined data
tables and aspirant interview transcripts were then used to build the second form of data display: eight thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research.

The case study narrative construction process comprised three steps. Firstly, refined data tables containing draft themes and their respective categories were re-examined. Secondly, aspirant interview transcripts were studied and quotations consistent with draft themes and categories were identified. Thirdly, relevant quotations, the natural language of aspirants, were used to construct case study narratives using sub-headings representing the four specific research questions as an organiser. The sub-headings were: ‘Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance’; ‘Factors enhancing interest in principalship’; ‘Factors diminishing interest in principalship’; and ‘Self-efficacy to commence principalship’. The result of this data display technique were thick descriptions capturing aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Aspirant case study narratives are provided in Chapter Five: Research Results.

4.5.3 Stage three: Drawing and verifying conclusions.

The final stage of the Miles and Huberman (1994) model is the analysis of data, displayed in the previous stage, to draw and verify conclusions. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) suggested the use of 13 possible tactics when drawing and verifying conclusions from displayed data. These tactics are “arranged roughly from the descriptive to the explanatory and from the concrete to the more conceptual and abstract” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 277). A summary of suggested tactics and the purpose of each are provided in Table 4.8.

In the context of this research, nine of the 13 suggested tactics were used in the cross-case analysis process to draw and verify conclusions. These tactics were: noting patters and themes; seeing plausibility; clustering; counting; making comparisons and contrasts; partitioning variables; subsuming particulars into the general; building a logical chain of evidence; and making conceptual/theoretical coherence. Each of these tactics will now be briefly described.
Table 4.8
 Recommended Tactics for Drawing and Verifying Conclusions (Miles et al., 2014, p. 277)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactic</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Noting patterns and themes</td>
<td>To assist the researcher to determine ‘what goes with what’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seeing plausibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clustering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Making metaphors</td>
<td>To further the process of integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Counting</td>
<td>To permit rapid assessment of significant trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Making comparisons and contrasts</td>
<td>To sharpen understanding of displayed data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Partitioning variables</td>
<td>To re-assess themes and categories presented in refined data tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Subsuming particulars into the general</td>
<td>To identify more abstract relationships between variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Factoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Noting the relationships between variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Finding intervening variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Building a logical chain of evidence</td>
<td>To systematically assemble a coherent understanding of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Making conceptual/theoretical coherence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When engaging in the cross-case analysis process using refined data tables and aspirant narratives created during the data display stage, four tactics were used to determine “what’s there” and “what goes with what” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 277). These tactics were: noting patterns and themes; seeing plausibility; clustering; and counting. The first tactic, noting patterns and themes, involved observing “recurring patterns, themes, or ‘gestalts’ that pull together many separate pieces of data” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 277). For example, when analysing aspirant pre-program perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in principalship, three recurring categories were observed. These categories were: ‘Establish and nurture a Catholic school community with relationships based on Gospel values’; ‘Build school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes’; and ‘Support marginalised
school community members.’ Based on the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review, these categories were eventually grouped together to form the theme, ‘Community Engagement and Development.’

The second tactic, seeing plausibility, involved the use of intuition when interpreting data (Miles et al., 2014). For example, collegial support networks comprising aspirant principals, program colleagues, coaches and guest principals who hosted ‘Inside Leadership’ modules appeared to exert a positive influence on aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. However, care was taken not to move quickly to conclusions and preliminary interpretations were subjected “to other tactics of conclusion drawing and verification” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 278) examined in the remainder of this section.

The third tactic, clustering, was used better understand aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship by “grouping and then conceptualising objects with similar patterns or characteristics” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 279). For example, when analysing aspirant end-of-program perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in principalship, several categories with similar characteristics were observed. These categories were: ‘Develop teacher capacity’; ‘Lead holistic student development’; ‘Encourage students to apply learning to benefit others (Christian service learning)’; and ‘Establish high expectations for teaching and student learning.’ Using the tactic of clustering, these categories were ultimately grouped together to form the theme, ‘Teaching and Learning.’ This decision was based on the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review.

The fourth tactic, counting, was used during both the data display and drawing and verifying conclusions stages of the data analysis process. Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) recommended the use of this tactic “(1) to see rapidly what you have in a large batch of data, (2) to verify a hunch or hypothesis, and (3) to keep yourself analytically honest, protecting against bias” (p. 282). An example of the use of counting as a tactic occurred when analysing aspirant pre-program perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in principalship. The refined data table and every aspirant narrative associated with this research question indicated concerns with regard to the requirement of the Catholic principal to manage school finances.
This observation was confirmed by the literature and could not be overlooked because of the frequency of appearance in the data.

The fifth and sixth tactics, making comparisons and contrasts and partitioning variables respectively, were used to sharpen understanding of data displayed in refined data tables and aspirant case study narratives. With regard to the fifth tactic, making comparisons and contrasts, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) stated:

> Although comparisons are supposedly odious, they are what we do naturally and quickly when faced with any life experience, including looking at a qualitative data display. (p. 284)

This tactic was used two ways when analysing data. Firstly, comparisons and contrasts were made when reading tabulated data across cases. For example, the refined data table displaying aspirant pre-program perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship indicated that three aspirants perceived high self-efficacy whilst three aspirants expressed low self-efficacy. The question was asked: ‘What is the difference between the groups?’ Analysis of data from relevant interview transcripts revealed the answer. Aspirants from the high self-efficacy group were supported by their principals through the provision of opportunities to lead school-based strategic initiatives, access to necessary resources and time in the form of reduced classroom contact. Such support and opportunities were absent from the experiences of aspirants who expressed low self-efficacy perceptions.

Secondly, aspirant data were compared with and contrasted against the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review. This tactic assisted the analysis process in three ways. Firstly, the tactic enabled the verification of patterns detected in the data (Miles et al., 2014). For example, end-of-program data regarding aspirant self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship indicated the positive influence of top-down support networks on aspirant perceptions. Aspirants considered CEOWA support staff, facilitators of several program modules, valued network members. Aspirants indicated that these personnel not only delivered principal-specific knowledge, they provided vicarious experiences and social persuasion, two important self-efficacy sources defined by Bandura (1986), and assurances of technical support during and beyond the novice years of principalship. Additionally, the positive influence of top-down support networks reflected the
conclusions of other researchers such as Orr and Orphanos (2011), Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009). Secondly, the tactic enabled the identification of findings present in the literature review, but absent in the data (Miles et al., 2014). One example was aspirant articulation of the role of the Catholic principal as educational leader, identified in the literature as the role component, teaching and learning. Despite aspirants identifying this role component and deeming it an attractive aspect of principalship, none articulated understanding in a manner consistent with leaders in the field such as Robinson (2011) or DuFour (2002). This finding highlighted an area of program deficiency that was subsequently recommended for refinement. Thirdly, the tactic assisted the identification of aspects of the research that were present in the data, but absent in the literature review, representing potential additions to the existing body of theory (Miles et al., 2014). One example was the unique relationship between aspirant reflection on program theory, leadership vision statement formulation and capacity to articulate attraction to Catholic principalship.

With regard to the sixth tactic, partitioning variables, Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) stated: “At the stage of initial conceptualization, it pays to ‘unbundle’ variables rather than assume a monolithic simplicity” (p. 285). This tactic was used when considering refined data tables and aspirant narratives across all four specific research questions used to guide this study. For example, aspirants overwhelmingly endorsed acting principalship or internship as positive influences provoking discernible perception changes. Acting principalship or internship was initially categorised then grouped with other program-related activities under the theme, ‘Active Learning Experiences.’ However, because of the apparent importance of these experiences across all dimensions of the research, a decision was made to partition these variables.

The seventh tactic, subsuming particulars into the general, was used when attempting to identify more abstract relationships between variables. This tactic involved the re-examination of previously clustered categories and asking: “What is this specific thing an instance of?” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 285). For example, when analysing aspirant end-of-program perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship during the data reduction stage, three influential support network categories were identified. The first category, ‘Collegial support networks’,
comprised aspirant principals, program colleagues, coaches and ‘Inside Leadership’
guest principals. The second category, ‘Top-down support networks’, comprised
CEOWA support staff with specialist knowledge that facilitated program modules.
The third category, ‘Bottom-up support networks’, comprised teachers, support staff,
students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community.
Each of these networks exposed aspirants to one or more of Bandura’s (1986) self-
efficacy sources, notably vicarious experiences and/or social persuasion and, in
doing so, influenced self-efficacy perceptions. Using this tactic, the three categories
were eventually incorporated into the theme, ‘Support Networks.’

The eighth and ninth tactics, building a logical chain of evidence and making
conceptual/theoretical coherence, were used when attempting to systematically
assemble a coherent understanding of the data. First, a trail of evidence was
gradually built. The construction process involved:

…getting an initial sense of the main factors, plotting the logical relationships
tentatively, testing them against the yield from the next wave of data
collection, and modifying and refining them into a new explanatory map,
which then gets tested against new cases and instances. (Miles et al., 2014, p.
290)

This tactic required the use of two interlocking cycles. The first cycle, ‘enumerative
induction’, involved the collection of “a number and variety of instances all going in
the same direction” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 290). The second cycle, ‘eliminative
induction’, required the testing of “hypothesis against alternatives” and looking
“carefully for qualifications that bound the generality of the conclusion” (Miles et al.,
2014, p. 290).

The final tactic, making conceptual/theoretical coherence, involved the “move
from metaphors and interrelationships to constructs, and from there to theories” and
accounting “for the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the phenomena under study” (Miles et al.,
2014, p. 292). This tactic was applied in four ways, when: formulating responses for
each of the four specific research questions used to guide the study; presenting
conclusions based on these findings; proposing an integrated model for principal
preparation for the consideration of local, national and international program
designers; posing implications and recommendations for the profession; and
suggesting potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal
preparation. In the context of these actions, findings were delivered from the “bottom up, from the field to the concepts” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 293) and were directly applicable to the research. At no time was a construct devised without the support of a logical chain of factual evidence.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an essential part of research (Silverman, 2006).
Likewise, Punch (2014) stated:

Social science researchers need to be alert to the various constraints around their research and to the ethical implications of any decisions they make. They engage in principled deliberation about morally salient issues and acceptable courses of action in particular research situations. In doing so, they can draw on their understanding of the particulars of each situation and of the personal and professional values infusing it, as well as on their critical interpretation of the regulation and various guidelines available to them. (p. 37)

Considering these assertions, this study was conducted in accordance with the requirements of both The University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee. Firstly, ethics clearance and research approval was granted from both committees prior to the conduct of the study (Appendix F and G). Secondly, the following measures were enacted:

a) The researcher drafted and mailed a letter to each of the eight aspirants from the 2011 cohort of the Aspiring Principals Program inviting and encouraging their participation in the research. The letter emphasised the importance of the study for the Western Australian Catholic education system, encouraged aspirant honesty and highlighted the confidential nature of the research (Appendix H).

b) A research information sheet was included with the invitation letter (Appendix I). This sheet contained specific details regarding the research including data collection processes, research limitations and planned mitigation measures. The sheet also contained details regarding the ethical dimensions of the research including the voluntary and confidential nature of the study, the right of aspirants to withdraw, publication protocols and data storage and retention arrangements.
c) A participant consent form (Appendix J) was included with the invitation letter and information sheet. This form reiterated the purpose, dimensions and procedures of the research. Each aspirant was asked to sign and return the form prior to the commencement of data collection.

d) The researcher scheduled a meeting with aspirants at their respective schools. During these meetings, the purpose and procedures of the research and the two potential limitations and planned mitigation measures were tabled and discussed. Aspirant questions were answered and concerns resolved.

e) All interview audio recordings, interview transcripts, triangulation and data analysis materials have been stored electronically on password secured computers with hard copies kept in a locked filing cabinet.

f) All electronic and hard copy data will be destroyed five years post-submission of this thesis for examination.

4.7 Design Summary

A design summary for the research is provided in Table 4.9. Details regarding the timeline of the research, milestones and person(s) responsible are provided within this table.

Table 4.9
Design Summary for the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Responsible person(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2010</td>
<td>• Low risk ethics clearance granted by The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee</td>
<td>• The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Research approval granted by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee</td>
<td>• Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Approval to proceed with research granted by the Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia</td>
<td>• Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Responsible Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2011</td>
<td>• Letter of invitation, research information sheet and participation consent form confirmed and mailed to aspirants. Individual meetings organised with aspirants</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual meetings with aspirants. Signed consent forms collected</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interview guides drafted, piloted and confirmed</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Qualitative interview one, transcription of audio recordings and member checking</td>
<td>Research contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2011 to June 2011</td>
<td>• Document search</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>• Delivery of interview audio recordings, transcripts and contractor field notes for qualitative interview one. Discussion regarding contractor observations</td>
<td>Research contractor, researcher and supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2011 to December 2011</td>
<td>• Analysis of data from qualitative interview one. Drafting of preliminary data tables and case study narratives including member checking. Thesis writing commences</td>
<td>Researcher in consultation with supervisor and CEOWA peer-review group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2011</td>
<td>• Qualitative interview two, transcription of audio recordings and member checking</td>
<td>Research contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collection of triangulation data: Aspirant mid-program journals</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>• Delivery of interview audio recordings, transcripts and contractor field notes for qualitative interview two. Discussion regarding contractor observations</td>
<td>Research contractor, researcher and supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Responsible Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012 to December 2012</td>
<td>• Analysis of data from qualitative interview two. Ongoing drafting of preliminary data tables and case study narratives including member checking. Ongoing writing of thesis</td>
<td>• Researcher in consultation with supervisor and CEOWA peer-review group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2012 to December 2012</td>
<td>• Collection of triangulation data: Aspirant cover letters and application forms for principalship vacancies</td>
<td>• Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2012</td>
<td>• Collection of triangulation data: Aspirant leadership vision statements</td>
<td>• Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collection of triangulation data: Aspirant end-of-program journals</td>
<td>• Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Qualitative interview three, transcription of audio recordings and member checking</td>
<td>• Research contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>• Delivery of interview audio recordings, transcripts and contractor field notes for qualitative interview three. Discussion regarding contractor observations</td>
<td>• Research contractor, researcher and supervisor</td>
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<td>February 2013 to December 2013</td>
<td>• Analysis of data from qualitative interview three. Ongoing drafting of preliminary data tables and case study narratives including member checking. Ongoing writing of thesis</td>
<td>• Researcher in consultation with supervisor and CEOWA peer-review group</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2014 to December 2014</td>
<td>• Refinement of data tables and final member check of case study narratives. Cross-case analysis of data tables and case study narratives. Ongoing writing of thesis</td>
<td>• Researcher in consultation with supervisor and CEOWA peer-review group</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2014</td>
<td>• Thesis submitted for examination</td>
<td>• Researcher and supervisor</td>
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4.8 Chapter Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. This chapter explained the methodological components that informed and directed the conduct of this research. The chapter provided justification for the use of interpretivism, with a lens of symbolic interactionism, as the theoretical perspective of this qualitative research and collective case study as the methodology. The methods adopted for the collection and analysis of data were also explained. A description of the research participants was provided along with measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Finally, the ethical considerations associated with the study were explained and a design summary for the research was provided. The upcoming chapter, Research Results, is comprised of eight, thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Aspirant narratives reflect the draft themes identified through the data analysis process described in this chapter. Case study narratives are largely comprised of the natural language of aspirants in the form of quotations extracted from interview transcripts and are organised using sub-headings representing the four specific research questions used to guide the study.
Chapter Five: Research Results

5.1 Introduction

Consistent with the recommendation of Yin (2003) regarding reporting formats for research employing collective case study methodology, this chapter is comprised of eight, thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. Each narrative is largely comprised of the natural language of aspirants in the form of quotations extracted from the transcripts of three qualitative interviews conducted before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program. Aspirant quotations reflect the draft themes and their respective categories identified through stages one and two of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: data reduction and data display. Each narrative is organised according to sub-headings representing the four specific research questions used to guide the study, namely:

Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

1. What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

2. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

3. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

4. What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?
Reflecting the recommendations of Gray (2013), this structure was devised to permit reader cross-case comparison of aspirant perceptions associated with each of the specific research questions.

Each case study begins with a description of context, namely an outline of the aspirant’s professional history, their role during the program and end-of-program status. An overview of the case study is then provided. Beyond the overview lies the thickly described narrative. As the case studies, aggregated together, represent a dense document, it is recommended that this chapter not be read in one sitting. Rather, it is suggested that time be taken to read each case individually before considering them collectively. The order of case studies, listed alphabetically by aspirant pseudonym, is provided in Table 5.1. To assist reader understanding of context-specific language used within case study narratives, a list of terms, acronyms and brief definitions are provided in Table 5.2. Comprehensive definitions for each term or acronym are available in the Glossary that precedes Chapter One: Research Defined.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study number and aspirant pseudonym</th>
<th>Aspirant role, school type and location during the research</th>
<th>Aspirant end-of-program status</th>
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<td>Applying for principalship vacancies</td>
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<td>5.3 Case Study Two: Frances</td>
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<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a remote community</td>
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<td>5.4 Case Study Three: Helen</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
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<td>5.5 Case Study Four: Jason</td>
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<td>5.6 Case Study Five: Jeff</td>
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<td>5.7 Case Study Six: Paula</td>
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<td>5.8 Case Study Seven: Riley</td>
<td>Head of junior school at a Kindergarten-Year 12 composite school in a country town</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.9 Case Study Eight: Sharon</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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| Acting      | principalship  
An active learning experience whereby an aspirant assumes the role of principal for a period of time, usually as a result of the incumbent principal undertaking a period of leave.                                                                                                           |
| CECWA       | The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA). The governing body for all Western Australian Catholic schools.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| CEOWA       | The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA). The executive arm of the CECWA that provides principals with advice and support they require to achieve system vision and ensure accountability.                                                                                                               |
| Coach       | A practicing principal who works with an aspirant to develop leadership capability improvement goals and achievement strategies based on 360-review data compiled prior to the commencement of the program. To achieve goals, the aspirant implements, evaluates and refines strategies as they enact their leadership role and lead a QCS school improvement project during the program’s second year. |
| ‘Inside Leadership’ | A discussion led by a Western Australian Catholic school principal at the conclusion of each face-to-face program module. During an ‘Inside Leadership’ session, the principal engages aspirants with tales of leadership success, challenge and resultant learning.                                                                 |
| Internship  | An active learning experience whereby an aspirant ‘shadows’ the principal of a school for a period of time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Leadership Framework | A mandated document of the CECWA that describes the role of the Western Australian Catholic school principal and requisite capabilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Leadership vision statement | A program activity whereby aspirants use a series of 10 questions to identify and reflect upon their leadership values. Responses are then synthesised into a statement that encapsulates a vision for their leadership. Structured activities over the course of the program provide opportunities for aspirants to share and refine their statements.                                                                                   |
| LSI         | The Life Styles Inventory (LSI) is the 360-degree review tool administered prior to and upon completion of the program. LSI data is used to identify aspirant leadership capability strengths and weaknesses. LSI data informs coaching goals and strategies.                                                                                       |
| QCS Framework | The Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool are used by all Western Australian Catholic principals to lead the review and improvement of school activities, processes and services.                                                                                                    |
5.2 Case Study One: Chelsea

When ‘Chelsea’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, she had completed her eighth year as assistant principal. Chelsea trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1995. Between 1996 and 2002, she taught at two Catholic primary schools in Perth. In January 2003, Chelsea commenced her first leadership role as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in Perth where she served until December 2006. In January 2007, she commenced her second assistant principalship at another metropolitan Catholic primary school. Upon conclusion of the program, Chelsea was actively applying for Catholic primary school principalship vacancies in Western Australian country towns.

5.2.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Chelsea expressed moderate self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She fundamentally considered principalship a managerial occupation requiring knowledge of technical responsibilities such as the administration of school finances and human resource management functions. She also made oblique references to the principalship role components, Catholic identity and community engagement and development. Chelsea was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role component, teaching and learning, influence school Catholic identity and develop a school community characterised by relationships based on Gospel values. She considered the adverse impact of role intensification on work-life balance and the requirement of the principal to manage school finances disincentives.

As Chelsea participated in and completed the program, she reported high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. Chelsea also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. Her attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However,
Chelsea also indicated that she was interested in leading the role component, school improvement and was driven to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership. Chelsea expressed reduced apprehension with regard to previously identified disincentives, but acknowledged several new concerns; the result of reflection inspired by her application for country school principalship vacancies. One concern was her perception that male-dominated principal appointment panels carried a gender bias against female aspirants.

As Chelsea participated in and completed the program, she attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Prime amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; LSI, 360-degree data and coaching for leadership capability improvement; leadership of a QCS school improvement project; and a five-week period of acting principalship at her school.

5.2.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Chelsea referred the principal as “the managerial glue that holds a school together, especially when it comes to school finances, building programs and ensuring compliance and accountability.” Further, she commented: “The principal is responsible for the development of staff including working with underperformers to improve practice.” She also described the principal as “a Gospel-centric communicator and builder of community.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, she asserted: “The principal must have the knowledge and skill necessary to administrate school finances, build facilities and manage human resources.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Chelsea described four interrelated role components associated with Catholic principalship. When discussing the role component of Catholic identity, she stated: “Because Catholic schools are built on Jesus’ example, the principal must weave His values into all aspects of school life, even when faced with conflict that can stir negative emotions.”
Further, she referred to the principal as “the person responsible for leading the evangelisation of school community members.” Chelsea also identified the principal as “a steward of environmental, financial, capital and human resources who administrates effectively, is transparent and accountable and considers the teachings of Jesus when making decisions.” With regard to the role component of teaching and learning, she commented: “The principal is a school’s educational leader who develops teachers to provide classroom environments that inspire a love of learning and equip students to make wise and moral life choices based on Gospel values.” Finally, Chelsea highlighted the role of the principal as “builder of a caring community, based on the life and example of Jesus, that assists all members to reach their potential.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Chelsea commented: “The principal must understand the Church’s evangelising mission and bring this to life at the level of the school by collaboratively forming vision with the members of the school community.” Further, Chelsea emphasised: “The effective principal, in the light of the example of Jesus, models Gospel values in word and deed when interacting with school community members.” With regard to the capability of knowledge and understanding, she stated: “Principals must know how to administer the technical parts of the role including budget management, the building program, CECWA policy application and the employment, development and performance management of staff.” Chelsea also highlighted “the importance of the principal clarifying expectations of staff, setting achievable goals and providing regular, meaningful feedback including praise for good work.”

At this point in the program, Chelsea attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. She commented: “The grounding of the program in the Leadership Framework made learning about role components and capabilities easy.” Additionally, she affirmed the opportunity provided by the program to discuss role components and requisite capabilities with her principal and guest principals invited to facilitate ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions. She asserted: “Listening to guest principals talk about their experience of the role and what it takes to succeed and comparing this against what I had learned in the program assisted my learning.” Finally, Chelsea considered the most important influence on her learning the opportunity to undertake acting principalship for a five-week period whilst her
principal convalesced from surgery. She reflected: “Acting principalship allowed me to experience the role, understand its components and road-test my leadership capabilities that I have refined through the program.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to the four components described previously, Chelsea referred to the Catholic principal as leader of the role component, school improvement. She explained: “The principal oversees the QCS process that aims to review all school activity, identify strengths and weaknesses and institute improvement plans.” When leading school improvement, Chelsea asserted: “The principal must understand its purpose, keep up to date with the latest literature on the subject and know how to use the QCS Framework and tool.”

Chelsea also commented on the capabilities required of the Catholic principal to effectively lead school improvement: “The principal must adopt a transcendental style where they take off their principal’s hat, listen to staff comments and suggestions and value the contribution.” She continued: “As Jesus would have done, these conversations must be based on Gospel values; they should also be ‘flat’, collegial, non-judgmental, reflective and completely focused on improvement to achieve school vision and support the Church’s evangelising mission.” In the context of improvement conversations, Chelsea also cited “the importance of the principal applying transformational leadership capabilities to generate enthusiasm for change.” When clarifying her understanding of these capabilities, she discussed the “ability of the principal to use charisma, emotional connection and intellectual stimulation to change people’s thoughts from self-focus to improvement of all facets of the school to achieve its vision.”

Chelsea attributed her end-of-program perceptions to the influence of four program-related features. The first three features reflected those identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year: enhanced comprehension of role components and capabilities as a result of program theory and discussions with her principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals respectively. The final feature, cited by Chelsea as significant, was “the use of LSI data, coaching sessions and the QCS project to understand school improvement and trial strategies to enhance leadership capabilities.”

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5.2.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Chelsea identified three factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship. Firstly, she stated: “I am attracted to principalship because it would allow me to develop teachers, inspire them to work as a team and ultimately assist students to achieve their potential.” She continued: “I want to do this by developing teacher understanding of pedagogy and ways to create stimulating classroom environments to meet student needs.” Secondly, Chelsea commented: “I am attracted by the challenge of evangelisation and want to create opportunities for staff, students and parents to nurture their faith and serve one another as Jesus did.” Thirdly, Chelsea emphasised: “I want to lead a community where Gospel values are modelled through every interaction.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Chelsea reflected: “My original attraction to principalship remains the same, especially when it comes to the opportunity to evangelise and model Gospel values, but has been refined by my experience of the program.” She elaborated:

I want to lead a community of learners; not just students, but their parents, teachers, support staff and the leadership team. We would work together to build a stimulating learning environment to enhance the lives of every member, but especially students. This environment would be based on the example of Jesus, the formal curriculum, quality teaching, learning and assessment and rich co-curricular activities.

Chelsea also detailed her “desire, as principal, to build a culture of improvement to enhance the holistic development of students.” When discussing improvement in the context of educational leadership, she expressed her “interest in developing teachers using shared language and precise talk about teaching and learning with the aim of improving content knowledge, ability to diagnose student needs and enhance teaching practices and classroom quality.”

At this point in the program, Chelsea attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. She remarked: “Reflecting on program theory and activities was a way for me to assess my suitability for the role and prompted me to explore my reasons for seeking principalship.” Further, Chelsea commented:
Formulating my leadership vision statement was an important experience. It allowed me to discern what I stand for as a leader and clarified my attraction to principalship. Sharing my vision statement with colleagues, my principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ principals and making refinements added to its strength and quality.

Chelsea also affirmed: “The experience of acting principalship was a way to road-test my leadership vision statement and clarify my attraction to the role.” She concluded her reflection with the statement: “I’m pleased to say that my vision statement held up and remains true as a result of the experience.”

At the conclusion of the program, Chelsea articulated the factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship through her leadership vision statement developed and refined over the course of the program:

I want to lead authentically for the benefit of every member of the school community. I want to build partnerships between staff, students, their parents and others connected to the school to establish a learning culture that assists students to reach their potential. The curriculum itself and behaviours within this culture would be based on the Gospel values and subjected to continuous improvement for the benefit of students. I want to encourage and develop our community, especially teachers, to harness new insights into learning, technology, pedagogy and psychology to help our students adjust to a frenetically changing world.

She concluded her leadership vision with the statement: “I am driven by a desire to develop a school community that is faithful to the evangelising mission of the Church and characterised by respectful, flexible and understanding people who serve one another as Jesus did.”

Chelsea reiterated the influence of two of the three program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year on her end-of-program perceptions. She stated: “Testing my vision statement against program theory helped me to clarify whether or not my reasons for seeking principalship were valid.” Moreover, she asserted: “Explaining my vision statement to my principal, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals before considering their feedback and making refinements were extremely beneficial experiences.”
5.2.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Chelsea identified three factors diminishing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “Designing and managing a school’s budget is daunting given my lack of experience.” With regard to her lack of experience, she commented: “I teach four days a week, so getting involved with such aspects is difficult given time restrictions; I feel that I don’t do justice to my class as it is.” Additionally, she reflected: “The increasing accountability demands placed on principals is a disincentive; they are expected to be educators, financiers, human resource specialists, social workers and even nutritionists!” Finally, Chelsea referred to “the time-intensive nature of the role, especially its negative impact on work-life balance.” When discussing disincentive perceptions, she explained: “my opinions are the result of discussion with and observation of my current and previous principals who always seemed stressed about these things.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Chelsea stated: “School finances concerns me less than it did a year ago.” With regard to this perception change, she affirmed the requirement of the program to “design the budget, complete the mid-year budget review and draft monthly board finance reports in collaboration with the principal, business manager and members of the school finance sub-committee.” With regard to principalship accountability requirements and work-life balance concerns, she remarked: “I was initially unrealistic about these responsibilities, but now know that they’re part of the job and acceptance is required if one is to take on the role.”

At this point in the program, Chelsea attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features:

Discussing role intensity with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals were golden moments. They had survived the challenges of the role and developed strategies to cope with resultant stress. These conversations convinced me that I could do the same. Also, completing a period of acting principalship reassured me that I have what it takes to cope with the role and its demands.

Finally, she discussed “the need for principals to build effective administrative systems and processes to distribute leadership and the importance of recruiting leadership team members and staff with talents to cover deficiencies” as strategies to
manage these disincentives. When discussing the origins of these solutions, Chelsea cited program theory and discussion with program colleagues.

At the conclusion of the program, Chelsea was actively applying for Catholic primary school principalship vacancies in Western Australian country towns. She commented: “There are financial disincentives related to moving from the city to the country including packing, renting or selling my home, transporting my belongings and paying rent in the new town.” Further, Chelsea stated: “As assistant principal in a large city school, I will actually take a pay cut to begin principalship in a small country town.” She also acknowledged concerns associated with “loss of professional and family support networks when moving to country locations, especially during times of stress that will undoubtedly occur.” Finally, Chelsea identified anxiety “arising from the principal appointment process, especially the male-dominated nature of selection panels that silently discriminates against women.”

5.2.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Chelsea asserted: “I’m ready for a new challenge after working as an assistant principal for eight years.” Nonetheless, she reflected: “I feel moderately ready for principalship, but feel that I need to participate in high-quality professional development such as this program to gain the clarity I need to make this decision.” Chelsea added: “I feel certain that the program will provide me with the knowledge and experience I need to take the next step.” Despite her confidence in the efficacy of the program, she commented: “I feel that acting principalship alongside the program would assist me to determine my level of readiness.” With regard to acting principalship opportunities, Chelsea observed: “It seems strange that acting principalship not part of this program as I believe that such experiences are vital development opportunities.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Chelsea specified high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She stated: “I have my role as assistant principal ‘down pat’, am supported by my principal, our staff, students and their parents and, as a result, feel ready for the challenge of principalship.” Chelsea also attributed her high self-efficacy perceptions to the influence of four program-related features. She commented:
The focus of the program on principalship role components and capabilities, defining vision and minimising disincentives, especially through school board and sub-committee participation, has increased my confidence. I better understand the role and its demands, my leadership strengths and weaknesses, my reasons for seeking promotion, what I can realistically expect to face and how best to cope with these challenges.

Chelsea also commented on the influence of program delivery on her self-efficacy perceptions:

The way modules were facilitated provided me with opportunities to reflect on content before sharing experiences with my colleagues. These conversations provided a window into their experiences and convinced me that I could achieve as they had, given the opportunity. I always came away from these discussions feeling affirmed and assured of my leadership ability.

Chelsea also stated that her high self-efficacy perceptions were confirmed by a successful five-week period of acting principalship at her school. She affirmed:

Acting principalship was a unique experience that provided me with the opportunity to apply program learning, especially the knowledge and skills I collected as a participant on my school’s board and finance and capital development sub-committees. The experience also allowed me to apply my leadership capabilities and ‘road test’ my leadership vision statement. Perhaps the greatest benefit, though, was the affirmation I received from members of staff and the school community about my leadership. This provided me with the confidence I sought when I first joined the program and convinced me that I am ready for principalship.

Finally, Chelsea commented on the influence of her support network, developed through the program, on her self-efficacy perceptions. She highlighted the effect of her program colleagues:

Our cohort is a group of like-minded professionals united in the search for principalship. However, rather than being competitors, we have formed extremely supportive relationships based on trust and encouragement of one another. The result is enhanced confidence to apply for and begin the role.

Likewise, Chelsea referred to her current principal as an important influence on her readiness. She remarked: “I never considered my potential until I was respected and given leadership responsibility by him.” She concluded her affirmation of her principal with the statement: “His belief in my capacity, willingness to support my
development and mentor me has enhanced my confidence.” Finally, she reflected on the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals: “These people are true professionals who shared their successes and struggles openly and, as a result, I have learned from their experiences; their affirmation of my leadership capabilities has also helped me to realise that I have what it takes to join their ranks.”

At the conclusion of the program, as was the case at the end of the program’s first year, Chelsea specified high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She reaffirmed the positive influence of the program curriculum; the manner in which modules were facilitated; leadership vision statement development and refinement; school board and sub-committee participation; and her collegial support network on her perceptions. She stated: “These program elements helped me to understand the role of the principal, required leadership capabilities, attractive aspects of the role and how to manage disincentives.” Chelsea also articulated the self-efficacy benefits associated another longitudinal learning experience, coaching sessions linked with leadership of the QCS school improvement project. She asserted: “These experiences assisted my understanding of school improvement, improved my leadership capability strengths and weaknesses and provided me with valuable insight into how my leadership is perceived by others.”

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5.3 Case Study Two: Frances

At the same time that ‘Frances’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, she began her first leadership role as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in Perth. Frances trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1984. Between 1985 and 2010, in addition to working as a teacher at three Catholic primary schools in Perth, she worked as an Aboriginal carer, youth worker and lay missionary at two metropolitan and one regional mission. After completing the program, Frances attended her first principalship interview and was appointed principal at a remote Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in the Kimberley region of Western Australia commencing January 2013.

5.3.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Frances expressed low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. Although she referred to leadership of the role components: Catholic identity, teaching and learning and community engagement and development when discussing the role of the principal, she predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation. Specifically, Frances discussed her perception that principalship involved managing school finances and capital development planning. Frances identified principal capacity to lead vision formation and achievement, apply Gospel values, lead transformationally and employ managerial knowledge as the capabilities required for effective performance. Frances was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead a marginalised Aboriginal community in a remote setting. She considered the requirement of the principal to manage school finances and resolve conflict disincentives.

As Frances participated in and completed the program, she reported moderate then high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. Frances also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. Her attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the
course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However, Frances also indicated that she was attracted by the prospect of leading the role component, teaching and learning and developing school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes. Frances expressed reduced apprehension with regard to previously identified disincentives, but cited new concerns; the result of her appointment as principal of a Catholic primary school in a remote setting. Concerns cited by Frances included anticipated recruitment difficulties in remote areas and the ‘fish bowl effect’, the result of working and living in a remote community.

As Frances participated in and completed the program, she attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Foremost amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; and internship where she shadowed the principal of a remote Catholic primary school for a 10-week period.

5.3.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Frances identified three role components associated with Catholic principalship. She predominantly focused on the role of the principal as “a manager of finances, building and the business side of schools.” Additionally, she described the principal as “an educational leader, responsible for ensuring that teachers plan, teach and assess students well.” Finally, she referred to the principal as “the guardian of school Catholicity who ensures that staff are appropriate witnesses of the faith and develops positive relationships, based on Gospel values, between the school, community and parish.”

Frances identified four capabilities required for effective performance. She stated: “The principal must ensure that the vision of the school is aligned with the evangelising mission of the Church and have the ability to communicate this clearly to the community.” Related to this capability, Frances commented on the importance of the principal “inspiring staff to think about their attitudes, behaviours and practices and how these contribute to the achievement of school vision.” When
discussing community engagement, she emphasised “the importance of the principal speaking and acting as Jesus would.” Finally, Frances cited “the importance of principal knowledge and skill regarding the management of the school.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Frances mentioned four interrelated role components of Catholic principalship. She discussed the principal as leader of the role component, Catholic identity:

Catholic identity is the defining feature of our schools that involves the principal leading school community evangelisation in response to the call of the Church. The principal is expected to build dynamic relationships between the school, the community and the parish and reflect Gospel values in word and action.

Moreover, she commented: “Principals are stewards of resources who promote care of the school’s natural environment and that of the surrounding community.” She added: “The principal as steward also recruits, develops, appraises staff and caters for their wellbeing, manages the school’s budget, develops and maintains facilities and reports as required to the CEOWA.” Frances then remarked: “The principal is an educational leader who oversees the curriculum, builds a culture of enquiry amongst staff and students and models a love of learning.” With regard to the principal as educational leader, she commented: “It is important that the principal encourage teachers to embed Gospel values into the curriculum, regardless of subject.” Finally, Frances articulated the role of the principal as “a community builder who models and promotes Christ-like relationships, engages in collaborative decision-making with members of the school community and provides a safe and inclusive environment for staff and students.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Frances reiterated “the requirement of the principal to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision and model Gospel values.” She also reflected: “Successful principals have the knowledge and ability to manage aspects of the role such as school finances, capital development planning and CEOWA compliance requirements.” When discussing managerial competence, Frances emphasised the importance of constructive transactional capabilities. She defined these capabilities as “the ability and willingness of a principal to set goals with staff, communicate regularly and offer feedback and advice to improve performance.”
At this point in the program, Frances attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. She commented: “the well-structured and sequenced theoretical program based on the Leadership Framework assisted my understanding of the role and its capabilities.” Further, she stated: “Listening to the experiences of guest principals who hosted ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions was a feature of the program that influenced my understanding of the role and what it takes to succeed.” Finally, she commented: “The willingness of my principal to share his perspective of the role, its demands and capabilities significantly influenced my learning.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to previously identified role components, Frances articulated the role of the Catholic principal as leader of role component, school improvement. She defined the purpose of school improvement as “the creation of a culture of collegiality where everyone strives for continual improvement to achieve school vision and, as a result, support the Church’s evangelising mission.” When discussing the capabilities required of the principal to effectively lead school improvement, Frances discussed “the need for a comprehensive understanding of the QCS Framework and use of the school improvement tool.” She also articulated “the need for the principal to be both a transformational and transcendental leader when working to create an appetite for change amongst school community members.” Frances elaborated on her understanding of transformational capabilities with reference to her current principal: “He is compassionate and gathers staff support through active listening and complete one-to-one engagement.” With regard to transcendental leadership capabilities, she stated: “As was the case with Jesus’ leadership, the principal must serve others, have a genuine love for and interest in people and a great deal of patience and understanding.”

Frances specified the influence of three program-related features on her end-of-program perceptions. She reflected: “The use of the QCS Framework and leadership theory within program modules assisted my understanding of school improvement as a role component.” As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, Frances reiterated “the informative nature of discussions regarding role components and capabilities with my principal and guest principals involved in the program.” Finally, she reflected on the influence of an internship experience on her perceptions,
organised during the program’s second year. This experience involved Frances shadowing the principal of a remote Kindergarten-Year 10 Catholic primary school in the Kimberley region of Western Australia for a 10-week period. She stated: “The willingness of the principal to share the highs and lows of her role and the opportunity to observe her leadership were invaluable tools that assisted my understanding of the role and its demands.”

5.3.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Frances identified a single factor enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship. She asserted: “I am completely driven by the possibility of being principal of a small, disadvantaged Catholic school in either the Geraldton or Kimberley regions of Western Australia.” Frances expressed a strong desire “to make a long-term commitment to the Gospel-based education of Aboriginal students and their families within such a community” and stated that she had “the compassion and drive necessary to do this work.” She reflected: “My previous experiences as a carer, youth worker and lay missionary to Aboriginal students has ignited in me a burning desire to achieve this goal.”

At the completion of the program’s first year, Frances commented: “My desire to be the principal of a remote Catholic school remains alive.” She observed: “The program has raised my awareness of the difficulties of such a role and I feel a growing confidence in my ability to handle these.” Frances reiterated her “love for Aboriginal people and desire to lead a school where students could be equipped with Gospel values, knowledge and skill to overcome disadvantage.”

At this point in the program, Frances specified the influence of three program-related features on her perceptions. She confirmed “the powerful influence of a well-structured program that clarified the role, its capabilities, positives and challenges.” Additionally, she affirmed “development of a leadership vision statement as a way to clarify the appeal of remote school principalship.” Finally, she reflected: “Sharing my emerging vision statement with my principal, fellow aspirants and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals allowed me to assess its practicality against my career goal and make appropriate adjustments.”
At the conclusion of the program, Frances described the factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement formulated and refined over the course of the program:

I am motivated to be the principal of a small, remote Catholic school catering for the needs of Aboriginal students and their families using Jesus as my role model. I am driven to understand and use the talents of teachers, support staff, parents and community members for the good of the students and want to build the capacity of each individual and promote happiness, tranquillity and growth. I am motivated to work with staff; to know them as both people and professionals, to tap into their talents, build their skills and support them. I want to inspire them to teach with passion, administrate classrooms effectively and engage with the families of students who feel disconnected from the school. Finally, I am motivated to build a community where parents, staff and students come together and use their collective resources to build an excellent Catholic school.

When discussing her ambitions, Frances specified the influence of two program-related features on her desire to achieve remote school principalship. Firstly, she reaffirmed the “influence of vision statement development and refinement in the light of discussions with my principal, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals.” Secondly, she stated: “Testing my vision statement, conception of the role and appropriateness of my leadership capabilities through my Kimberley internship confirmed my aspiration.”

5.3.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Frances identified two factors diminishing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “The business side of schools, especially financial management, concerns me because of my lack of leadership experience in general and knowledge about these things specifically.” Further, she discussed concerns associated with “the need for principals to manage conflict arising from and between staff, students and their parents.” Frances also commented on the structure of her assistant principal role as a barrier to her learning: “Even though I have just started as an assistant principal, I can see that learning more about principalship will be difficult because I am tied to the classroom for four days a week.” She lamented: “Because of the time restrictions and demands of my dual teaching and leadership roles, I am concerned about my capacity to deliver quality.”
At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Frances remarked: “My first year as an assistant principal and program participant have boosted my confidence to lead.” With regard to pre-program disincentives emanating from school financial management, she stated: “I feel more comfortable dealing with school finances because of the program requirement to participate on my school board and sub-committees.” With regard to conflict resolution as a disincentive, Frances reflected: “I am now aware that conflict and the need to resolve it is baseline requirement of the job and have accepted the fact that I need to develop strategies to deal with it if I want to be a principal.” At this point in the program, Frances identified a new disincentive: the complexity of principalship decision-making. She admitted: “My natural inclination to please people is a significant leadership weakness and I know that I must develop a ‘thicker skin’ before applying for principalship.” She attributed this disincentive to program-inspired reflection, especially as a result of listening to the experiences of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals.

Soon after the conclusion of the program, Frances was appointed principal at a remote Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in the Kimberley region of Western Australia catering for the needs of Aboriginal students and their families. She commented: “I am less concerned about previously identified disincentives, but more concerned by three new ones.” Frances reflected that her higher self-efficacy, the result of a further year of experience as an assistant principal and a successful internship experience in a remote school in the Kimberley, had largely countered her concerns regarding the requirement of the principal to make complex decisions.

The three new disincentives expressed by Frances were the result of her internship experience, subsequent appointment and confirmation by ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. She observed: “When vacancies arise in remote schools, there are usually few suitable applicants meaning that you may have to recruit unsuitable people that you may be lumbered with for a long time.” She described the impact of this reality as “demoralising, especially if new staff are not committed to school vision”. Frances pronounced the alternative of not appointing unsuitable staff as “just as bad because it means that existing, dedicated staff are forced to take on extra duties.” Further, she reflected: “Remote school staff are away from family, friends and professional networks and live in community with one another, including the principal.” She explained: “Living in such close proximity to
others can result in conflict over small issues like differences in work ethic and have the potential to cause disharmony.” The reality of the staff and principal not being able to “go home and disconnect physically, mentally and emotionally” was identified by Frances as a disincentive associated with remote school principalship. Finally, she referred to concerns regarding the ‘fish bowl’ effect, a consequence of living and working in remote communities. Frances commented: “You’re on show 24/7, there’s no privacy.” Of particular concern was the prospect of “socialising with parents of at risk or ill-mannered children and then having to engage them in hard conversations when they have welcomed you into their community and consider you a friend.”

5.3.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Frances indicated low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She attributed her perception to a lack of leadership experience and an absence of exposure to principal-related professional learning. Frances stated: “I feel completely out of my depth and know that I need significant up-skilling such as that offered by this program before I’ll be ready.” She expressed confidence that the program would meet this need and detailed her intention to use the experience to assess her suitability for the role.

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Frances indicated moderate self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship:

I don’t know that I could say I’m totally confident, but I feel far more equipped that I did at the start of the year. I’m ready to have a go and have an open mind about what’s involved.

Frances attributed her improved self-efficacy perceptions to the influence of six program-related factors. Firstly, she affirmed the influence of the program curriculum and related activities: “I feel more confident to lead as a result of an improved understanding of the role and required capabilities; the result of studying the Leadership Framework and applying learning through school board and sub-committee participation.” She also favoured the method of program delivery: “The opportunity to reflect on theory before sharing experiences with colleagues were important learning experiences that boosted my confidence.” Secondly, she reiterated the “importance of forming and refining a leadership vision statement to define
principalship values and motives”. Thirdly, Frances acknowledged the influence of her program colleagues on her perceptions:

Reflecting on my journey in the program so far, I see that I needed trustworthy colleagues who understood the challenges I was facing as an aspiring principal and inexperienced leader. My fellow aspirants met this need. Their collective encouragement provided me with the confidence I needed to seriously consider principalship.

Fourthly, Frances referred to the influence of her current principal on her improved self-efficacy perceptions: “He recognised aspects of my leadership that would work in a remote community and encouraged me to apply for the program.” She elaborated: “He has guided and totally supported me through each program module; I am grateful for his encouragement and owe much of my improved feelings of readiness to him.” Fifthly, Frances discussed the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals:

Their collective affirmation of our group was encouraging. Their stories resonated with me and confirmed that they had faced the challenges of principalship and survived. I found myself thinking: ‘they were worried about the same things that I am and they managed to overcome and learn from these situations; if they did, so can I.’

Finally, Frances referred to the influence of CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules on her self-efficacy perceptions. She stated: “It is comforting to know that CEOWA people will be there to assist, support and encourage me, especially when it comes to the management of school finances, legal issues and conflict resolution.”

At the conclusion of the program, Frances indicated that she had experienced significant growth with regard to self-efficacy. She stated: “I can say with pride that I am highly confident and feel well prepared to commence principalship; the program has been a turning point in my career.” In addition to reiterating the positive influence of the six program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year, she acknowledged the influence of her Kimberley school internship on her self-efficacy perceptions:

I feel energised by the thought of working as principal in a remote community. My intern principal taught me the intricacies of leadership in these settings. I
have a realistic grasp on the role and what is required of me to succeed. I have witnessed the challenging aspects of the role, know how to deal with the things I can change and accept those I can’t.

Frances concluded her narration regarding the influence of her internship with the comment: “I felt particularly affirmed by the support I received from community members regarding my leadership potential and consider these relationships essential for success.”

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5.4 Case Study Three: Helen

When ‘Helen’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, she had completed her sixth year as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in Perth. Helen trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1996. Between 1997 and 2004, she taught at a Catholic primary school in Perth prior to commencing her assistant principalship at another Catholic primary school in January 2005. Toward the end of the program, in September 2012, Helen attended her first principalship interview and was appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town commencing January 2013.

5.4.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Helen expressed high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation and, to a lesser extent, one involving leadership of the role components, teaching and learning and Catholic identity. Helen identified principal capacity to employ managerial knowledge, lead vision formation and achievement, lead transformationally and apply Gospel values when leading and managing as the capabilities required for effective performance. Helen was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, teaching and learning, community engagement and development and learn from the experiences provided by the role. She considered role intensification and the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, deal with legal issues and cope with threats of litigation disincentives.

As Helen participated in and completed the program, self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship remained high. She described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. She also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. Her attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However, Helen also
conveyed a desire to lead of the role component, Catholic identity and positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership. She expressed reduced apprehension with regard to disincentives identified previously, but cited new concerns; the result of her appointment as principal of a Catholic primary school in a country town. Concerns highlighted by Helen included the impending separation from her personal support network; financial disincentives associated with the move from Perth to the country town; and anticipated staff recruitment and retention difficulties in her new setting.

As Helen participated in and completed the program, she attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Chief amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; use of LSI 360-degree data within coaching sessions; and leadership of a QCS school improvement project. Helen particularly espoused the benefits associated with two, six-month periods of acting principalship. The first experience took place at her school during the program’s first year with the second experience enacted at another metropolitan Catholic primary school during the program’s second year.

5.4.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Helen identified three role components associated with Catholic principalship. She focused on the role of the principal as “an accountable manager who ensures that financial and human resources are best used to pursue and achieve school vision and deals with a myriad of matters including the resolution of legal issues.” She also considered the principal “an instructional leader and an active witness of the Catholic faith who builds Gospel values into everyday interactions.” Finally, Helen understood the principal to be “the person responsible for recruiting and developing quality staff.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, Helen identified four competencies. Firstly, she discussed “the need for the principal to have command of technical role
responsibilities such as school finances to ensure that the school remains financially viable and is effectively managed.” Secondly, she acknowledged “the importance of the principal being able to formulate school vision in line with the evangelising mission of the Church before communicating it clearly to the school community.” Thirdly, and related to this capability, she commented on “the capacity of the principal to bring staff together and motivate them to achieve school vision.” Finally, Helen stated: “The principal must be intrinsically driven to model Gospel values when leading and managing.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Helen described Catholic principalship in terms of four interrelated role components studied through the program. Helen identified the principal as “an evangeliser and nurturer of school Catholic identity who emulates the example of Jesus in word and action.” She also commented on the role of the principal as “steward of environmental, financial and human resources who makes decisions to achieve school vision.” Additionally, Helen referred to the principal as “an instructional expert who develops teacher capacity, sets the climate for collaborative curriculum planning, assessment and evaluation and ensures that Gospel values are integrated through the curriculum.” When discussing this role aspect, she reflected: “Effective principals ensure that students are provided with safe learning environments and teachers have access to the resources they require to be the best they can be.” Finally, Helen described the principal as “a community builder who models Gospel values in word and action to develop constructive, trusting and respectful relationships.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Helen commented: “Above all, the principal must be committed to the application of Gospel values in every situation.” She added: “Effective principals have command of the managerial aspects of the role, especially school finances, capital development planning and the application of CECWA policies.” Helen also reflected on the importance of the principal “working with stakeholders to form school vision that supports the Church’s evangelising mission before sharing it with the community and driving achievement.” To develop and implement vision effectively, she identified the “need for the principal to have transformational leadership capability to inspire staff to think not only about themselves, but how they can contribute to the achievement of school vision.” When leading transformationally, Helen commented:
“It helps if the principal is charismatic, able to emotionally connect with staff and inspire them intellectually.”

At this point in the program, Helen specified the influence of four program-related features on her perceptions. She reflected: “The use of the Leadership Framework domains and capabilities and contemporary leadership theory within program modules were instrumental in assisting my understanding of the role and its capabilities.” Further, she stated: “Implementing the theory behind the role component, stewardship of resources by participating as a school board observer and sub-committee member were extremely powerful learning experiences.” Helen continued: “Discussing the role and its capabilities with my principal and those who hosted ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions both confirmed and changed my thoughts regarding the role and what it takes to succeed.” Finally, Helen described the experience of acting principalship at her school for a six-month period during the program’s first year as:

…the most valuable learning experience of my career and an excellent way to apply program theory to reality. The experience exponentially enhanced my role knowledge and taught me a great deal about what it takes to succeed.

Helen concluded her affirmation of this learning experience with the comment: “Perhaps the best part of the experience was the opportunity to closely study and refine my leadership capability strengths and limitations.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to previously identified role components, Helen discussed the role of the principal as leader of school improvement. She stated: “Done well, school improvement ensures the development and achievement of shared vision, clarity of purpose, high levels of trust, staff empowerment and a focus on continual enhancement of all aspects of the school.” She reflected on the leadership capabilities required of the principal when leading this role component: “The principal must understand the purpose of school improvement generally, the QCS Framework specifically and have the wherewithal to use the QCS tool to effect improvement.” Helen also emphasised “the importance of the principal adopting a Gospel-based, transcendental approach when leading school improvement including placing the needs of others before self and engaging with staff in collaborative, non-hierarchical dialogue.” She observed:
By leading in this way, the principal is able to build a culture of trust. Within such a culture, review and improvement becomes an embedded, accepted practice.

Helen concluded her reflection regarding the importance of transcendental capabilities with the statement: “Leading in this way also allows the principal to form genuine, lasting relationships with staff where talents are acknowledged and developed and staff collectively strive to achieve school vision.”

When discussing her end-of-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and requisite capabilities, Helen reiterated the influence of the program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year:

I cannot emphasise enough the positive influence of reflection on program theory, especially that related to school improvement. Also, serving as a school board observer and sub-committee member for two years were important experiences that built my leadership capacity. Likewise, ongoing and reflective collegial discussions with my principal, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals were highly beneficial aspects of the program.

Helen also emphasised the value of acting principalship on her perceptions: “I was fortunate this year to be invited by the Executive Director to complete a second six-month period of acting principalship at a school other than my own.” The opportunity presented itself when the principal took leave at short notice. Moreover, she reflected: “It’s one thing stepping up to acting principalship at a school where you know the staff, families and the culture, but doing so in a foreign context is more challenging and, in my opinion, the best way to test your knowledge of the role and further develop leadership capabilities.”

With regard to the role component, school improvement, Helen discussed the influence of LSI data, coaching and the QCS project on her perceptions:

The use of LSI data to identify my leadership capability strengths and weaknesses, coaching to develop improvement goals and strategies and putting these into practice by leading a school improvement project were a ‘game-changer’ for me.

Additionally, she stated: “These experiences not only provided me with a greater understanding of the purpose of the QCS Framework and use of the school...”
improvement tool, they changed my perspective regarding the capabilities required for role success.”

5.4.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Helen identified three factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “I am attracted to principalship because of my enthusiasm for learning and passion for leadership.” Helen also described how this disposition inspired her to “develop and lead teachers who are keen to assist students to develop holistically.” Finally, she expressed her “desire to work with staff, parents and students to develop a Gospel-centred community based on pillars of shared leadership, empowerment and trust.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Helen asserted: “My initial attraction to the principalship has not changed, but has been affirmed by the program.” She clarified her perspective:

I remain committed to developing teacher quality. Through the staff, I want students to discover their passions before being assisted to reach their potential within inspiring and challenging classrooms.

With regard to leading the role component, community engagement and development, Helen commented: “I am driven to nurture a school community characterised by positive relationships grounded in the teachings of Jesus.”

At this point in the program, Helen specified the influence of three program-related features on her perceptions. She commented on “the formative influence of the leadership vision statement development framework that prompted reflection on program theory and clarified both non-negotiable leadership values and attraction to principalship.” Further, she stated: “Sharing my emerging vision statement with my program colleagues, my principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals allowed me to make refinements and assess the authenticity of my aspirations.” Finally, Helen asserted: “The real test of my vision statement occurred during my experience of acting principalship where I was constantly called upon to state it publically and reflect upon it privately.” She acknowledged the important role this experience played in endorsing role attraction: “Acting principalship confirmed that I am
committed to being a Gospel-based community builder and educational leader, known for nurturing quality teachers who aim to develop students holistically.”

At the conclusion of the program, Helen articulated the factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program. She stated:

I am driven to lead like Jesus, to serve the members of our school community and to work with staff, students and their parents to create a Gospel-based curriculum and learning community with a culture of inquiry, reflection and educationally informed risk-taking at its heart. Within this culture, teachers will be nurtured to understand content, student needs, effective pedagogical practices and the use of data-driven interventions to assist the holistic development of students. Parents will be encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the life of our school to ensure that learning is the result of a true partnership.

Helen concluded her vision statement with the assertion: “I want to authentically share my leadership and positively influence staff, student and parent commitment, wellbeing and development.”

When discussing her end-of-program perceptions, Helen reiterated the influence of the program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year. She stated: “My attraction to principalship has been clarified and confirmed through the development and refinement of my leadership vision statement.” With regard to this process, she expressed three important actions: “deep and sustained reflection on learning regarding the role and its capabilities, discussing the statement with colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals, and making refinements before testing its mettle through acting principalship.”

5.4.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Helen identified three factors diminishing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “Managing school finances concerns me because it is foreign and daunting, requiring a whole new skills-set that I haven’t been trained for or exposed to.” Further, she reflected: “There exists potential for principals to be distracted by the ever-increasing intensity of the role, especially completion of administrative tasks, and distance themselves from
staff and students.” Finally, Helen commented: “My lack of knowledge about school-based legal issues and the potential for litigation worries me; as is the case with school finances, I haven’t had the opportunity to experience this aspect of the role.” She confirmed that her disincentive perceptions were “the result of observing current and previous principals stress about these responsibilities.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Helen’s pre-program disincentive perceptions “had decreased as a result of the program, especially the requirement to participate on the school board and its sub-committees and a successful, six-month period as acting principal.” With regard to school financial management, she commented:

I originally thought negatively about the financial responsibilities of principalship, the result of knowing very little about these requirements. The knowledge and awareness drawn from the program was invaluable. Perhaps more so was the opportunity to convert this knowledge into practice through school board and finance sub-committee participation and acting principalship. These experiences confirmed that I have the ability to handle this role aspect.

When discussing the need to balance role intensity and staff and student engagement, Helen affirmed: “One key learning I gleaned from the program is that with the right systems, structures and processes in place to distribute leadership, this doesn’t have to be a problem; it is possible to be both a sound administrator and people leader.”

When reflecting on legal issues as a disincentive, she observed: “Initially, I was overwhelmed by the need to deal with these situations, but now feel less threatened because of the availability of CEOWA support staff who are there to help principals navigate tricky situations.” Finally, Helen discussed the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals on her perceptions: “Listening to their stories made me realise that my concerns about certain role aspects were not unique; they too had similar fears during the early years of principalship.” Moreover, she reflected: “Their proactive suggestions regarding strategies to manage these aspects were helpful and assured me that I would survive these challenges as they had.”

At the conclusion of the program, Helen’s perceptions regarding Catholic principalship disincentives had changed again. She commented: “My perception changes are the result of reflecting on the experience of acting principalship, discussing the prospect of country principalship with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest
principals and my impending move from Perth to a country town to commence the role.” Specifically, Helen identified three new concerns. She discussed the financial disincentives associated with the relocation from Perth to the country town:

Because I am an assistant principal in a three-stream primary school in Perth, I’m actually taking a pay cut despite my promotion. Also, the cost of living in my new town is significantly higher than Perth. When you add these factors to the costs associated with renting my family home, packing, transportation, paying the non-subsidised portion of rent for my new place and the balance between rental income and my mortgage, I’m significantly out of pocket. Despite this, it’s not all about money and I look forward to the challenges my new role will bring.

Helen also acknowledged: “Separation from immediate family with the move to a town where I know no one is a disincentive, especially for my young children who are emotionally connected to their grandparents.” She also lamented the challenge associated with the loss of family support, especially with regard to before and after school care for her children. Finally, she commented: “I anticipate that recruiting and keeping high quality staff in country areas will be problematic and a definite challenge for me as a novice country principal.”

5.4.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Helen specified high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She asserted: “I feel very confident to undertake the role, the result of my six years of experience as assistant principal in a very large primary school.” She also attributed her high self-efficacy perceptions to support received from both current and past principals. She stated: “Their willingness to distribute leadership for strategic initiatives such as whole-of-school ICT integration and provide me with the time and resources to do so has greatly assisted my feelings of readiness.” Despite these perceptions, however, she reflected: “I’m expecting that the program will help me build the professional networks I require to excel as a new principal.” Helen also commented: “Program topics including school financial management and dealing with legal issues will equip me with the knowledge and skill required to handle these aspects of the role and further build my leadership capacity.”
At the end of the program’s first year, Helen reiterated her high self-efficacy to commence principalship. She attributed her perceptions to “role competence” or “command of responsibilities associated with assistant principalship and the overwhelming feeling of readiness to tackle principalship.” Helen also attributed her self-efficacy perceptions to the influence of six program-related features. Firstly, she discussed the influence of “a well structured and facilitated program that provided an improved understanding of the role and its capabilities.” Secondly, she commented on “excellent program activities that encouraged the practical application of theory and, as a result, confirmed feelings of readiness.” Helen specifically referred to “working with a coach to amplify leadership capability strengths and minimise weaknesses identified by the LSI and participating as a school board observer and sub-committee member.” Thirdly, Helen reflected on the influence of a six-month period as acting principal at her school on her self-efficacy perceptions. She confirmed:

Yes, I’m ready! I have handled the financial, school board management, legal and relationship responsibilities that daunted me before I began the program and my leadership vision statement highlights my authenticity; I can do this. Helen also highlighted as significantly important the “confidence boost associated with the support and affirmation received from staff, students, their parents and community members during the experience.” Fourthly, and related to the experience of acting principalship, was the influence of CEOWA networks developed through the program:

The just-in-time technical support provided by CEOWA personnel during my time as acting principal, especially in relation to school finances, industrial disagreements, legal and students with disabilities issues, was incredible. The fact that I already knew many of these staff through the program provided me with a sense of connection and comfort. I never felt alone.

Fifthly, Helen commented on the self-efficacy benefits associated with the collegial nature of her cohort:

In large part, I attribute my feelings of readiness to my incredibly supportive program colleagues. Our network of co-learners is based on trust, encouragement and support and has provided me with the confidence I need to apply for principalship. Because of these people, I am convinced that the journey ahead will not be lonely.
Finally, Helen affirmed the influence of supportive relationships she enjoyed with her principal mentors, coach and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals formed or enhanced through the program. She articulated the “benefits associated with listening to their tales of leadership struggle and triumph including the realisation that, like them, I have the resilience and capacity to thrive.” Helen particularly acknowledged the influence of two mentors, both previous principals, on her self-efficacy perceptions. She stated: “Throughout my career, these people have recognised and affirmed my leadership potential and tested my abilities by providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.” She described these mentors as: “visionary principals who challenged me to become a highly reflective leader who recognises the potential in others and gives back.”

At the conclusion of the program, Helen expressed high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship and attributed her perceptions to the influence of the same six program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year. She also described the influence of another program activity, coaching in conjunction with the QCS school improvement project:

These were excellent means through which to understand school improvement as a role component of Catholic principalship and develop my leadership capabilities and confidence to commence principalship. My coach expertly used my LSI data to guide the formation of improvement goals before working with me to develop strategies to achieve them.

Helen reflected: “The strategies developed within coaching sessions were put to great effect as I led my QCS school improvement project and experienced a second, six-month period of acting principalship in a different school”.

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5.5 Case Study Four: Jason

When ‘Jason’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, he had completed his seventh year as assistant principal. Jason trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1996. Between 1997 and 2003, he taught at one government and one Catholic primary school in Perth. In January 2004, he commenced his first leadership role as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in Perth where he served until December 2009. In January 2010, he commenced his second assistant principalship at another metropolitan Catholic primary school. Upon conclusion of the program, Jason was actively applying for Catholic primary school principalship vacancies in Western Australian country towns.

5.5.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jason expressed low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation and, to a lesser extent, one involving leadership of the role components, community engagement and development and teaching and learning. Jason identified principal capacity to employ managerial knowledge when administrating responsibilities such as school finances and capital development planning and the ability to lead transformationally as the capabilities required for effective performance. Jason was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, Catholic identity, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. He considered role intensification and the requirement of the principal to manage school finances and capital development planning disincentives.

As Jason participated in and completed the program, he reported moderate then high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. Jason described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. He also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. His attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program,
remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However, Jason indicated greater
desire to lead school improvement and positively influence the lives of school
community members through quality leadership and reduced interest in leading the
role component, community engagement and development. Jason expressed reduced
apprehension with regard to disincentives identified previously, but cited a new
concern; the result of reflection emanating from his application for country
principalship vacancies. Specifically, he voiced anxiety regarding the potential for
role intensification to adversely impact work-life balance, important for him as a
professional and a father of two young children.

As Jason participated in and completed the program, he attributed discernible
perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a coherent,
rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and
interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Prime amongst
these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital
development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a
leadership vision statement; and a 10-week period of acting principalship at his
school.

5.5.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for
effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jason identified three role components
associated with Catholic principalship. He focused predominantly on the managerial
aspects of the role, notably “administration of school finances, the school building
program and policies and procedures.” To a lesser extent, he referred to the principal
as “the builder of Gospel-based relationships with staff, students, parents, members
of the parish and the wider school community.” Finally, he discussed “the
importance of the principal working with teachers to ensure that they provide
students with the best possible education.” With regard to the capabilities required
for effective performance, Jason stated: “It is imperative that the principal have a
comprehensive understanding of managerial role responsibilities.” Additionally, he
reflected: “When working with staff and building the community, the principal must
be capable of getting people on side, usually through communication prowess and
the use of interpersonal skills.”
At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jason expressed Catholic principalship in terms of four interrelated role components studied through the program. He described the principal as “leader of school Catholic identity who ensures that all aspects of the school are infused with the Gospel values.” Further, he stated: “One way the principal achieves this aim is by modelling Jesus’ example when engaging with others, especially those from the school community who are most in need.” He concluded his description of this role component with the comment: “The principal also leads the evangelisation process where staff work to nourish the faith needs of practicing Catholics from the school community, bring baptised, non-practicing Catholics back to the Church and convert non-Catholics to our faith tradition.” Jason also referred to the principal as “an accountable steward who effectively manages environmental, financial, capital and human resources to create the best possible learning opportunities for students.” When discussing leadership of teaching and learning, Jason described the principal as “an educational leader who works with teachers to ensure that lessons meet the holistic needs of students.” Finally, he reflected on the role of the principal “as a servant who models the example of Jesus when building community amongst staff, students, their parents and parish members.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Jason defined the successful principal as “one capable of forming school vision in the light of the Church’s evangelising mission before communicating it effectively to the school community.” He also described as a pivotal capability “the ability and willingness of the principal to speak and act with Gospel values when leading, especially when it comes to driving achievement of school vision.” Moreover, Jason articulated the “need for the principal to have both managerial and transformational capability.” With regard to managerial capability, he commented: “The principal must have the knowledge and skill required to prudently manage the school budget, the building program, human resources and conflict resolution through the application of policy.” When discussing transformational capability, he stated: “The effective principal is a ‘relationship manager’ who uses highly-developed interpersonal skills to work with a range of people, especially staff, to develop professional capacity and cater for wellbeing.” Additionally, he reflected: “The tools used by the transformational leader to motivate staff and community members to
embrace and work toward the achievement of school vision are charisma, emotional
connection and intellectual stimulation.”

At this point in the program, Jason specified the influence of three program-
related features on his perceptions. He commented: “The study of these role
components and capabilities through the program assisted my understanding.” He
also espoused “the value of applying program learning, especially that relating to the
role component of stewardship, through school board observation and finance and
capital development sub-committee participation.” Finally, Jason stated: “Discussing
the role components and capabilities studied in the program with my principal and
guest principals who joined us were great ways to confirm or change my
perspectives.”

At the conclusion of the program, Jason added one principalship role
component to the four previously described, school improvement. He reflected: “The
principal as leader of school improvement aims to advance all aspects of school
operations.” When leading and managing this role component, Jason indicated: “The
effective principal places achievement of school vision at the heart of improvement
endeavours and uses transcendental leadership capabilities to drive the process.”
With regard to transcendental capabilities, he stated:

The principal acts transcendentally when he or she leads improvement
discussions using words and actions reflecting those modelled by Jesus. These
leaders do not force their own agenda; they place the needs of others before
self, listen deeply and strive to create unity by engaging staff and community
members in ‘flat’, collaborative discussions.

Jason also mentioned knowledge of school improvement as a capability required for
successful leadership. He commented: “The effective principal remains abreast of
contemporary literature in the field of school improvement, understands the
philosophical underpinnings and principles of the QCS Framework and knows how
to effectively use the QCS school improvement tool.”

Jason reiterated the influence of the three program-related features identified
previously on his end-of-program perceptions. He stated: “Program theory, school
board and sub-committee participation and collegial discussions with my principal
and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals were features of the program that influenced
my perspectives.” With regard to his understanding of the role component, school improvement Jason identified the influence of two new factors. Firstly, he mentioned the use of LSI data within coaching sessions to frame improvement goals before developing strategies that were subsequently applied when leading the QCS project as an important aspect of the program. He asserted: “These activities improved my understanding of the role of the principal as leader of school improvement and helped me to test and refine my leadership capabilities.” Secondly, he emphasised the experience of acting principalship as a “powerful way to boost knowledge and practice of school improvement, other role components and leadership capabilities.” Jason indicated that the opportunity to experience a 10-week period of acting principalship at his school arose when his principal undertook long service leave.

5.5.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jason identified four factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship. He expressed his “motivation to be principal that delivers Gospel-based teaching and learning programs that equip students with a set of values based on those modelled by Jesus.” Additionally, he identified his “passion to develop and support teaching staff to achieve holistic student development.” Jason also commented: “I want to promote the Church’s mission by leading evangelisation initiatives and sharing my faith with others.” Finally, he articulated his “desire to engage with and develop a school community based on Gospel values.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jason asserted: “The program has confirmed my original attraction to the principalship.” He reiterated “the attraction of the role to grow quality teachers capable of delivering a Gospel-based curriculum and achieving holistic student development.” Further, he reflected: “I want to be known as a principal who nurtures the faith of school community members through quality, Gospel-based leadership.”

At this point in the program, Jason specified the influence of three program-related features on his perceptions. He affirmed “the influence of self-reflection after program modules as an effective way to identify appealing role aspects.” He also revealed “the powerful influence of leadership vision statement development and refinement” on his perceptions. Specifically, he referred to “the clarity the process
delivered regarding leadership values and reasons for seeking appointment as principal.” Finally, and connected to this activity, Jason acknowledged “the positive effect of sharing this statement with program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals.” He commented: “These program aspects were vitally important ways to test the legitimacy of my aspirations.”

At the conclusion of the program, Jason discussed the factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program. He stated:

I want to develop teachers to be the best they can be and encourage them to achieve the holistic development of students through the delivery of a distinctly Catholic curriculum based on Gospel values. To achieve this aim, we would work together to create a culture of trust where development of professional capacity and wellbeing would take centre stage. I am equally motivated by the prospect of engaging with and developing a positive, Gospel-focused school community where the faith of each member is nurtured and challenges are proactively addressed.

Jason concluded his leadership vision statement with the assertion: “I also aspire to lead a school community through a lens of continuous improvement where we would work together to review and enhance all aspects of our school.”

When discussing the factors influencing his end-of-program perceptions, Jason reiterated those identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year. He stated: “My attraction to principalship has been positively influenced by program-inspired reflection, the process of defining my leadership vision statement and discussing this with my colleagues and guest principals who joined us for the program.” Jason also identified acting principalship as a significantly influential experience. He asserted: “In my opinion, the experience was the ‘golden opportunity’ I was searching for since starting the program.” He justified his perspective with the comment: “It allowed me to test the legitimacy of my vision statement and, as a result, confirmed my reasons for seeking appointment as a Catholic school principal.”

5.5.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jason identified three factors diminishing his interest in Catholic principalship. He stated: “I am intimated by the
requirement of the principal to manage school finances and building programs given my lack of experience.” When asked to explain the reasons for his perspective, he commented:

Mainly, I just haven’t been exposed to these aspects. Also, my teaching commitment, four days per week, leaves me with little time to get involved in other leadership duties. Sometimes, being an assistant principal is terrible because I feel that I don’t deliver the quality my students deserve or that expected of me by my principal and our staff.

Jason also referred to concerns regarding his “inadequate professional support network that would be necessary to consult with when trying to navigate difficult situations or make high-stakes decisions as a novice principal.” Finally, he remarked: “The never-ending increase in principalship accountability requirements are daunting and have the potential steal time from leadership of other important role components such as teaching and learning and building community.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jason reflected: “The program confirmed my original concerns, but limited their scale.” He identified the positive influence of four program-related factors on his perceptions. Firstly, he referred to his “increased knowledge and confidence regarding school financial management and building programs as a result of serving on the school board and finance and capital development sub-committees.” Secondly, Jason commented: “Building relationships with CEOWA support staff through the program expanded my professional network and assured me that expert help will be readily available when I commence the role.” Thirdly, he confirmed: “As I learned during the program, when I become a principal, I plan to distribute my leadership to escape the administrative trap and reclaim time to lead other important role aspects, especially teaching and learning.” Finally, he affirmed: “A very helpful aspect of the program that reduced my apprehension were the leadership success and disaster stories recounted by ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals.” Jason clarified his perspective: “The fact that these principals had struggled with aspects of the role that were of concern to me and, over time, developed strategies to minimise their impacts reassured me that I could do the same.”

At the conclusion of the program, Jason’s disincentive perceptions had changed, the result of three program-related features. He stated: “My thoughts about
aspects of the role that concern me now are the result of deep reflection on my recent experience as acting principal.” Further, he remarked: “Comparing these thoughts against the stories of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals regarding the challenging aspects of working in country settings was an influential experience.” Finally, Jason exclaimed: “Applying for country primary school principalship vacancies was a major influence on my perceptions!” He elaborated: “My family is my first priority and I am concerned that the intensity of the role will impact quality family time, especially if I am appointed to a country school where I will be considered principal 24/7.” In light of this concern, Jason discussed a contingency plan: “I intend to get to work earlier, stay later, prioritise tasks throughout my day and distribute leadership when I can so that when I get home, I can disconnect from work and spend quality time with family, especially my two young children who miss their dad when he’s at work!”

5.5.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jason asserted: “When it comes to leading as assistant principal, I am very confident and in many respects feel that I have conquered the role and am ready for a new challenge.” Nonetheless, he stated: “I feel woefully inadequate to begin principalship.” He explained the origins of his low self-efficacy beliefs: “To feel ready, I need principal-specific knowledge and skill and the experience of acting principalship to road-test my learning.” With regard to acting principalship, Jason expressed frustration “that the program doesn’t have an in-built component as this is an essential part of an aspiring principal’s formation.” Despite this reservation, he reflected: “I anticipate that the program will thoroughly prepare me for principalship and I intend to use the experience to assess my suitability for the role.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jason described his self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as “moderate; a definite improvement from the start of the year.” Further, he stated: “I have an gnawing feeling inside me that I have gone as far as I can as an assistant principal and am ready for a new challenge.” Jason identified the influence of five program-related features on his self-efficacy perceptions. Firstly, he discussed “increased confidence as a result of program theory that has provided an improved understanding of the role and required capabilities.”
Secondly, he commented: “Identifying disincentives and working to minimise their impact through activities such as school board and sub-committee participation has greatly increased my confidence.” Thirdly, he reflected: “Developing a leadership vision statement was a vitally important activity.” Jason indicated that this activity helped him to clarify his values and validated his principalship motivations. Fourthly, he stated:

Developing relationships with my principal, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals who hosted program modules was a great way to expand my professional network and increase my self-confidence. These people served as a rich source of information, support and affirmation and I highly valued the discussions we had about the role, my desire for principalship, disincentives and a range of other topics.

Finally, Jason affirmed the influence of his CEOWA support network, developed through the program, on his self-efficacy perceptions. He remarked: “I’m excited that I’m getting to know CEOWA support staff really well and find that I’m learning a lot from their expertise and stories of success and failure.” Additionally, he commented: “They are very affirming of the leadership capabilities of our group and I feel comforted by their assurances that we will not be left alone when we’re finally in the ‘big chair’ and in the middle of a crisis.”

At the conclusion of the program, Jason specified “high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship.” He reiterated the influence of several program-related features on his perceptions: reflection on program theory; development, sharing and ongoing refinement of a leadership vision statement; and school board and sub-committee participation. Further, Jason articulated the positive influence of a 10-week period of acting principalship at his school on his perceptions. He stated:

I was lucky that my principal took such a long period of leave, opening the door for me. The experience allowed me to develop a greater understanding of the role and its required capabilities. It also allowed me to confront and deal with disincentives, test the authenticity of my leadership vision statement and my leadership capabilities that I had been working on with my coach. The experience also inspired a mindset shift. Previously, I viewed the role managerially, but now realise it’s far more than that. Principals must be capable of building community through relationships. As a result of this experience, I know that I can do both well.
Related to this experience, Jason commented on “the uplifting effect of affirmation received from the staff, students and their parents” on his self-efficacy perceptions. He reflected: “For me, affirmation of my leadership by these stakeholders is the thing that most propels me toward principalship.”
5.6 Case Study Five: Jeff


5.6.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jeff expressed high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation and, to a lesser extent, one involving leadership of the role component, community engagement and development. Jeff cited knowledge of technical role responsibilities such as the management of school finances as the sole capability required for effective performance. Jeff was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. He identified the difficult nature of principalship decision-making and the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, resolve legal issues and cope with threats of litigation as disincentives.

As Jeff participated in and completed the program, his self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship remained high. He described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. Jeff also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. His attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However, Jeff also flagged his interest in leading the role components, Catholic identity and school improvement.
Jeff expressed reduced apprehension with regard to disincentives identified previously, but cited a new concern; the result of his appointment as principal of a metropolitan Catholic secondary school. Specifically, he indicated reluctance to leave his highly satisfactory deputy principalship for an unknown, complicated and challenging role.

As Jeff participated in and completed the program, he attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Chief amongst these experiences were development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; use of the LSI 360-degree tool and coaching for leadership capability improvement; and a two-week internship where he shadowed five, east coast Catholic secondary school principals.

5.6.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jeff identified three role components associated with Catholic principalship. He primarily focused on the role of the principal as “manager of school finances, industrial relations and legal issue resolution.” He also remarked: “The principal is accountable to multiple masters including students, their parents, the CEOWA and government agencies.” Finally, Jeff asserted: “Even though it’s challenging, the principal must use the example of Jesus to build positive relationships with community members to allow the school to understand and respond appropriately to their needs.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, Jeff specified: “a high degree of knowledge and skill associated with the managerial aspects of the role.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jeff discussed Catholic principalship through the four interrelated role components studied through the program. Specifically, he described the principal as:

A Catholic leader, an evangeliser of the school community and teacher of Religious Education who strives to model Jesus’ actions in word and deed and establishes links between the school and parishes to provide a tangible connection to the Church.
Further, Jeff identified the principal as “a steward of resources or efficient manager of school finances, building plans and staff recruitment, selection, development and wellbeing.” He also referred to the principal as “an educational leader responsible for leading the school’s curriculum to achieve the holistic development of students.” Finally, he defined the principal as “a community builder who ensures that the school expresses its Catholic ethos through respectful and caring relationships and service to others, especially the marginalised.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Jeff considered a successful principal to be one with transformational leadership capability. He stated: “This is the ability of the principal to generate school vision and get people on board with it by being relational and inspiring trust through displays of genuine honesty and support.” When striving to lead community in this way, Jeff emphasised the “importance of the principal modelling Gospel values such as justice, inclusivity, respect and care for the marginalised.” He also articulated the need for the principal to have “knowledge and understanding of the managerial aspects of the role including school financial management, facilities construction and the resolution of legal issues.” Additionally, Jeff acknowledged the importance of the principal “understanding and accurately applying CECWA policy statements necessary for the smooth operation of schools.” When discussing managerial capabilities, he identified the need for the principal to “set appropriate goals with staff, be a source of quality feedback for them as they perform their roles and celebrate achievements when appropriate.”

At this point in the program, Jeff attributed his changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. He reflected: “My understanding of the role and capabilities was assisted by the delivery of program theory based on the Leadership Framework and established models of leadership.” He also affirmed the influence of two support network members on his perceptions, his current principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ principals. Jeff stated:

These people really ‘nailed’ the nature of role components and capabilities for me. My principal, in particular, has been incredibly supportive and a valuable source of learning. He regularly volunteers his experiences and perspectives that, for me, are pure gold!
Finally, Jeff reiterated the importance of a two-week internship, organised and funded by his school, on his perceptions. He commented: “During my internship, I visited five Catholic secondary schools on the east coast and observed five very different principals in action before engage them in discussion regarding the highs and lows of the role and what it takes to flourish.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to the role components identified previously, Jeff articulated the role of the Catholic principal as leader of school improvement. He defined school improvement as “a way to enhance all aspects of the school to achieve its vision and, in doing so, support the mission of the Church.” Jeff reflected on the leadership capabilities required of the principal when leading this role component. He highlighted as imperative: “principal knowledge of school improvement generally and the philosophy of the QCS Framework and use of the school improvement tool specifically.” He also remarked: “The QCS Framework and tool are vehicles for transcendental leadership because they encourage the principal to engage in collaborative dialogue on the same level as the staff for the purpose of cultural analysis and improvement.” When clarifying his understanding of transcendental leadership capabilities, Jeff commented: “Such principals care less about themselves and their needs than they do about those of others, especially staff and the students and families they serve.” He continued: “They are highly reflective individuals who model Gospel values and engage in discussion in a genuine, peaceful and non-hierarchical way.”

Jeff specified the positive influence of two program-related features on his end-of-program perceptions. He cited the influence of his LSI, 360-degree profile and coaching sessions:

My coach was brilliant at assisting me to dissect my leadership strengths and weaknesses and guided the process of improvement with precision. As a principal, his understanding of the role and what it takes to succeed was a bonus for my learning and development.

Additionally, he reiterated the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals and his principal: “Their willingness to openly share their experiences of the role, positive and negative, and what it takes to succeed greatly assisted my learning.”
5.6.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jeff identified three factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship. He reflected: “I am attracted to the principalship because of the opportunity provided by the role to do good, to benefit others as Jesus did, especially the marginalised.” He also articulated his “desire to work with staff to develop students in the holistic sense and encourage them to be self-responsible, strive for excellence and display leadership.” Finally, he identified as significantly important his “desire to inspire all members of the school community to live according to the Gospel values of faith, justice and service.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jeff stated: “My original attraction to principalship has not changed, but has become more focused as a result of the program.” He expressed his “desire, as principal, to build a distinctively Catholic school community focused on school improvement where areas of weakness are identified before working to create positive change for the benefit of students.” Jeff discussed the result of this focus as “a Catholic curriculum used to holistically develop students who are responsible for self, strive for excellence, display leadership and live out the Gospel values of faith, justice and service to others, especially the marginalised.”

At this point in the program, Jeff specified the influence of three program-related features on his perceptions. He discussed the importance of “reflecting on the content of program modules and using the vision statement development framework to clarify leadership values and principalship motives.” Linked to this program feature was a second influence: “Sharing this vision statement with my fellow aspirants, my principal and guest principals from the program and modifying it as a result of these discussions.” Finally, Jeff asserted: “Testing the authenticity and validity of my vision statement with the five principals I shadowed during my internship experience was a very affirming experience.”

At the conclusion of the program, Jeff described the factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program:

I value Catholic education and the important role it plays in Australian society.
I also believe in the need for schools to establish sound fundamentals including
high expectations and a consistent approach to teaching and learning. I am motivated to lead a vibrant Catholic school where teachers are developed to use Gospel-based curricula and modern technology to facilitate holistic student development. I want to work with staff who challenge and support our students to be self-responsible, to strive for excellence, to display leadership and live the Gospel values of faith, justice and service to others, especially the marginalised.

He concluded his vision statement with the declaration: “I am keen to develop educative partnerships between the school and its community, especially parents, to bring this vision to life and use a process of improvement to continually assess and develop our effectiveness.” As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jeff identified vision statement development and discussion with program colleagues, his principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals as significant influences on his perceptions.

5.6.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jeff identified three factors diminishing his interest in Catholic principalship. He stated: “I have significant concerns regarding the requirement of the principal to manage school finances; an unfamiliar area that I have gained little exposure to during my time as deputy principal.” Further, Jeff acknowledged the disincentive associated with “having to deal with legal issues and the possibility of litigation” given his “background as a teacher, not a lawyer.” With regard to these disincentives, he commented: “observing my principals struggle with these role aspects has rubbed off on me in a negative way.” Jeff also discussed the “uncomfortable nature of making certain decisions, especially expelling students.” When elaborating on decision-making concerns, he identified his poorly developed professional support network as a problem because he anticipated the need to “call upon the experience of wise people when making these decisions.” Jeff conceded: “The thought of being professionally alone when doing so is not attractive.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jeff’s apprehension with regard to disincentives identified pre-program: managing school finances, dealing with legal issues/potential litigation and the difficult nature of decision-making, had decreased.
He noted the positive influence of three program-related features on his perceptions. Firstly, he observed:

Listening to the stories recounted by ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals made me realise that my original concerns were a natural part of the role that everyone struggles with at some point. The fact that they have survived assures me that I will too.

Secondly, he stated: “The program has allowed me to develop relationships with CEOWA support staff who provided pearls of wisdom, practical advice and assurances that significant assistance will be available to me as a new principal as required.” Finally, Jeff affirmed the influence of his internship experience on his perceptions:

Discussions with my internship principals highlighted that, as beginning principals, these people were as worried as I was about things like managing school finances and resolving legal issues. The reality is that they experienced these aspects of the role, sought advice and survived. As a result, I know that I have the capacity to do so too.

Despite minimisation of his initial concerns, Jeff identified a new disincentive, the result of program-inspired reflection: “Reduced student contact because of role intensity, the result of accountability requirements and the time taken to deal with student, staff and parent issues.”

At the conclusion of the program, the disincentive associated with role intensification and reduced student contact had abated. Jeff remarked:

I have reflected on program theory and discussed my concerns with my principal, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals and CEOWA support staff I met through the program. What I have learned is that effectively distributing leadership actually releases you to make meaningful contact with students. It is possible to put the pen down and free oneself from administrivia.

As the program neared completion, however, Jeff expressed a new disincentive, the result of his recent appointment as principal. He commented: “I am torn between leaving my deputy principal role, one that is thoroughly enjoyable and fulfilling, a pristine position, and assuming one that will undoubtedly involve unknown, complicated challenges.”
5.6.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Jeff nominated high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He believed that his eight years as deputy principal “had provided the necessary on-the-job training and experience required to handle the rigors of principalship.” Further, Jeff’s experience as acting principal at his school for a six-month period during 2009 convinced him that he had “an excellent working knowledge of the role and the necessary faith, skills, vision and energy to lead a Catholic school.” Linked to this experience, he discussed the “strong endorsement and support of past and present principals, staff, students, their parents and other members of the school community as significant factors” contributing to his self-efficacy perceptions. Finally, he stated: “being trusted to lead strategic initiatives by my principal and being provided with the time and resources to do so has provided me with the confidence to take on the role.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Jeff reiterated his high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He attributed his perceptions to “proficiency as a deputy principal and an overwhelming sense of readiness for promotion.” Jeff also affirmed the positive influence of four program-related features on his self-efficacy perceptions. He stated:

The use of program theory to understand the role and required capabilities; developing a leadership vision statement to clarify motivations; and opportunities to identify, reflect upon and minimise disincentives were interrelated program features that positively influenced my perspectives.

Jeff also reflected on the positive effect of LSI, 360-degree data and coaching sessions:

The way my coach used the data to assist my understanding of leadership strengths and weaknesses and guided the design of goals and improvement strategies was impressive. I consider this element of the program a vital preparatory step in my development.

Additionally, he commented positively on the influence of program facilitation and collegial interactions on his perceptions:

The way each program module was facilitated was superb. We were given opportunities to think about theory presented before interacting with a range of people to share our perspectives and experiences. Listening to the stories of
colleagues, guest principals, my coach and, when back at school, my principal, provided me with confidence that I have what it takes to lead. Likewise, when I told my stories, I felt affirmed regarding my potential as a future Catholic principal.

Finally, Jeff discussed the self-efficacy benefits associated with “knowing that CEOWA support staff, especially those who facilitated program modules, would be there to render assistance during times of need.” He concluded his affirmation of CEOWA staff with the comment: “Their stories of success, failure and learning and belief in my capacity to lead not only provided me with confidence, it assured me that failure is not only acceptable, it’s expected!”

At the conclusion of the program, Jeff had attained his first principalship. He commented: “I couldn’t be more ready to begin the principalship and feel confident that I can bring experience and ideas that will enhance the excellent reputation of my new school.” As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, he reiterated the positive influence of three support network members on his high self-efficacy perceptions. Jeff discussed the influence of his coach and use of LSI data:

His experience as a principal from our system benefited me greatly. He knew my context and was able to relate to my experiences. He also intimately knew my LSI profile and used the data to guide me through some serious improvement goals by encouraging me to develop and use effective strategies.

Jeff reaffirmed the positive influence of his fellow aspirants on his perceptions:

One of the greatest benefits was the very deliberate manner in which our convenor and developed group collegiality. In this high-trust environment, we freely shared experiences, concerns, triumphs and failures that assisted our learning and allowed us to gauge our readiness for principalship.

He also attributed his perceptions to “the opportunity to develop and refine a leadership vision statement and test it through discussion with colleagues, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals and my principal.” Jeff concluded his discussion with two statements. Firstly, he commented: “These people affirmed and encouraged me to believe in my leadership abilities.” Secondly, he remarked: “They also openly shared their stories of triumph, failure and the learning that flowed from both. I often found myself thinking, if they survived and thrived, there is every chance that I will too!”
5.7 Case Study Six: Paula

When ‘Paula’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, she had completed her eighth year as assistant principal. Paula trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1980. Between 1980 and 2002, she taught at two Catholic primary schools in Western Australian country towns. In January 2003, Paula commenced her first leadership role as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in Perth where she served until December 2008. In January 2009, she commenced her second assistant principalship at another metropolitan Catholic primary school. Toward the end of the program, in September 2012, Paula attended her first principalship interview and was appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town commencing January 2013.

5.7.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Paula expressed moderate self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She fundamentally considered principalship a managerial occupation requiring knowledge of technical role responsibilities such as the administration of school finances. To a lesser extent, Paula described the principal as leader of the role component, teaching and learning and provider of staff and student pastoral care. She was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. Paula considered the requirement of the principal to manage school finances and the school board and adhere to compliance and accountability requirements disincentives.

As Paula participated in and completed the program, she reported high self-efficacy to commence principalship. Paula described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. She also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. Her attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program, but expanded to include leadership of the role
components, Catholic identity and school improvement. She expressed reduced apprehension with regard to previously identified disincentives, but cited several new concerns; the result of reflection inspired by her appointment as principal of a country Catholic primary school. One concern cited by Paula was impending separation from her family support network.

As Paula participated in and completed the program, she attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Paramount amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; use of the LSI 360-degree tool and coaching for leadership capability improvement; and a three-week period of acting principalship in a country Catholic primary school.

5.7.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Paula identified three role components associated with Catholic principalship. Above all, she considered the Catholic principal “a manager of school finances.” She also described the principal as “a pseudo human resource manager responsible for the recruitment, development, appraisal and wellbeing of staff.” Further, she referred to the principal as “an educational leader who motivates teachers and support staff to perform to the best of their ability when striving to meet the holistic needs of students.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, Paula asserted: “The principal requires knowledge and skill to manage these functions along with strong organisation and time management skills and a willingness to delegate.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Paula articulated Catholic principalship through four interrelated role components studied through the program. Specifically, she referred to the principal as “leader of school Catholic identity; responsible for the evangelisation of school community members through exposure to Catholic traditions and the development of positive relationships based on Gospel values.” Additionally, she discussed the role of the principal as “a steward who,
using Gospel-based, accountable leadership, plans and manages environmental, financial, capital and human resources to achieve school vision.” Paula also articulated the role of the principal as community builder:

Effective principals model the love of Jesus through the relationships they develop with school community members. Done well, positive and respectful relationships form between teachers, students and parents and staff and families are supported, especially during times of need.

Finally, she described the principal as “an educational leader who promotes the development and delivery of a Gospel-based curriculum and classrooms and empowers teachers to know subject content, student needs and effective teaching practices.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Paula highlighted as essential “principal knowledge regarding the management of school finances, construction of school facilities, application of CECWA policy statements and industrial agreements and the resolution of legal and human resource management issues.” Further, she stated: “When managing people, the principal must be capable of adopting a constructive transactional disposition.” Paula also referred to the successful principal as “a leader with transformational capability necessary to form a distinctively Catholic vision for the school, communicate it clearly to the community and drive efforts to achieve it.” With regard to leading vision achievement, she commented: “The principal must think, speak and act through the lens of Gospel values and be able to empower others to think beyond themselves and act in ways appropriate for the achievement of school vision.”

Finally, Paula reiterated the “importance of interpersonal skills to ensure that relationships between staff, students and their parents are healthy and reflect Gospel values.”

At this point in the program, Paula attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. She commented: “The use of the Leadership Framework and leadership theory to frame program modules made role components and capabilities explicit and assisted my learning.” Moreover, she reflected:
My knowledge of stewardship responsibilities and constructive transactional capabilities came directly from the program requirement to work with my principal, school board chair and colleagues from our finance and capital development sub-committees. These experiences helped me to learn about and apply these important managerial role aspects.

Finally, she stated: “My principal’s willingness to engage with me in critical discussion regarding the role and its demands after each program module was a significant factor influencing my perceptions.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to the role components previously described, Paula discussed the Catholic principal as leader of the role component, school improvement. She specified: “The purpose of QCS in our system is improvement of school structures and activities to achieve school vision and, as a result, ensure provision of support the Church’s evangelising mission.” Paula also commented on the capabilities required of the principal when leading school improvement: “The principal must have the knowledge and skill necessary to use the QCS Framework and tool to identify outstanding aspects of the school as well as its flaws before developing and implementing improvement plans.” When leading school improvement, she referred to the need for the principal “to model Gospel values through a transcendental approach to leadership by engaging with staff and community members in honest, collaborative dialogue, not as the principal, but as a colleague focused on improvement.” Paula also reflected on the need for the principal to distribute leadership for school improvement to develop staff capacity. She stated: “It is important that the principal identify and encourage interested staff to lead QCS component-reviews; these are opportunities for them to develop and showcase their leadership potential.”

Paula attributed her end-of-program perceptions to the influence of four program-related features. She commented: “The delivery of content relating to the QCS Framework and school improvement tool alongside leadership theory throughout the program’s second year assisted my understanding of the nature of this role component and the capabilities required to lead it effectively.” Additionally, she reiterated the influence of her “supportive principal who shared his experience of the QCS process and its challenges.” Paula also described the positive effect of “discussions regarding school improvement benefits and challenges with ‘Inside
Leadership’ guest principals” on her perceptions. Finally, she asserted: “Taking the reins as acting principal for three weeks in a country school was an overwhelmingly positive experience that assisted my understanding of school improvement, other role components and the capabilities principals require to lead and manage effectively.”

5.7.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Paula identified three factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship. She declared: “I am attracted to the role because it would allow me to achieve my goal of leading a school where staff and parents work together to develop the spiritual, emotional, social, academic and physical dimensions of students.” Paula also referred to her “commitment to lead the development of teachers through a professional learning community dedicated to the improvement of pedagogical practices and student learning.” Finally, she remarked: “I am driven by a strong belief in the value of Catholic Education, especially the potential for Gospel values to be integrated into all facets of the school and its community.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Paula asserted: “My original attraction to principalship has not changed, but has been strengthened by participation in the program.” Specifically, she expressed her “drive to develop and lead a school community that overtly demonstrates Gospel values and considers the holistic development of students its highest priority.” To achieve this aim, Paula clarified the importance of “nurturing effective school-community partnerships and developing teachers who constantly review and improve the quality of their practices and classroom environments.”

At this point in the program, Paula attributed her changing perceptions to the influence of three program-related features. She referred to the “effect of the program, especially modules and activities that prompted deep reflection on the role and its appealing features.” Moreover, she reflected: “The process of moulding my thoughts about leadership into a vision statement was a defining moment that clarified my motivations for seeking principalship.” Finally, Paula asserted: “Constantly sharing my vision statement with my program colleagues and my principal were affirming experiences that allowed me to test its authenticity and make appropriate refinements.”
At the conclusion of the program, Paula described the factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program:

I am drawn to the possibility of leading a distinctly Catholic school that focuses on the holistic development of students; where individual gifts and talents are recognised and opportunities are provided for students to engage in acts of collective good through Christian service learning. I am driven to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand the Catholic curriculum and meet student learning needs in highly pastoral, Gospel-infused, classroom environments.

Paula concluded her vision statement with the declaration: “To assist students to reach their potential, I want to lead a school where community members model Gospel values and work as a team to review and improve all aspects of the school.”

Paula discussed the influence of two program-related features on her end-of-program perceptions. She stated: “As was the case at the end of last year, sharing my emerging leadership vision statement with my program colleagues and my principal were tremendously affirming experiences that helped me to mould it further and clarify my drive.” Paula also considered sharing her emerging vision statement with “guest principals during ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions and testing it with the community” during her acting principalship experience important perception influences.

5.7.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Paula identified three factors diminishing her interest in Catholic principalship. She described the requirement of the principal to manage school finances as a “daunting part of the role.” Additionally, Paula considered school board management a disincentive because she perceived it would “involve trying to cater for a diverse group of people, all vying for favourable treatment.” Finally, she commented: “The requirement of the principal to be constantly accountable to the CEOWA and government authorities is an unattractive part of the role.” When explaining her reasons for identifying these concerns, Paula stated: “My current principal is challenged by these role aspects and they are alien to my training and leadership experiences.” She also commented on the learning barrier presented by the current structure of her assistant principal role:
“I am an assistant principal for 0.2 FTE and I teach 0.8 FTE and, as such, I struggle to do justice to either role and know that I would need more time to dedicate to these aspects of principalship to master them.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Paula remarked: “My original concerns regarding the principalship have decreased as a result of program participation.” She noted the influence of two program-related features on her perceptions:

Being an observer on my school board and a participant on the finance sub-committee has reduced my concerns regarding school financial management. Also, the realisation that CEOWA support staff, many of whom I met through the program, are available to assist principals with compliance and accountability tasks is a huge relief.

Instead, Paula identified a new disincentive: “the impact of role demands on principal health and wellbeing.” She cited two specific role aspects responsible for this impact: “the need for the principal to constantly mediate between conflicting parties, especially parents and staff members” and “demands placed on the principal to support school community members experiencing crisis.” Paula commented that her conclusions regarding this disincentive were the result of observing her principal “suffer physical and emotional exhaustion as a result of these demands.”

At the conclusion of the program, Paula reflected a change in perspective with regard to the potential for the role to adversely impact principal health and wellbeing:

Meeting principals through the program and hearing their stories have taught me two things. Firstly, it is important to have a confidential, professional network to debrief with and lean on during difficult times. Secondly, an interest beyond school, something to engage in as a ‘pressure release’ to counter role negativity, is a non-negotiable.

Further, she stated: “As I said last year, I feel relieved and comforted that there are CEOWA specialist staff, many of whom I met through the program, who will be available to support me as a beginning principal when confronted with tricky conflict and crisis situations.” The willingness of these staff to render assistance was confirmed for Paula during her acting principalship experience where she “used their knowledge and skills to navigate these very situations with great success.”
At the conclusion of the program, Paula had been appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town and was preparing to undertake the role. As a result of her appointment, she reflected that her disincentive perceptions had changed:

Now that the reality of my appointment has hit me, I think more about the impact of the role on my family and me. My husband is a successful professional in Perth and my children are at university, so it’s not possible for them to join me in the new town. Even though I will only be an hour from Perth and will come home regularly on weekends and holidays, not having them with me to provide face-to-face support and advice is daunting.

Paula also identified a concern specific to her new school: “The old-fashioned priest with his negative attitude toward female leaders has the potential to thwart attempts to build a positive school-parish relationship.” Finally, Paula expressed the disincentive associated with country principals having to be “Jacks of all trades.” She clarified this statement when discussing a handover meeting with her predecessor. During the meeting, the incumbent principal informed her that she would not only be responsible for the usual principalship duties and responsibilities, she would be expected to “clean gutters, fix roof leaks, mow the school oval on weekends, be the parish council chairperson and possibly coach the town football team!”

5.7.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Paula remarked: “After working effectively as an assistant principal for eight years, I feel ready for a new challenge and am moderately confident in my ability to begin principalship.” She expressed “excitement at the prospect of participating in a program that focuses on identification and improvement of leadership strengths and weaknesses.” Additionally, she stated: “I am sure that this program will provide me with the knowledge, skills and confidence I need to apply for and start my first principalship.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Paula nominated high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. Specifically, she asserted: “I feel highly ready for principalship and am in a great place personally and professionally to do so; it’s now just a matter of opportunity.” In part, Paula attributed her high self-efficacy perceptions to mastery of her current leadership role and positive support.
she received from her principal, staff, students and their parents. She stated: “These factors compel me to seek a new challenge in the form of principalship.” Paula also discussed the influence of four program-related features on her perceptions. Firstly, she commented favourably on “the confidence provided by the program to take on the challenge of the role.” She referred to “self-assuredness that comes with an improved understanding of the role and its required capabilities, working to clarify the reasons for seeking appointment and identifying and managing disincentives.” Secondly, Paula identified as important influences on her self-efficacy perceptions:

Program activities including the use of LSI and coaching sessions to improve my leadership capabilities; developing and refining my leadership vision statement to clarify my leadership values and reasons for seeking appointment; and participating on my school board and sub-committees to master parts of the role that initially terrified me.

Thirdly, and related to disincentive mitigation, she discussed the influence of CEOWA specialist staff, facilitators of program modules, on her self-efficacy perceptions:

Meeting and getting to know these people, especially those who delivered school finance, human resource, industrial relations and legal content, has provided me with a sense of comfort. I don’t have to have all the answers when facing difficult situations, support is available and I’ll not be left to go it alone.

Finally, Paula reflected on the influence of support, encouragement and affirmation received from her fellow aspirants, coach and principal on her confidence to commence principalship. She stated: “Listening to their stories of triumph, failure and the learning that resulted from both have inspired the belief in me that I am capable of achieving as they have; their collective encouragement has provided me with confidence to lead that I lacked a year ago.”

At the conclusion of the program, as was the case at the end of the program’s first year, Paula specified high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She confirmed: “I am keen to continue my leadership journey as a principal and feel that I have the skills, knowledge, dedication and personality required to make a positive contribution to a country school community.” Paula indicated that her high self-efficacy perceptions were, in part, due to program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year, notably vision statement development and
refinement, school board and sub-committee participation and use of LSI data and coaching sessions. She also emphasised the positive influence of support network members on her self-efficacy perceptions, especially her program colleagues:

For me, my colleagues are more than supportive professional connections. They are life-long friends and confidants who will be there for me regardless of the challenges I face in the role. It is reassuring to know that I have a group of like-minded people traveling the principalship road with me.

She concluded her affirmation of support network members with the comment: “My principal and coach have also been instrumental to the feelings of confidence I have to commence principalship.”

Paula also identified three new influences on her end-of-program self-efficacy perceptions. She reflected:

‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals were a source of encouragement and support for me this year. Their stories of leadership success, failure and learning were encouraging because I am aware that I will experience the same as a beginning principal. They survived and so will I!

Moreover, she commented on the positive influence of a successful three-week stint as acting principal at a country primary school on her confidence to lead. Paula described the experience as “imperative for road-testing program learning, my leadership vision statement, my ability to deal with challenging role aspects and develop positive and productive relationships with school community members.” Finally, and related to this experience, was the influence of affirmation received from the school community. Paula confirmed: “the support and encouragement received from staff, students and their parents with regard to my leadership provided me with a confidence boost and prompted me to apply for and achieve my first principalship.”

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5.8 Case Study Seven: Riley

When ‘Riley’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, he had completed his sixth year as head of junior school at a Catholic, Kindergarten-Year 12 school in a Western Australian country town. Riley trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1994. Between 1995 and 2004, he taught at three Catholic primary schools in Western Australian country towns before undertaking his first leadership role as head of junior school in January 2005. Toward the end of the program, in November 2012, Riley attended his first principalship interview and was appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town commencing January 2013.

5.8.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Riley expressed high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation and, to a lesser extent, one involving leadership of the role component, community engagement and development. Riley cited principal knowledge of school financial management, accountability and compliance requirements and the resolution of legal issues together with transformational leadership ability as the capabilities required for effective performance. He was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, Catholic identity and teaching and learning. Riley considered the requirement of the principal to manage school finances and resolve conflict and legal issues whilst coping with threats of litigation disincentives.

As Riley participated in and completed the program, self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship remained high. He described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development; and school improvement. Riley also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. His attraction to principalship, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, remained similar to that conveyed pre-program. However, Riley indicated that he was also attracted by the prospect of leading the role component, community engagement and
development and positively influencing the lives of school community members through quality leadership. Riley expressed reduced apprehension with regard to previously identified disincentives, but cited new concerns; the result of his appointment as principal of a country Catholic primary school. Concerns highlighted by Riley included separation from personal and professional support networks to commence principalship in a new context.

As Riley participated in and completed the program, he attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Foremost amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; coaching for leadership capability improvement; leadership of a QCS school improvement project; and a 10-week period of acting principalship at his school.

5.8.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Riley identified two role components associated with Catholic principalship. He predominantly focused on the requirement of the principal to “manage a number of responsibilities including school finances, administrative compliance and dealing with conflict and legal issues.” To a lesser extent, he referred to the role of the principal as “leader of the school community who builds links between staff, parents and the parish using words and behaviours based on those of Jesus Christ.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, Riley commented: “The principal needs knowledge and experience to effectively manage technical role aspects.” Additionally, he reflected: “To build a positive school community, the principal must have strong interpersonal skills, respect for people, be capable of forming meaningful relationships and the ability to motivate staff.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Riley articulated Catholic principalship in terms of leadership and management through four interrelated role components conveyed by the program. He began by describing the role of the
principal as “the driver of school Catholicity who leads the evangelisation of students, staff, parents and members of the wider community using words and actions based on Gospel values.” Additionally, Riley reflected on the role of the principal as “a steward who looks after the school environmental, financial, capital and human resources.” He also described the principal as “a Gospel-driven educational leader who works with teachers to achieve the holistic development of students.” To accomplish this aim, he stated: “The principal must encourage teachers to know subject content, including the integration of Gospel values into the curriculum, use data to interpret student needs and effective pedagogy to enhance student achievement.” Finally, Riley discussed the role of the principal as “a community builder who models Gospel values when working with people, no matter how difficult they are.” He reflected: “Capacity to grow community is especially demonstrated by the way a principal responds to those who are marginalised or most in need.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Riley referred to the use of constructive transactional capabilities when managing staff:

Effective principals set crystal-clear expectations for the work they need completed before working with staff to generate mutually acceptable goals. They provide feedback, celebrate when things go well and clarify what needs to change when performance is sub-par.

He also emphasised the importance of principal transformational capabilities:

The principal must be capable of establishing school vision to support the Church’s evangelising mission, communicate it to the school community and motivate all to achieve it. To do this, the principal must have a set of values based on those modelled by Jesus. He or she must speak and act with genuine care for people, especially staff, be capable of connecting with them emotionally, inspiring them intellectually, listening to their opinions and actively involving them in decision-making.

Finally, Riley discussed role-related knowledge and understanding as a capability. He commented: “The principal must have the knowledge necessary to design and manage the school budget including implementing corrective measures when required.” Moreover, he stated: “The principal needs to know how to work with the
school board to plan and oversee the construction of school facilities and apply CECWA policy statements and industrial agreement clauses.”

At this point in the program, Riley specified the influence of three program-related features on his perceptions. He discussed the influence of “the program curriculum, especially understanding the role of the principal and required capabilities as detailed in our Leadership Framework.” Further, he described the influence of school board and sub-committee participation on his role and capability perceptions, notably with regard to “understanding the technical requirements associated with school financial management and capital development planning.” Finally, Riley referred to discussions with his principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals invited to host program sessions as “excellent opportunities to clarify and understand the role and what it takes to succeed.”

At the conclusion of the program, Riley focused specifically on the role of the Catholic principal as leader of the role component, school improvement. He defined school improvement as “the process used by a school to enhance its strengths and minimise its weaknesses for the purpose of achieving its vision and, in doing so, supporting the evangelising mission of the Church.” With regard to the capabilities required of the principal to effectively lead school improvement, he cited “knowledge of the QCS Framework and use of its tool.” Riley also highlighted the importance of principal transcendental capabilities. He remarked: “When leading improvement conversations, the principal must model the example of Jesus by engaging in non-hierarchical, respectful, high-trust and collaborative discussions.” He also stated his belief that “transcendental principals provide opportunities for interested staff to develop their leadership potential by distributing responsibility for school improvement.”

Riley specified the influence of four program-related features on his end-of-program perceptions. He asserted: “In depth study of the QCS Framework and use of the school improvement tool during the program’s second year was an opportunity to understand this role component and required capabilities.” He also affirmed leadership of the QCS school improvement project as “an excellent way to develop an understanding of school improvement and effective ways to apply transcendental capabilities.” Moreover, he reflected that his learning regarding school improvement
was confirmed through discussions with his “coach, current and past principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals who participated in the program.” Finally, he commented: “The 10-week period of acting principalship at my school exerted a powerful influence on my understanding of school improvement and leadership of other role components.” This opening arose when Riley’s principal undertook long service leave, providing him with the opportunity to experience the role, apply program learning and test and refine his leadership capabilities.

5.8.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Riley identified two factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship. He stated his “desire to be an educational leader who assists teachers to improve their craft.” Riley indicated that he would “achieve this by developing teacher knowledge of content, student needs, effective pedagogical practices and the use of data to make good decisions in the classroom.” Further, he commented: “I am motivated by the prospect of leading a school where vision can be created and staff inspired to share it.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Riley stated: “I am attracted to the role because of the opportunity to lead.” He continued: “Part of my motivation stems from the feeling that I have outgrown my current role and feel compelled to take the next logical career step to principalship.” He also reiterated his “interest in being a principal who places educational leadership at the centre of all school endeavours and drives achievement of this vision through the development of quality teachers.”

At this point in the program, Riley specified the influence of three program-related features on his perceptions. He stated: “Reflecting on the role components and capabilities as they were presented through the program has confirmed my suitability for principalship.” Further, he reflected: “Development of my leadership vision statement has assisted me to clarify my leadership values and identify the appealing aspects of the role.” Finally, Riley discussed the benefits associated with sharing his vision statement with his principal, fellow aspirants and guest principals invited to host ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions. He reflected: “These discussions permitted me to assess whether or not I’m on this path for the right reasons.”
At the conclusion of the program, Riley articulated the factors enhancing his interest in Catholic principalship through his leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program:

I want to create an authentic Catholic school community where the lives of staff, students and parents are enhanced through high quality, caring leadership. Together, we would work to create a passionate community and learning environment based on Gospel values. Within this learning community, teachers would be developed to understand content, the needs of their students, effective teaching practices and the use of data to make good decisions in the classroom. Together, we would work to assist each child to develop holistically: academically, spiritually, socially, physically and emotionally. Parents are important for the realisation of this vision and I am driven to encourage their participation in lessons alongside teachers, the aim of which is to support the development of their children.

Riley believed the he had the capacity to implement and achieve his vision because of his “ability to communicate non-hierarchically and in an honest and uncomplicated manner.” He considered his capacity to communicate his “greatest leadership asset”.

Riley specified the influence of three program-related features on his end-of-program perceptions. He discussed “the confidence boost provided by positive self-assessment regarding suitability for principalship against the role components and capabilities presented through the program.” He also reiterated his earlier perspective that “vision statement development and refinement clarified and confirmed the authenticity” of his principalship ambitions. Riley affirmed discussions with his principal, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals as an “integral part of the vision statement refinement process.” Finally, he stated: “The opportunity to test the authenticity of my vision statement and my understanding of the role and its required capabilities through acting principalship has confirmed my suitability for principalship.”

5.8.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Riley identified three factors diminishing his interest in Catholic principalship. He remarked: “The need for principals to deal with legal issues is daunting given that I’m a teacher, not a
lawyer.” Additionally, he stated: “Conflict with staff and parents troubles me because I am a ‘people pleaser’ and imagine that being tough in these situations will be uncomfortable.” Finally, Riley conceded: “I have no experience with school finances and consider this part of the role most challenging.” With regard to school financial management as an unattractive role aspect, he explained: “My fear is the result of my current principal who expertly administers the budget and viciously guards the process, preventing me from learning the ropes.”

At the end of the program’s first year, Riley reported diminished pre-program concerns. When discussing school financial management as a disincentive, he commented: “The requirement of the program to work with my principal, bursar and school board treasurer to set and manage the school budget was an invaluable experience that boosted my confidence.” With regard to the unappealing nature of conflict management and legal issue resolution, Riley stated:

I fear this aspect of the role less that I did a year ago, partly because I have worked on strategies such as mediation to deal with these situations. Also, the relationships I have formed with CEOWA legal and industrial relations support staff through the program reassures me that expert assistance will be available if the need arises.

He also affirmed the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals on his disincentive perceptions:

Listening to their stories of the early days of principalship made me realise that they too feared aspects of the role that I do. Their proactive suggestions for coping with these challenges were helpful and I felt reassured by the fact that they had survived to tell their tales!

Riley, however, identified a new concern, the result of direct observation of his principal: “The potential for principalship tasks such as dealing with conflict to distract from leadership of other important role components such as teaching and learning.”

At the end of the program, Riley commented: “I feel less daunted by the need to manage school finances, deal with conflict and legal issues and ‘clearing the decks’ to lead teaching and learning.” He reflected: “The program has taught me that with the right structures in place to distribute leadership, it is possible to create the
time needed to focus on educational leadership.” As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, he also reiterated the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals on his perceptions regarding disincentives. Riley also cited “the value of acting principalship as a way to experience disincentives and develop strategies to manage them.”

As the program concluded, Riley began applying for Catholic primary school principalship vacancies in country towns and was subsequently appointed. As a result of his appointment, he identified the disincentive associated with being separated from family, friends and colleagues. With regard to loss of established professional networks, comprised of his current principal, former principals and assistant principal colleagues, he commented:

My network is a valuable source of advice and support. Loss of immediate face-to-face contact is a difficult, but a necessary part of role progression. This being said, I am not looking forward to the task of creating a new network in a country setting whilst trying to adjust to a new role and all it demands.

With regard to separation from personal support networks, Riley reflected: “My kids are very close to my wife’s mum and dad who live in our town and they are a great source of support for us, especially when it comes to before and after school care.” Riley indicated that moving from his family support base would be emotionally difficult for his children and logistically difficult for himself and his wife.

5.8.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Riley described his journey to principalship as a natural, almost expected, part of his career path. He stated: “After six successful years as head of junior school, I would say that my self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship is high.” Nonetheless, he reflected: “I consider participation in the program a necessary preparatory step in my development.” Moreover, Riley commented: “I am strongly supported by my principal with regard to my principalship ambition and am fortunate to have been recently provided with the time, authority and resources to lead several initiatives at my school that I believe will further prepare me for the role.”
At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Riley reiterated his high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. He stated: “I can say with confidence that the experience of the program together with my effectiveness as head of junior school has me ready for take-off.” He also commented on the self-efficacy boost associated with affirmation of his leadership “received from staff, students, their parents and members of the school community.” Riley also referred to the influence of four other program-related features on his perceptions. Firstly, he discussed the influence of the program itself:

The program has given me a comprehensive understanding of the role and what it takes to succeed. Clarifying my motivations through the vision statement activity and identifying and working to minimise disincentives through school board and finance sub-committee participation have also significantly assisted my feelings of readiness.

Secondly, he affirmed the influence of program delivery:

Without exception, the way each module was facilitated was brilliant. Along with delivery of content was time to think before joining with colleagues in discussion. These conversations almost always involved the sharing of stories and affirmation of one another’s strengths. I always left these conversations with renewed faith in my ability to lead.

Thirdly, Riley discussed the influence of his principal, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals involved in the program and fellow aspirants. He observed: “Their stories of leadership success and disaster as well as what they learned from both left me with the feeling that I am capable of tackling the role as they have.” He specifically affirmed the influence of his program colleagues on his self-efficacy perceptions:

The high-trust, unconditional support and affirmation we offer one another has provided me with a sense of confidence in my ability to begin principalship. I am convinced that I have a ready-made, valuable support network to draw upon when things get tough.

Finally, Riley discussed the influence of CEOWA support staff:

Getting to know CEOWA staff as they presented modules was terrific. Their affirmation of me as a potential future principal was especially encouraging and, like ‘Inside Leadership’ principals, their stories left me with the feeling that I have what it takes to succeed.
He also expressed “a sense of comfort as a result of assurances provided by CEOWA staff that they will be a phone call or email away and are happy to provide advice and support during rocky times that will undoubtedly occur.”

At the conclusion of the program, as was the case at the end of the program’s first year, Riley specified high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. When discussing the influences affecting his perceptions, he reiterated the positive effect of the program curriculum and method of facilitation; program activities including leadership vision statement development and refinement; and discussion with his program colleagues, his principal and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. Further, Riley identified the influence of two new factors on his perceptions. He stated:

This year provided an opportunity for leadership coaching alongside a QCS school improvement project. These experiences provided me with an understanding of the purpose of the QCS Framework and use of the QCS tool. Importantly, through the project, I was also able to identify and work on areas of leadership strength and weakness and, as a result, I feel better prepared to lead.

He also attributed his self-efficacy perceptions to a successful, 10-week period of acting principalship at his school: “In term two, I led the college community and applied many program learnings in the field.” Further, he asserted: “This was an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience that allowed me to reflect on my leadership strengths and weaknesses and continue my journey as an authentic Catholic leader.” Finally, Riley reflected: “As a result of the experience, I have a better understanding of the importance of building community and feel encouraged by the positive, productive relationships I developed with staff, students, their families and community members beyond the school gates.”

***
5.9 Case Study Eight: Sharon

When ‘Sharon’ commenced the Aspiring Principals Program in January 2011, she had completed her third year as assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in Perth. Sharon trained as a primary school teacher, graduating in 1996. Between 1996 and 2007, she taught at three Catholic primary schools, one in a Western Australian country town and two in Perth. In January 2008, she commenced her first leadership role as assistant principal. During the program’s second year, Sharon gave birth to her first child, commenced parental leave and completed the program. Upon conclusion of the program, she was actively applying for Catholic primary school principalship vacancies in Western Australian country towns.

5.9.1 Case study overview.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Sharon expressed low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She predominantly considered principalship a managerial occupation dominated by responsibilities such as the administration of school finances, adherence to compliance and accountability requirements and human resource management. To a lesser extent, she described principalship through the role components, Catholic identity and community engagement and development. Sharon identified principal capacity to employ managerial knowledge, lead vision formation and achievement, apply Gospel values and lead transformationally as the capabilities required for effective performance. Sharon was attracted to principalship because of the opportunity to lead the role components, teaching and learning and community engagement and development. She also expressed attraction to the opportunity, as principal, to form a managerially competent leadership team, apply leadership theory studied and advice received and mentor aspiring female leaders. Sharon considered the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, resolve human resource management and legal issues and cope with threats of litigation disincentives.

As Sharon participated in and completed the program, she reported moderate then high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. She described principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources; community engagement and development;
and school improvement. Sharon also cited three capabilities required of principals to effectively lead and manage through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. Her attraction to the role, articulated through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program, became focused on leadership of the role components, teaching and learning, community engagement and development and school improvement. Additionally, Sharon expressed her desire to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership. With regard to previously identified disincentives, Sharon indicated reduced apprehension. However, she cited new concerns, the result of her application for a number of country principalship vacancies and becoming a first-time parent. One concern raised was her capacity to balance spousal and parental responsibilities with the intensity of principalship.

As Sharon participated in and completed the program, she attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features: a well-facilitated, coherent, rigorous and systematic curriculum; development of support networks and interaction with network members; and active learning experiences. Prime amongst these experiences were school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; development and refinement of a leadership vision statement; and leadership capability improvement using LSI, 360-degree data, coaching sessions and the medium of a QCS school improvement project.

5.9.2 Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Sharon identified three role components associated with Catholic principalship. She primarily considered the principal “responsible for managing every aspect of a school from finances to human resource management, resolution of legal issues, staff and student pastoral care and teaching and learning.” To a lesser extent, she referred to the principal as “a Christ-centred relationship-builder who is required to form rich relationships with staff, students, their parents and other members of the school community.” Moreover, she commented: “The relationship between the school and parish is crucial for support of the Church’s evangelising mission and it is important that the principal be capable of
bringing the two together.” With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, Sharon stated: “The principal requires knowledge and skill regarding the managerial dimensions of the role and an ability to inspire staff, students and parents to embrace school vision and work to achieve it.” When discussing vision formulation and achievement, she highlighted the “capacity of the principal to understand the Church’s evangelising mission and its influence on school vision.” Sharon also emphasised the importance of the “principal having a set of values based those of Jesus and the ability and willingness to apply these in word and action.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Sharon discussed the role of the Catholic principal through four interrelated role dimensions addressed by the program. She identified Catholic identity as a role component: “The principal leads the process of evangelisation, reflects Gospel values in school policies and practices and forms effective relationships with members of the local parish.” Additionally, Sharon described the principal as “a steward who cares for the environment, manages the school’s budget and building program, recruits, develops and appraises staff, caters for their wellbeing and is accountable to the CEOWA.” She also defined the principal as “a school’s educational leader who must model a love of learning, professionally develop staff and encourage the provision of high-quality teaching to assist student learning.” When discussing leadership of this role component, Sharon emphasised “the ability of the principal to ensure that teachers embed Gospel values into the curriculum and that staff speak and act with the example of Jesus in mind.” Finally, she asserted: “The principal must grow the school community through Christ-like constructive, respectful and supportive relationships.”

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, Sharon reiterated her pre-program observations regarding “the importance of principal capacity to understand, communicate and drive achievement of school vision using words and behaviours based on Gospel values.” Furthermore, she commented: “The effective principal has managerial capability including deep knowledge of school finances, building programs, resolution of conflict and legal issues, policy implementation and the recruitment, appraisal and development of staff.” Sharon also stated: “The principal must be capable leading transformationally through the use charisma, emotional connection and intellectual inspiration if staff are to work as a team to achieve school vision.”
At this point in the program, Sharon specified the influence of three program-related features on her perceptions. She highlighted the role that “program theory, based on Leadership Framework domains and capabilities, played in assisting understanding of the role and what it takes to succeed.” Moreover, she emphasised “the influence of opportunities to apply theory through well-structured activities including school board observation and sub-committee participation” on her perceptions. Finally, Sharon described “being regaled with stories of role success and challenge by ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals” as “significantly influential learning experiences.”

At the conclusion of the program, in addition to the role components previously identified, Sharon discussed Catholic principalship through the lens of school improvement. She described school improvement as “vital for improving the proficiency of other role components: Catholic identity; education; stewardship; and community and the quality of services offered to the school community, especially students.” Sharon made three observations when discussing the capabilities required of principals to successfully lead school improvement. She discussed “the capacity of the principal to understand and communicate the importance of this role component for achievement of school vision to the school community.” She also emphasised as an essential capability, “principal command of school improvement knowledge as it pertains to the QCS Framework and the use of the school improvement tool.” Finally, she expressed the importance of principal transcendental capability when leading school improvement. Sharon clarified her understanding of transcendental capabilities with the statement: “When leading improvement conversations, the principal must be willing and able to take off their ‘principal’s hat’ and engage with others in authentic, collegial, Gospel and trust-based discussions.”

Sharon specified the influence of three program-related features on her end-of-program perceptions. She reaffirmed the influence of “listening to stories of guest principals involved in the program, especially those related to school improvement experiences.” Additionally, she commented: “Productive discussions with my principal regarding school improvement and the use of the QCS Framework and tool were essential for developing my understanding of this role component.” Finally, she identified “coaching using LSI data and the QCS school improvement project” as
“significant tools that enhanced understanding of the QCS Framework, the review process and the capabilities that must be applied when leading school improvement.”

5.9.3 Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Sharon identified five factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “I am attracted by the prospect of building a diverse and strong leadership team with the capacity to effectively manage school resources.” Further, she commented: “I am attracted by the opportunity provided by the role to lead teaching and learning for the benefit of students in the holistic sense.” Sharon also indicated her “motivation to build a close-knit school community, based on Gospel values, where effective partnerships between teachers and parents are developed for the benefit of students.” Moreover, she reflected: “I am keen to put leadership theory learned through my studies and advice received from mentors into practice as principal.” Finally, Sharon expressed her “desire, as principal, to be a role model and mentor for aspiring female leaders.”

At the end of the program’s first year, Sharon noted that participation in the program had confirmed her original reasons for seeking promotion to principalship:

I remain attracted to the principalship because of the prospect of forming an effective leadership team and being a positive role model for aspiring female leaders. The opportunity to lead teaching and learning for the purpose of holistic student development also appeals to me. Most importantly, I remain committed to nurturing a school community, based on Gospel values and authentic partnerships between teachers and parents, to enhance student educational outcomes.

She also cited as an additional appealing aspect of principalship, “the opportunity to work collegially with staff to create a workplace culture where the example of Jesus Christ is authentically lived in word and action.”

At this point in the program, Sharon specified the influence of three program-related features on her perceptions. She considered “journaling after program modules an effective way to sift through thoughts regarding the appeal of the role.” She also emphasised as a potent influence the “development of a vision statement to clarify non-negotiable leadership values and appointment motives.” Finally, she stated: “Sharing my leadership vision statement with my fellow aspirants and “Inside
Leadership’ guest principals who regularly joined us were effective activities that assisted me to clarify the allure of the role.”

At the conclusion of the program, Sharon articulated the factors enhancing her interest in Catholic principalship through a leadership vision statement developed over the course of the program:

I am attracted by the prospect of leading a Catholic school community, characterised by Gospel values, authenticity, trust and wellbeing. I want to develop a culture of feedback where staff, students and their parents communicate openly and honestly with one another with the view to improving all aspects of the school. I want to build teacher capacity through distributed leadership, subsidiarity and the provision of professional learning that encourages them to be the best educators and role models they can be.

Sharon concluded her vision statement with the declaration: “When all of this is achieved, I believe that our teachers will be well placed to meet the needs of students and foster within them a life-long passion for learning and achievement of their potential in whatever form this takes.”

When discussing her end-of-program perceptions, Sharon reiterated the influence of the three program-related features identified at the conclusion of the program’s first year. She commented: “The attractive aspects of principalship have been clarified through reflection on program content and activities, defining my leadership vision statement and testing it through discussions with my colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals.”

5.9.4 Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Sharon identified three factors diminishing her interest in Catholic principalship. She stated: “The prospect of having to manage school finances as principal is intimidating because, as an assistant principal, I haven’t been exposed to this aspect of the role.” Further, she remarked: “Having to deal with legal issues is a definite disincentive, again because of my non-existent experience base.” Finally, Sharon cited “concerns regarding the management of staffing issues, especially drafting contracts and dealing with underperforming staff.” With regard to managing underperforming staff, she stated: “Watching my current and previous principals skirt such issues has planted the seed in my mind that
the whole area is a minefield to be avoided.” Sharon also raised the structure of her role as a source of her disincentive perceptions: “Being an assistant principal prevents me learning about principalship; I want to understand the role, but have no time to do so when I consider my large teaching role and existing leadership duties.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Sharon reflected: “I’m less concerned about managing school finances than I was a year ago.” She explained: “My reduced apprehension is the result of the program requirement to work with my principal and bursar to design our school’s budget, conduct the mid-year and end-of-year budget reviews and report monthly to the school board.” With regard to the disincentives associated with the management of legal and human resources issues, Sharon stated: “Meeting and working with CEOWA legal, industrial relations and human resource staff through the program has reduced my apprehension; mainly as a result of their assurances that significant central office support is readily available.” She also considered meeting and listening to the stories of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals “an excellent program feature that created a mindset shift regarding distasteful role aspects.” She elaborated: “Every one of these principals, at some point in their careers, had struggled with these aspects of the role and managed to cope with and eventually master their fears; I found myself reflecting, if they could do it, so can I.”

At the conclusion of the program, Sharon’s perspectives regarding disincentives had changed from those “associated with the technical aspects of the role to those connected with people.” She noted:

I was originally worried about mechanical aspects of the role such as managing school finances, understanding policies and drafting contracts, but now know that these can be learned and that significant CEOWA support is available to provide advice and support. What concerns me now is the unpredictable people stuff. It’s easy to work with those who like you and want to follow your vision. It’s another to work with people who, for whatever reason, don’t like you or the decisions you make.

Sharon also identified concerns regarding her “capacity to balance personal and professional obligations as a female leader, wife and first-time mum given the all-consuming nature of the principalship.”
Sharon noted the influence of two program-related features on her end-of-program perceptions. She stated:

Listening to guest principal tales of unreasonable and downright crazy staff members and parents confirmed my perspective regarding the complications associated with people leadership. Also, many discussed the intensity of the role that led me to reflect on the importance of my husband and baby and the need to strike the balance between family and professional obligations.

She also reflected on the ‘reality-check’ that comes with applying for principalship vacancies. Sharon commented: “As was the case with family-work balance concerns prompted by discussions with guest principals, actually submitting applications for vacancies and attending interviews delivered to me a sense of reality; I am torn between my desire for the role and obligations as a wife and first-time mother. Is it possible to balance the two?”

5.9.5 Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, Sharon nominated low self-efficacy to commence principalship: “I’m not even close to feeling ready for principalship and know that I need knowledge, skills and experiences beyond my current role as assistant principal.” However, she expressed confidence in her “strong base upon which to build capacity”, especially her “penchant for relationship building.” She reflected: “I am yet to gain exposure to thorough, principal-specific professional learning, including acting principalship, but feel certain that by the end of this program, I will be better positioned to determine whether or not I am suited to principalship.”

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, Sharon indicated moderate self-efficacy to commence principalship. She asserted: “I’m definitely better placed to begin principalship than I was at the start of the year and feel a growing confidence in my ability to cope with the role, especially the managerial aspects that initially threatened me.” However, she indicated that she was not yet ready to consider applying for principalship vacancies: “I’m not ready to go yet and am even exploring other leadership opportunities such as Religious Education Consultant at the CEOWA before I consider principalship.” Sharon reflected: “Other leadership
opportunities have the potential to add to my skills and experiences that I could then
drawn upon as principal.”

At this point in the program, Sharon commented: “My moderate self-efficacy
to commence principalship is mainly the result of a better understanding of the role
and its required capabilities and the opportunity to clarify my attraction to the role,
identify my concerns and develop strategies to manage them.” She attributed her
perspectives to the influence of four program-related features. Firstly, Sharon
credited her enhanced understanding of the role and requisite capabilities to
“participation in a thorough and well-organised program based on the Leadership
Framework and contemporary leadership theory.” Secondly, she considered the
method of module facilitation a positive influence on her perceptions:

Being given time to consider theory presented before discussing perspectives
with colleagues in small groups were vitally important activities. These
opportunities developed in me a capacity to reflect on what I was learning and
my leadership strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, these activities also
prompted the development of fruitful, affirming relationships.

Thirdly, Sharon reflected on the influence of program activities on her confidence to
lead. She specifically cited developing a leadership vision statement, the use of LSI
data within coaching sessions and school board and sub-committee participation as
examples. When discussing the use of the LSI and coaching sessions, she
commented:

My coach and I used LSI data to identify my leadership capability strengths
and weaknesses before developing improvement goals and strategies. My
confidence grew as I put these strategies into action through my role as
assistant principal and witnessed their impact.

With regard to influence of leadership vision statement development and refinement
on her self-efficacy perceptions, she remarked:

This activity prompted me to reflect deeply on my reasons for seeking
principalship and helped me to clarify what I stand for as a leader. As the
process unfolded, I was reassured that my drive was authentic.

When discussing the self-efficacy benefits associated with school board observation
and sub-committee participation, she commented:
Watching my principal work with school board members led me to reflect on his effectiveness as well as what I would do differently when working with my own board as principal. Probably the most important benefit, however, were comments of support and affirmation I received from him, board members and sub-committee colleagues as I ‘learned the ropes’ of school finances and capital development planning.

Fourthly, Sharon affirmed the self-efficacy benefits associated with her support network, developed through the program. When discussing the influence of her program colleagues as network members, she emphasised:

My colleagues have definitely contributed to my confidence. Our trusting, frank and affirming relationships allow us to openly share experiences without fear of judgement. The learning resulting from these conversations has confirmed my belief that I am developing in the right direction.

Likewise, she discussed the influence of three other support network members. She stated: “The positive advice, encouragement and support received from CEOWA personnel that facilitated modules, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals involved in the program and my coach have enhanced my leadership confidence.” Sharon cited the self-efficacy benefits associated with her “learning that resulted from listening to their stories of leadership success and failure.” She commented: “In the midst of these tales, I often found myself thinking: ‘What would I do in this situation?’ Many times, the answer to my question concurred with the action they had taken; these ‘golden moments’ did wonders for my confidence.”

At the conclusion of the program, Sharon expressed high self-efficacy to commence principalship: “Before the program, I rated myself 20% ready to begin principalship, I now consider myself 90% prepared.” Notwithstanding her priority of caring for her newborn child, she described her “readiness to empower, build community, lead with vision and passion and assist children to flourish in every respect.” As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, Sharon reiterated the positive influence of “the program, the way it was delivered, learning activities and colleague, coach and guest principal support” on her self-efficacy perceptions. She also discussed the positive influence of two additional program-related features on her perceptions: “coaching and the QCS school improvement project and principal support and affirmation.” With regard to the first feature, she commented:
My coach was my former principal. This was great because we had a pre-existing relationship; we knew each other well and got on famously. He was able to expertly use my LSI data to work with me to form leadership capability improvement goals and strategies that I implemented as I led my school improvement project. Overall, I was successful at changing aspects of my leadership that needed overhauling.

When discussing the influence of her principal on her self-efficacy perceptions, Sharon reflected:

Last year, our relationship was strained. He was new to our school and had not yet adjusted to the climate of the place or the expectations of the people. As we built our relationship, his support of my development and affirmation of my leadership capabilities came to the fore.

Sharon concluded her affirmation of her principal with the comment: “Our renewed relationship has fostered a spike in my development as an aspiring principal and improved my confidence to lead.”

5.10 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the research in the form of eight, thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the study. Each narrative reflected the draft themes identified through the data analysis process and highlighted aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four perceptions were presented: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship.

The upcoming chapter, Discussion, explores the themes emerging from the cross-case analysis of aspirant case study narratives and data tables generated through the data analysis process. Specifically, each of the four sections of this chapter discusses the themes associated with one set of aspirant perceptions explored by one specific research question. The discussion uses a number of ‘tactics’ recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) including comparison and contrast of themes with the established body of knowledge provided in the literature review.
Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the themes emanating from the cross-case analysis of aspirant case study narratives presented in the previous chapter and the refined data tables associated with stage two of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: data display. Specifically, each section of this chapter discusses aspirant perceptions explored by one specific research question, namely:

Section One: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance
1. What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Section Two: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship
2. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Section Three: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship
3. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Section Four: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship
4. What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Discussion throughout this chapter uses a number of tactics recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) for stage three of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: drawing and verifying conclusions. These tactics include comparison and contrast of themes and their
respective categories with the established body of knowledge presented in Chapter Three: Literature Review. An overview of this chapter is provided in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1
Overview of Chapter Six: Discussion

6.2 Section One: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance
   6.2.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.
   6.2.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.
   6.2.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.
   6.2.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.
   6.2.5 Section one summary.

6.3 Section Two: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship
   6.3.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.
   6.3.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.
   6.3.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.
   6.3.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.
   6.3.5 Section two summary.

6.4 Section Three: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship
   6.4.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.
   6.4.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.
   6.4.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.
   6.4.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.
   6.4.5 Section three summary.

6.5 Section Four: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship
   6.5.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.
   6.5.2 Aspirant mid-program and end-of-program perceptions.
   6.5.3 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.
   6.5.4 Section four summary.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion

Table 6.2 is provided to assist reader interpretation of the refined data tables provided within this chapter. This table contains details regarding case study numbers and the pseudonym chosen by each aspirant for use during the research; aspirant roles, school types and locations during the program; and the status of each aspirant at the end of the program.
Table 6.2
*Case Study Details*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study number and pseudonym</th>
<th>Aspirant role, school type and location during the program</th>
<th>Aspirant end-of-program status</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Chelsea</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Applying for principalship vacancies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Frances</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a remote community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helen</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in a country town</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. Jason</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Applying for principalship vacancies</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Jeff</td>
<td>Deputy principal at a Year seven-12 Catholic secondary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Year seven-12 Catholic secondary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Paula</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Riley</td>
<td>Head of junior school at a Kindergarten-Year 12 composite school in a country town</td>
<td>Appointed principal at a Kindergarten-Year seven Catholic primary school in a country town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sharon</td>
<td>Assistant principal at a Kindergarten-Year six Catholic primary school in metropolitan Perth</td>
<td>Parental leave/applying for principalship vacancies</td>
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</table>

6.2 Section One: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance

Section one discusses the themes associated with aspirant pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Themes
associated with the influences provoking discernible perceptions changes are also examined.

6.2.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants predominantly considered Catholic principalship a managerial occupation dominated by the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Aspirants placed a secondary emphasis on the role components, community engagement and development, teaching and learning and Catholic identity. Absent from aspirant responses were references the role component, school improvement. When referring to the capabilities required for effective performance, few aspirants discussed the capacity of the principal to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. Likewise, few aspirants identified the need for the principal to model Gospel values in word and action when leading and managing. All aspirants discussed the technical knowledge required of the principal to prudently lead and manage the responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Over half of the aspirants expressed the importance of principal transformational leadership prowess. A summary of aspirant pre-program perceptions is provided in Table 6.3.

When discussing the role of the Catholic principal as a steward of resources, all aspirants identified school financial management as a core responsibility. Moreover, half of the aspirants commented on the requirement of the principal to adhere to systemic compliance and accountability requirements, administrate school-based human resource management functions and resolve legal issues. Aspirants also named a number of other stewardship-related responsibilities including capital development planning; catering for staff wellbeing; managing industrial relations issues; and resolving conflict. Aspirant responses regarding this role component reflect the literature review that defined stewardship of resources as the prudent leadership and management of school-based resources by the principal (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).
Table 6.3
Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<td>• Leading school Catholicity using Gospel-based words and actions</td>
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<td>• Leading instruction, motivating staff and driving performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Managing school finances</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensuring accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establishing and nurturing relationships based on Gospel values</td>
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<td>1. Vision and Values</td>
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<td>• Ability to model Gospel values in word and action when leading and managing</td>
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<td>2. Knowledge and Understanding</td>
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<td>• Ability to understand and apply technical role knowledge (Stewardship of resources)</td>
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<td>3. Leadership Competence</td>
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<td>• Transformational leadership ability</td>
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Although aspirants emphasised the importance of stewardship-related responsibilities, analysis of the data revealed a limited understanding of the four dimensions that comprise this role component. Specifically, the literature review described the principal as a steward of human resources who leads and manages the recruitment, induction, formation and appraisal of staff (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Aspirant responses focused primarily on performance management responsibilities. Further, aspirants did not discuss the role of the principal as steward of environmental resources, responsible for school-based preservation projects and promotion of participation in local, national and/or global conservation initiatives (Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Spry & Cunliffe, 2008). With regard to the role of the principal as steward of financial resources, aspirants made generalised references to the requirement of the principal to manage the school budget. However, aspirants did not refer to the expectation placed upon the principal to design, implement and monitor the budget, rectify anomalies and report in a transparent and accountable manner to the school board and governing system (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). Finally, aspirants used the phrase ‘capital development planning’ when referring to the role of the principal as steward of capital resources, but did not discuss the use of project management principles when planning, executing and overseeing the construction of new or refurbishment of existing school buildings and facilities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Further, aspirants did not refer to the need for the principal to supervise the provision, installation and maintenance of capital items housed within these buildings and facilities (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

In addition to articulating the responsibilities associated with stewardship of resources, most aspirants identified a second role component, community engagement and development. Aspirants, when discussing this role component, cited the responsibility of the principal to establish and nurture relationships based on
Gospel values with and between school staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the local parish and diocesan Church. This responsibility was reflected in the literature review (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996). Beyond this point, however, aspirant responses were scant and did not mirror the literature review.

Specifically, aspirants did not articulate the requirement of the principal to oversee the development and maintenance of structures and processes to facilitate communication and collaboration between these parties (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Epstein, 2007). Likewise, aspirants did not refer to the expectation that the principal value and promote the principles of inclusion (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013) or work with relevant agencies to protect and support student attendance and wellbeing (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Aspirants were not cognisant of the need for the principal to provide support to marginalised school community members (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010) or those experiencing crisis (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Finally, aspirant responses did not refer to the expectation that the principal encourage and oversee the sharing of teaching and learning facilities, resources and effective practices with staff from neighbouring schools for the purpose of enhancing student learning outcomes across the community (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; A. Harris, 2008).

Over half of the aspirants also referred to a third role component associated with Catholic principalship, teaching and learning (Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013). Aspirants stated that this role component involved the principal leading instruction, motivating staff and driving performance. However, as was the case with the previous role component, aspirant articulation of the role of the principal as educational leader was underdeveloped when compared with the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review. For example, aspirants did not express
the requirement of the principal to work collegially with staff to create a teaching and learning culture focused on the holistic development of students (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; DuFour, 2002; Marzano et al., 2005; The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). Likewise, aspirant responses indicated a limited understanding of the role of the principal in assisting teachers to use assessment frameworks, based on data, benchmarking and observation, to monitor student progress (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005; Lashway, 2002).

Aspirants did not identify the requirement of the principal to lead and manage the role component, school improvement. This is an interesting finding given that the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool was communicated extensively by the CEOWA to all Western Australian Catholic principals throughout 2009/10 and mandated by the CECWA for use in schools from January 2011. Equally significant was identification of the role component, Catholic identity by four aspirants. The literature review articulated the importance of this role component for achievement of school vision and provision of support for the Church’s evangelising mission (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). Further, the literature review revealed that this role component permeates all other role components of Catholic principalship (McNamara, 2002). The response rate for this role component was notable because of the assumption of the researcher that all aspirants would have identified and accurately described associated responsibilities. This assumption was based on the requirement of the Western Australian Catholic education system that all staff aspiring to assistant/deputy principalship or principalship complete an ‘Accreditation for Leadership’ as part of the eligibility requirements for appointment (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2012). This qualification involves the study of school Catholic identity through six university units in Religious Education and/or Theology with at least two units completed at Master of Education level (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014a).

The aspirants who did identify Catholic identity as a role component emphasised the need for the principal to model Gospel values in word and action.
when leading and managing (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996). However, beyond this point, aspirants did not articulate the four main responsibilities associated with Catholic identity identified through the literature review. Firstly, aspirants did not mention the expectation placed upon the principal to enhance and promote school Catholic identity (Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 2009; Australian Catholic University, 2004; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005; Sergiovanni, 2004). Secondly, no aspirant referred to the requirement of the principal, where possible, to ensure the integration of Gospel values through the curriculum (Convey, 2012). Thirdly, aspirants did not discuss the responsibility of the principal to develop the school as a faith community by providing opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental and liturgical celebration (Convey, 2012; DeFiore et al., 2009; Klenke, 2007). Finally, no aspirant identified the requirement of the principal to sustain a commitment to social justice and action (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Grace, 2002; T. H. McLaughlin, 1996).

With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirant responses were incomplete when compared with the literature review. A minority of aspirants indirectly referred to the first capability, vision and values. These aspirants alluded to the capacity required of the principal to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009). Likewise, these aspirants obliquely referred to the requirement of the Catholic principal to possess and model Gospel values (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996) and ensure that words and actions are aligned when leading and managing (Buchanan, 2013a). The second capability identified in the literature review, knowledge and understanding, refers to the capacity of the principal to comprehend the responsibilities associated with role components and apply requisite knowledge and skill when leading and managing (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). All aspirants referred to the managerial requirements of the role when describing the knowledge
and understanding required of the principal to effectively administrate school-based resources. For example, aspirants mentioned the knowledge required of the principal to prudently manage school finances, human resources and accountability requirements. However, aspirants did not make the connection between this capability and other role components. For example, when leading teaching and learning, the literature review highlighted the importance of principal knowledge regarding contemporary research and legislative developments influencing curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and student wellbeing (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013). Finally, when aspirants discussed leadership competence, the third capability identified in the literature review, over half of the aspirants alluded to the importance of transformational leadership. Aspirants defined transformational leadership as the ability of the principal to motivate staff through deep respect for people and use of interpersonal skills. These suppositions, in part, reflect the literature review, specifically principal use of inspirational motivation and idealised influence (Marzano et al., 2005).

6.2.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance had changed in three ways when compared with those tendered pre-program. Firstly, aspirants identified the interrelated nature of role components and provided several illustrative examples, notably principal-led integration of Gospel values (Catholic identity) through the curriculum (teaching and learning). Secondly, aspirant articulation of the role components, Catholic identity and stewardship of resources closely reflected the literature review. Thirdly, aspirants demonstrated improved capacity to express the capabilities required for effective performance as defined through the literature review. These changes were not surprising given that first year program theory was based on the domains and capabilities of the Leadership Framework for Catholic schools in Western Australia. A summary of aspirant mid-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components is provided in Table 6.4. A summary of aspirant perceptions regarding the capabilities required for effective performance is provided in Table 6.5.
### Table 6.4

*Aspirant Mid-program Perceptions: Catholic Principalship Role Components*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Catholic Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading evangelisation</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading school Catholic identity</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modelling Gospel values in word and action</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensuring provision of Gospel-based curricula</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building school-parish links</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Teaching and Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developing teacher capacity</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading holistic student development</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modelling a love of learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using data to monitor student progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Stewardship of Resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing human resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Managing environmental resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Managing financial resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Managing capital resources</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensuring accountability</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Considering Gospel values when making resource-based decisions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Community Engagement and Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishing and nurturing relationships based on Gospel values</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting marginalised school community members</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting the principles of inclusion and providing a safe environment for staff/students</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Interrelated nature of role components</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.5
Aspirant Mid-program Perceptions: The Capabilities Required for Effective Performance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Case study number</th>
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<td><strong>Themes and categories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Vision and Values</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ability to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ability to model Gospel values in word and action when leading and managing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Knowledge and Understanding</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ability to understand and apply technical role knowledge (Stewardship of resources)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Leadership Competence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transformational leadership ability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Constructive transactional leadership ability</td>
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At this point in the data collection, all aspirants acknowledged Catholic identity as a role component of Catholic principalship. Aspirants emphasised the importance of the principal modelling Gospel values in word and action when discussing leadership and management through this role component (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996). Aspirants also referred to the expectation that the principal lead evangelisation initiatives (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997) and ensure the provision of teaching and learning programs infused, where possible, with Gospel values (Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2000; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Several aspirants described such a curriculum as vital for the holistic development of students with counter-cultural values systems reflecting that of Jesus (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000). Moreover, several aspirants commented on the role of the principal as builder of rich school-parish relationships and supporter of diocesan...
Despite enhanced capacity to articulate the responsibilities associated with this role component, aspirants did not express the requirement of the principal to lead the development of the school as a faith community (Convey, 2012; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). Such leadership occurs when the principal provides school community members with opportunities to participate in reflection, prayer and sacramental and liturgical celebration (Convey, 2012; DeFiore et al., 2009; Klenke, 2007). Likewise, aspirants did not mention the requirement of the principal to demonstrate a commitment to social justice and action. Nonetheless, aspirants did acknowledge this Gospel value when discussing the role component, community engagement and development. Specifically, half of the aspirants referred to the need for the principal to build social justice awareness amongst school community members before encouraging appropriate personal and collective action. These aspirants also highlighted the need for the principal to ensure that school policies and processes are designed and applied in a manner respectful of school community members, especially those who are marginalised or facing crises (Carrington, 1999; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Dyson et al., 2002).

The majority of aspirants, when discussing the role component, teaching and learning described the connection between this role component and that of Catholic identity by referring to the requirement of the principal to lead the integration of Gospel values, where possible, through the curriculum (Convey, 2012; Hunt et al., 2000; Krebbs, 2000; The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977). Half of the aspirants also commented on the need for the principal to consult with teachers to ensure that they are appropriately resourced, encouraged and developed through professional learning (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; Jenkins, 2009; Marzano et al., 2005; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). Likewise, several aspirants indicated the importance of the principal working collegially with teachers to create an effective, whole-of-school teaching and learning culture (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Blase & Blase, 2000; DuFour, 2002; Marzano et al., 2005; The Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) with holistic student development as its aim (The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977).
Despite improvements in aspirant articulation of teaching and learning as a role component compared with pre-program responses, gaps in aspirant knowledge remained. Specifically, a minority of aspirants expressed the importance of the principal modelling a love of learning and encouraging school community members to become independent, enthusiastic and life-long learners (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; J. Harris et al., 2013). Likewise, a single aspirant voiced the expectation that the principal work with teachers to improve understanding and use of assessment frameworks, based on data, benchmarking and observation, to monitor student progress (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Department for Education and Skills, 2004; Department of Education Northern Ireland, 2005; Lashway, 2002).

Other aspects of this role component, described in the literature review, were completely absent from aspirant responses. One example included the responsibility of the principal to promote the careful and collaborative planning of a diverse and flexible curriculum to meet national (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson, 2011; Victory, 2013) and, where appropriate, Church requirements (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). A second example was the expectation that the principal promote peer observation and collaborative discussion to review and improve the effectiveness of teaching practices and classroom environments (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; DuFour, 2002; Jenkins, 2009; Robinson, 2011).

In contrast to these knowledge gaps, aspirants demonstrated a comprehensive understating of the role component, stewardship of resources. Specifically, aspirants accurately articulated the requirement of the principal to prudently lead and manage school-based human, environmental, financial and capital resources (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Most aspirants referred to the need for the principal to lead and manage in a transparent and accountable manner when discussing this role component (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009). Moreover, several aspirants pronounced the need for the
principal to consider Gospel values when making resource-focused decisions (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

All aspirants identified the requirement of the principal to lead and manage human resources with several aspirants referring directly to the responsibilities of recruitment, induction, professional formation and formative and summative appraisal of staff (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Aspirants also described the need for the principal to lead and manage school environmental resources, in part by promoting participation in local, national and international conservation initiatives (Catholic Earthcare Australia, 2012; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Spry & Cunliffe, 2008). All aspirants identified the role of the principal as leader and manager of school financial resources and discussed the responsibilities of setting, implementing and monitoring the budget, identifying and rectifying anomalies and reporting in an accountable manner to the school board and governing system (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). Likewise, aspirants expressed the duty of the principal to use project management principles when planning and supervising school-based capital development projects including the construction of new and refurbishment of existing buildings and requisite capital fit-out (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). However, despite robust understanding of the role of the principal as steward of capital resources, no aspirant described the links between the school infrastructure master plan, the capital development plan and savings plan for both linked to the school budget (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2010; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

When discussing their perceptions regarding the role component, community engagement and development, all aspirants identified as imperative the use of Gospel-based words and actions by the principal when building relationships (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011;
Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996). Likewise, aspirants voiced the requirement of the principal to oversee the development and maintenance of processes and structures to facilitate reciprocal communication between the school, home and community (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Epstein, 2007) when striving to grow a Christ-like community. Half of the aspirants also discussed their perception that the principal is expected to care for marginalised school community members, notably staff, students and parents experiencing crises (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

However, aspirants either poorly articulated or did not mention the three other dimensions of this role component highlighted through the literature review. Firstly, only two aspirants acknowledged the requirement of the Catholic principal to recognise and promote the principles of inclusion amongst school community members (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). Examples provided by aspirants included the use of student, parent and community member linguistic and cultural gifts in the classroom to enhance both school diversity and the quality of teaching and learning practices. Secondly, these aspirants identified the expectation placed upon the principal to work proactively with agencies to support student attendance, protect and nurture student wellbeing and create safe and inclusive learning environments (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Thirdly, no aspirant mentioned the importance of principal willingness to enhance the educational outcomes of the Western Australian education system by sharing school facilities and internal expertise with staff from neighbouring schools to build teacher capacity (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010; A. Harris, 2008).

When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirants offered more comprehensive descriptions than those tendered pre-program. Further, the capabilities identified by aspirants at this point in the research reflected the three broad categories identified in the literature review. All aspirants, when referring to the capabilities of vision and values, articulated the importance of principal capacity
to understand the evangelising mission of the Church and use this when working with school community members to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009). To support the evangelising mission of the Church, aspirants commented on the need for school vision to focus on the holistic development of students with values systems based on that of Jesus Christ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000). Aspirants indicated that achievement of such a vision requires the principal to ensure the provision of Gospel-based teaching and learning programs (Convey, 2012). However, no aspirant referred to the need for the principal to focus all role components and school activities on achievement of this vision (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

All aspirants identified the importance of the principal modelling Gospel values (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996) and ensuring that words and actions are aligned when leading and managing (Buchanan, 2013a). When discussing specific values, aspirants cited social justice and action as imperative (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Absent from aspirant responses, however, was the need for the principal to value, model and promote the pursuit of life-long learning and set high standards for themselves and those they lead (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005; Welsh Assembly Government, 2006).

Aspirant responses with regard to knowledge and understanding, the second capability required for effective performance, were concentrated and specific. That is, all aspirants referred to the wherewithal required of the principal to lead and manage the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources such as school financial management (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). However, as was the
case, no aspirant discussed the knowledge and understanding required of the principal to effectively lead and manage through the role components of Catholic identity, teaching and learning or community engagement and development. Further, no aspirant identified principal strategic planning proficiency as a means through which to ‘chart the course’ for the achievement of school vision (Davies & Ellison, 2013; A. Harris, 2012).

Just over half of the aspirants identified the capacity of the principal to adopt a constructive transactional approach when managing staff when discussing the third capability identified through the literature review, leadership competence (Avolio, 2010; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Specifically, aspirants articulated the need for the principal to work with staff to clarify expectations, set appropriate goals, suggest strategies for improvement as they work, provide feedback, praise and recognition when warranted and exchange rewards for accomplishments (Avolio, 2010; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005). Most aspirants also described the effective principal as one capable of adopting a transformational disposition when leading and managing staff toward the achievement of school vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). Aspirants defined transformational capability as the capacity of the principal to transform or inspire staff to move from a mindset of egocentricity to one that considers the needs of colleagues and achievement of shared organisation vision (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lavery, 2011; Locke & Kirkpatrick, 1991). Aspirant responses identified four possible strategies available for use by the principal when leading and managing in this way. The first strategy was the willingness and capacity of the principal to mentor marginalised staff, referred to in the literature as individual consideration, to encourage a sense of belonging and enhance dedication (Bass, 1990). The second strategy was stimulation of the intellectual capacity of staff by the principal to generate unique solutions to problems without publically criticising the history of the issue or the mistakes of individuals (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). The third strategy involved the use of charisma by the principal, specifically dynamic presence, confidence and projection of power, to inspire and motivate staff (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). The final strategy was the capacity of the principal to create a high-trust culture by modelling expected behaviour, using ethical words and actions, encouraging
appropriate risk-taking amongst staff and considering the needs of others before self (Marzano et al., 2005).

6.2.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program, aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance had changed again. Specifically, aspirant responses predominantly focused on the principal as leader and manager of the role component, school improvement. With regard to the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirants discussed the ability of the principal to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision using knowledge of the QCS Framework and school improvement tool in conjunction with transformational and transcendental leadership capabilities. Given the emphasis of the program’s second year on the use of the system-mandated Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool and contemporary leadership theory, aspirant identification of this role component and requisite capabilities was unsurprising. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.6.

With regard to research data, three trends were evident. Firstly, aspirants identified the principal as leader and manager of the role component, school improvement (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). Secondly, aspirants articulated the potential of the QCS Framework and school improvement tool to enhance all aspects of school operations, especially the quality of activities and services offered to the school community (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006, 2011; Department of Education and Training, 2014; A. Harris, 2012). Thirdly, aspirants discussed the importance of school improvement for the achievement of school vision and, as a result, provision of support for the evangelising mission of the Church (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). With regard to this trend, more than half of the aspirants emphasised the importance of placing achievement of school vision at the centre of school improvement endeavours (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).
Table 6.6  
Aspirant End-of-program Perceptions: Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities for Effective Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role component</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. School Improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leading school improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using the QCS Framework and school improvement tool to enhance all aspects of school operations</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Placing achievement of school vision at the centre of improvement endeavours</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distributing leadership for school improvement/QCS component reviews</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicating the importance of school improvement to the school community</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Vision and Values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to drive achievement of school vision through school improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to lead school improvement using Gospel-based words and actions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Knowledge and Understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to understand and apply the QCS Framework and school improvement tool</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Desire to maintain contemporary knowledge of school improvement</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership Competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transcendental leadership ability</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transformational leadership ability</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When discussing school improvement as a role component of Catholic principalship, aspirants highlighted the need for the principal to ensure that component review teams reflect the diverse nature of the school community (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Aspirants indicated that such representation is achieved when the principal invites the participation of school community members with interest or expertise in the component due for review (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Aspirants identified leadership team members, teachers, support staff, students, their parents and carers and members from the broader school community as potential component-review participants (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Aspirants also accurately described the QCS school improvement process. Specifically, aspirants stated that the purpose of the component-review team was determination of school performance against QCS component descriptors, the sourcing of evidence to confirm ratings and, where necessary, formulation and implementation of a component improvement plan (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Post-implementation of the component improvement plan, aspirants discussed the importance of periodic review to determine effectiveness of interventions together with the formulation and implementation of modifications as required (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009).

When compared with the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review, however, responses for this role component revealed three gaps in aspirant knowledge. Firstly, only one aspirant acknowledged the importance of the principal communicating the purpose and significance of school improvement and the outcomes of QCS component reviews to the school community (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006; A. Harris, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2008). Secondly, only two aspirants emphasised the importance of the principal distributing leadership for QCS component-review processes to interested staff as a means through which to develop leadership potential (A. Harris, 2008). Thirdly, no aspirant mentioned the importance of the principal incorporating QCS component improvement plans with the school strategic plan (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006).
All aspirants referred to vision and values when discussing the capabilities required for effective performance. Specifically, aspirants articulated the importance of principal capacity to drive achievement of school vision through school improvement (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). Aspirants also identified the importance of the principal modelling Gospel values (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Convey, 2012; Cook & Simonds, 2011; Dobzanski, 2001; Grace, 1996) and ensuring that words and actions are aligned (Buchanan, 2013a) when leading and managing school improvement.

All aspirants, when discussing the capability of knowledge and understanding, considered principal comprehension of the QCS Framework important for the success of the school improvement process (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). Likewise, aspirants highlighted principal prowess with regard to the use of the school improvement tool as an important capability (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2006). A minority of aspirants, however, discussed the need for the principal to maintain contemporary knowledge of school improvement literature and developments in the field (Ainscow et al., 2013; Davies & Ellison, 2013; Department of Education and Training, 2014).

With regard to the capability of leadership competence, several aspirants discussed the strategic use of individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealised influence by the principal (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005) when leading school improvement. In contrast, all aspirants referred to the need for the principal to utilise transcendental leadership capabilities (Beckwith, 2011; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012) when working with school community members in general and component-review group members specifically. Aspirants identified three specific traits when discussing transcendental capabilities. Firstly, aspirants expressed the ability and willingness of the transcendental principal to reflect upon their leadership and management strengths and deficiencies before proactively determining and implementing improvement strategies (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). Secondly, aspirants referred to the ability of the transcendental principal to engage with others in genuine, non-
hierarchical and collaborative discussion, supported by unconditional listening and the application of Gospel values (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). Thirdly, aspirants discussed the overarching motivation of the transcendental principal to serve others before self (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007; Rebore & Walmsley, 2009). Aspirants also described the outcomes of transcendental capabilities as values-based, high-trust workplace cultures where staff serve one another and focus on the continual improvement of school activities and processes to achieve school vision (Cardona, 2000; Gardiner, 2006; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007).

6.2.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they attributed discernible perception changes regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance to the influence of three program-related features. These features were the program curriculum; active learning experiences; and collegial support networks. Summaries of mid-program and end-of-program influences provoking discernible perception changes are provided in Tables 6.7 and 6.8 respectively.

The first influence provoking discernible perception changes was the program curriculum. All aspirants commented that the use of the Leadership Framework to structure first year program modules assisted understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Specifically, aspirants affirmed explicit study of Leadership Framework domains (Catholic identity, stewardship, education and community) and capabilities (personal, professional, relational and organisational). Similarly, six aspirants indicated that study of the QCS Framework and school improvement tool and leadership of a school improvement project throughout the program’s second year enhanced their knowledge of the role component, school improvement. Moreover, all aspirants indicated that program modules based on contemporary leadership theory positively influenced perceptions regarding the capabilities required for effective performance. Aspirants cited the exploration of constructive transactional leadership during the program’s first year and transformational and transcendental models of leadership during second year ‘Transforming leadership’ modules as examples.
Table 6.7
*Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance: Mid-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Program Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding role components and requisite capabilities</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Active Learning Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiencing role components and capabilities through school board and sub-committee participation</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiencing role components and applying capabilities during periods of acting principalship or internship</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Collegial Support Networks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing role components and requisite capabilities with aspirant principals</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing role components and requisite capabilities with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings reflect the literature review. Specifically, several researchers posited that exemplary principal preparation programs have the potential to enhance participant understanding of role components and requisite capabilities through the provision of a rigorous, coherent and systematic curriculum aligned to national professionals standards and a well-defined process for school improvement (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). The focus of the program’s second year on the use of the QCS Framework and school improvement tool also reflected the conclusions of several researchers who asserted that exemplary principal preparation programs address strategies for organisational development and change leadership (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009)
Table 6.8
Catholic Principalship Role Components and the Capabilities Required for Effective Performance: End-of-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Program Curriculum</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding role components and requisite capabilities</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Active Learning Experiences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• LSI/coaching/QCS project: Understanding school improvement and refining leadership capabilities</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiencing role components and applying capabilities during periods of acting principalship or internship</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Collegial Support Networks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing role components and requisite capabilities with aspirant principals</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing role components and requisite capabilities with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing role components and requisite capabilities with program-appointed coaches</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</table>

The literature review also indicated that effective principal preparation programs provide participants with opportunities to apply program theory to reality through well-planned, active learning experiences (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Thus, aspirants cited active learning experiences as the second influence provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, aspirants highlighted the positive influence of four program-related experiences on their perceptions: school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation; use of LSI, 360-degree review data and coaching sessions for leadership capability improvement; leadership of a QCS school improvement project; and acting principalship or internship.
During the interview conducted at the end of the program’s first year, over half of the aspirants asserted that their perceptions regarding role components and capabilities changed as a result of school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation. Specifically, aspirants highlighted the influence of these program features on their understanding of the principalship responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Moreover, aspirants indicated that these experiences enhanced their capacity to collaborate effectively with school board personnel, manage school finances and plan and supervise capital development projects.

During the interview conducted at the end of the program, the majority of aspirants reflected on the positive influence of the LSI psychometric tool and coaching sessions on their capability perceptions. Aspirants indicated that these program features enhanced their understanding of the importance of the principal reflecting on his/her leadership capability strengths and weaknesses before enacting improvement strategies. Aspirants also commented on the benefits of these tools for personal leadership capability development. Likewise, aspirants discussed the positive influence associated with leading a QCS school improvement project during the program’s second year. Specifically, aspirants considered the QCS project a means through which to implement, evaluate and refine strategies for leadership capability improvement generated during coaching sessions. Aspirants also observed that the project provided a unique opportunity to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the QCS Framework and develop proficiency with regard to the use of the school improvement tool.

Several researchers also recommended the use of the internship as a means through which to provide program participants with an authentic experience of principalship (Leithwood et al., 1996). The internship not only provides aspirants with a ‘window’ through which to experience role components and apply requisite capabilities, it has the potential to expose aspirants to three important self-efficacy sources. The first source is mastery experiences or opportunities to repeat effort in an attempt to overcome challenging situations and experience success (Bandura, 1986). The second source is control of physical and emotional states, such as stress reactions, that often arise during mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986). The third source is social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). In a school context, social persuasion
takes the form of affirmation of aspirant leadership capabilities by his or her principal and/or, staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community (Tschanen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). These three self-efficacy sources have the potential to enhance aspirant belief in ability to commence principalship (Tschanen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009).

The three aspirants who experienced acting principalship or internship during the program’s first year commented on the value of the experience as a means through which to comprehend and experience principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Aspirants also expressed the self-efficacy benefits associated with these experiences (see 6.5 Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship). One aspirant completed a five-week period of acting principalship at her school whilst her principal recovered from surgery. A second aspirant completed a six-month period of acting principalship at her school, the opportunity created by the sudden departure of her principal to undertake the lead role at another school. The third aspirant participated in a two-week internship organised and funded by his school. This aspirant visited five Australian east-coast schools where he shadowed each principal. Likewise, the five aspirants who experienced acting principalship or internship during the program’s second year commented on the positive influence of the experience on their perceptions. The first aspirant completed a 10-week internship at a remote primary school in the Kimberley region of the Broome diocese where she shadowed the principal. A second aspirant completed a six-month period of acting principalship at a large metropolitan primary school. This opportunity arose when the substantive principal was appointed to the lead role at another school. The third and fourth aspirants completed 10-week periods of acting principalship at their schools, replacing their principals as they undertook leave. The final aspirant undertook a three-week period as acting principal of a country primary school in the Geraldton diocese whilst the principal recovered from illness.

Over the course of the data collection, all aspirants nominated a final influence provoking discernible perception changes, interaction and discussion with the members of collegial support networks established and developed through the program. Aspirants identified their principals, coaches and guest principals encountered during ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions as valued network members. Not
only did these colleagues provide aspirants with perspectives regarding role components and requisite capabilities, they served as sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Aspirants were exposed to vicarious experiences when they observed network members achieving goals through perseverance and, as a result, formed the belief that they too had the capacity to succeed in comparable situations (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Aspirants experienced social persuasion when they received praise from network members and, as a result, formed the belief that they had the capability to commence Catholic principalship (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009).

6.2.5 Section one summary.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants largely perceived Catholic principalship to be a managerial occupation, dominated by the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. To a lesser extent, aspirants discussed aspects of role components of community engagement and development, teaching and learning and Catholic identity. When considering the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirants focused on the knowledge required of the principal to prudently manage technical role responsibilities such as the management of school finances in addition to transformational leadership prowess. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they expressed Catholic principalship through five, interrelated role components studied through the program: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources (human, environmental, financial and capital resources); community engagement and development; and school improvement. Aspirants also identified three capabilities required for effective performance when leading and managing through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence.

Despite enhanced understanding of role components and requisite capabilities, the research identified six ‘gaps’ in aspirant knowledge, indicating program deficiencies. Firstly, aspirants did not discuss the requirement of the principal, as leader of the role component, Catholic identity to develop the school as a faith community by providing opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental
and liturgical celebrations. Secondly and thirdly, aspirant responses indicated a
cursory understanding of the role components, teaching and learning and community
engagement and development when compared with the established body of
knowledge presented in the literature review. Fourthly, aspirants omitted to
emphasise vital responsibilities associated with the role component, school
improvement such as the need for the principal to distribute leadership to develop the
leadership capacity of interested staff. Fifthly, aspirants discussed the knowledge and
understanding required of the principal to effectively lead and manage the role
components, stewardship of resources and school improvement, but ignored that
pertaining to Catholic identity, teaching and learning and community engagement
and development. Finally, aspirants did not refer to the need for the principal to have
strategic planning proficiency, important when ‘charting the course’ for the
achievement of school vision.

Aspirants confirmed the influence of three program-related features when
discussing perception changes pertaining to Catholic principalship role components
and the capabilities required for effective performance. These features were the
program curriculum; active learning experiences; and interaction and discussion with
the members of collegial support networks developed through the program.

6.3 Section Two: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship

Section two discusses the themes associated with aspirant pre-program, mid-
program and end-of-program perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in
Catholic principalship. Themes associated with the influences provoking discernible
perceptions changes are also examined.

6.3.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants identified two primary
factors enhancing their interest in Catholic principalship: the opportunity lead the
role components, teaching and learning; and community engagement and
development. To a lesser extent, aspirants cited five other factors enhancing role
interest. Specifically, aspirant interest was driven by a desire to: lead the role
component, Catholic identity; form a leadership team capable of the prudent
stewardship of resources; apply leadership theory studied and advice received from
advisors; mentor aspiring female leaders; and learn from the experience of principalship. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9
*Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study number</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes and categories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Catholic Identity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lead evangelisation initiatives</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure provision of Gospel-based curricula</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lead holistic student development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop teacher capacity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. Stewardship of Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Form a leadership team and develop managerial capability</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Community Engagement and Development</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish and nurture a Catholic school community with relationships based on Gospel values</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support marginalised school community members</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Personal Motives</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apply leadership theory studied and advice received from advisors</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentor aspiring female leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passion for leadership and learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When discussing the opportunity provided by Catholic principalship to lead the role component, teaching and learning the majority of aspirants articulated their desire to work with staff to holistically develop students. To accomplish this aim,
aspirants expressed their drive to develop staff through the continuous improvement of teacher pedagogical practices and the quality of classroom environments. These desires reflect the conclusions of d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002) who considered the opportunity to lead instruction and enhance student learning an internal reward with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship. Other researchers asserted that aspirants with a passion for developing people, especially teaching staff they lead, are attracted to principalship because of the opportunity provided by the role to fulfil this need (Day & Leithwood, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2008).

The second factor driving aspirant interest in Catholic principalship was the opportunity to lead the role component, community engagement and development. Most aspirants discussed their desire to establish and nurture a Catholic school community characterised by relationships based on Gospel values. Aspirants also expressed their motivation to build reputations amongst the members of their school communities as trustworthy, genuine, present and accessible leaders. Two aspirants made a direct link with the role component, teaching and learning by expressing their interest in building effective school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes. Both aspirants cited direct parent involvement in classrooms and use of school community cultural knowledge in the teaching and learning process as practical strategies that could be applied to achieve this aim. Finally, when discussing their attraction to leading community engagement and development, several aspirants reflected an inclination to care for marginalised school community members.

Aspirant perceptions reflect the conclusions of several researchers. Specifically, aspirants who indicated desire to build a school community based on Gospel values reflect the findings of d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002), McNeese, Robertson and Haines (2008) and Pritchard (2003). These researchers asserted the influence of internal rewards associated with principalship on aspiration such as the need to fulfil a divine calling. Further, aspirants directly or indirectly referred to the appeal of contributing to Catholic education and the evangelising mission of the Church, a factor identified in the literature review as another internal reward with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship (d'Arbon et al., 2002; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003). Aspirant
desires also reflect the findings of several researchers, notably those of Buchanan (2013a), Day and Leithwood (2007) and Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) who described successful principals as reflective, genuine leaders who align their words with actions that, in turn, mirror the values of the school and its context. Additionally, aspirant desires to develop school-community partnerships for the purpose of enhancing student educational outcomes reflect the assertions of several researchers including those from The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (2011) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011). Finally, Day and Leithwood (2007) and Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) concluded that successful principals were effective because of their willingness to be visible and accessible to staff, students and their parents during times of need.

With regard to other factors enhancing interest in principalship, several aspirants referred to the opportunity provided by the role to lead school Catholic identity. Specifically, two aspirants considered the prospect of leading school-based evangelisation initiatives an attractive aspect of principalship. One aspirant cited attraction to the opportunity presented by principalship to lead the provision of Gospel-based teaching and learning programs. As explained previously, the purpose of Gospel-based teaching and learning programs is the development of students with a set of values based on those modelled by Jesus Christ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997; Dobzanski, 2001; Flynn & Mok, 2002; Krebbs, 2000). Equipped with such values, students are encouraged to think and act counter-culturally when confronted with situations that oppose these ideals (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Grace, 2002; Groome, 2002). Likewise, a single aspirant articulated a desire to work with the school community to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision and, by doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. All three categories reflect aspirant motivation to contribute to Catholic education and the evangelising mission of the Church, an internal reward driving interest in principalship identified by d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002), Fraser and Brock (2013), Neidhart and Carlin (2003b) and Pritchard (2003).

Another internal reward highlighted by several researchers in the literature review (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011) was the authority of the principal to form a competent and committed
leadership team capable of inspiring staff, student and parent achievement of school vision. One aspirant reflected this finding when she identified the opportunity to form a managerially competent leadership team as an appealing aspect of principalship. Although the aspirant did not specifically identify achievement of school vision as her purpose, it was inferred because the prudent stewardship of resources creates the conditions required for achievement of school vision that, in turn, ensures provision of support for the Church’s evangelising mission (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

The same aspirant nominated the opportunity to apply learning acquired through formal study and advice received from advisors as a factor enhancing interest in principalship. In part, this perception reflects the conclusions of Bezzina (2012) and Walker and Kwan (2009) who determined strong correlation between aspirant involvement in professional learning and enhanced interest in principalship. These researchers surmised that that involvement in professional learning has the potential to enhance aspirant confidence to apply for vacancies. Further, the researchers concluded that such aspirants are attracted to principalship because it represents a means through which to apply theoretical learning to real-world settings. The same aspirant also considered the opportunity offered by principalship to mentor aspiring female leaders a factor enhancing interest in the role. She reflected that male mentors, all excellent in terms of quality, had nurtured her entire leadership career. In the context of the Western Australian Catholic education system, this situation is common and a reflection of the male-dominated nature of the senior leadership tier, a conclusion reached by Bezzina (2012) and Neidhart and Carlin (2003a). The aspirant indicated that she longed for exposure to a significant female role model to provide her with another perspective on leadership. In return, the aspirant cited her desire to assume this mantle for aspiring female leaders in the future.

Finally, another aspirant cited the opportunity to fulfil her passion for leadership and learning through the role as a factor enhancing interest in principalship. This perception reflects the conclusions of Bezzina (2012), Bickmore, Bickmore and Raines (2013), Fraser and Brock (2013), Lacey (2003), Tekleselassir and Villarreal III (2011) and Walker and Kwan (2009) who considered the developmental promise of the principalship an important external reward. That is,
aspirants who perceive that the principalship will provide challenging and interesting experiences and contribute to knowledge and skills are likely to seek promotion.

6.3.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, aspirants commented that participation in the program had confirmed their pre-program perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship. Although aspirant perceptions were similar to those identified pre-program, analysis of mid-program data revealed four new factors. Firstly, several aspirants expressed enthusiasm at the prospect of leading the role component, school improvement as principal. Secondly, one aspirant considered improved self-efficacy a factor enhancing desire for promotion. Thirdly, one aspirant was attracted by the opportunity provided by principalship to develop and lead a community of learners dedicated to improving the lives of staff, students and their family members. Finally, one aspirant expressed interest in promotion, driven by the feeling that he had outgrown his current role. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.10.

At this point in the program, just over half of the aspirants considered the opportunity to lead and manage the role component, Catholic identity a factor enhancing interest in principalship. Specifically, three aspirants articulated their desire to lead the provision of Gospel-based curricula compared with one aspirant who expressed the same aspiration pre-program. In concert with pre-program perceptions, two aspirants cited opportunities to lead school-based evangelisation initiatives as an attractive aspect of principalship. Likewise, one aspirant discussed the appeal of the role to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision.

As was the case pre-program, aspirant attraction to leadership of the role component, teaching and learning remained at the program’s mid-point. Specifically, most aspirants considered the opportunity to influence the holistic development of students an attractive role aspect. Likewise, aspirants who expressed attraction to educational leadership expressed their desire to lead staff development. These aspirants cited teacher pedagogical improvements and the collaborative development of stimulating classroom environments as key focus areas.
Table 6.10
Aspirant Mid-program Perceptions: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Catholic Identity</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure provision of Gospel-based curricula</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead evangelisation initiatives</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Teaching and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lead holistic student development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop teacher capacity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Stewardship of Resources</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Form a leadership team and develop managerial capability</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Community Engagement and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish and nurture a Catholic school community with relationships based on Gospel values</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build school-community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support marginalised school community members</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. School Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lead school improvement to enhance student educational outcomes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Personal Motives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved self-efficacy</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Develop and lead a community of learners to improve the lives of staff, students and their family members</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mentor aspiring female leaders</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Outgrown current role</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Most aspirants also remained committed to leading the role component, community engagement and development. Aspirants reiterated their desire to establish and nurture a Catholic school community characterised by relationships based on Gospel values. Several aspirants also expressed their motivation, as principal, to develop collaborative community partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes. Moreover, several aspirants considered the opportunity to care for marginalised community members an attractive aspect of this role component.

One aspirant considered the opportunity to lead the role component, stewardship of resources a factor enhancing interest in principalship. As was the case pre-program, this aspirant expressed her desire, as principal, to form a competent and committed leadership team capable of the prudent management of school resources. Specifically, the aspirant discussed the essential role the leadership team plays in managing school human, environmental, financial and capital resources (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010) to influence student educational outcomes and achievement of school vision.

With regard to newly identified factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship, several aspirants expressed interest in leading the role component, school improvement. One aspirant discussed the appeal associated with overseeing the analysis and improvement of all facets of school operations to enhance student educational outcomes. Another aspirant voiced a desire to use the school improvement process to enhance teacher effectiveness, thereby assisting students to achieve their potential. This aspirant specifically referred to the possibility of using the system-mandated QCS Framework and school improvement tool to engage teachers in a continuous cycle of improvement, especially with regard to content knowledge, student needs analysis and pedagogical effectiveness. These findings reflect the literature review, notably the conclusions of several researchers who asserted that aspirants may be intrinsically driven to achieve principalship because of the opportunity offered by the role to influence school improvement (d'Arbon et al., 2002; Fraser & Brock, 2013; McKenzie et al., 2011; McNeese et al., 2008).

At this point in the data collection, four aspirants identified personal motives driving their interest in principalship. Reflecting pre-program data, one aspirant
reiterated her ambition to mentor aspiring female leaders as principal. Another aspirant attributed her interest in principalship to enhanced self-efficacy perceptions, the result of a year of experience as an assistant principal and program participant. This finding reflects the conclusions of several researchers who asserted that high self-efficacy is a factor with the potential to enhance aspirant interest in principalship (Bezzina, 2012; McKenzie et al., 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). A third aspirant regarded the opportunity provided by the principalship to lead the development of a community of learners an attractive role aspect. This aspirant discussed her desire to encourage collaboration between the school and community members to build stimulating learning environments for all based on the example of Jesus, the formal curriculum, quality teaching, learning and assessment and rich co-curricular activities. In the literature review, several researchers referred to this attractive role aspect as an internal reward rooted in desire to improve the lives of staff and life chances of students and their families (Bickmore et al., 2013; d'Arbon et al., 2002; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Pritchard, 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). A final aspirant attributed enhanced interest in principalship to the feeling that he had outgrown his current leadership role and considered progression to the principalship a logical career step. d’Arbon, Duignan & Duncan (2002) labelled this factor an external or extrinsic reward driving aspirant interest in principalship.

6.3.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program, aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship had developed further. The most discernible change was the manner in which aspirants expressed their ambitions. In every case, aspirants conveyed their attraction to principalship through a leadership vision statement developed and refined over the course of the program. Aspirant vision statements reflected a combination of five drivers: desire to develop school Catholic identity; aspiration to lead teaching and learning; drive to lead community engagement and development; motivation to lead school improvement; and ambition to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.11.
Table 6.11
Aspirant End-of-program Perceptions: Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Catholic Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure provision of Gospel-based curricula</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead evangelisation initiatives</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form, communicate and drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>achievement of school vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop teacher capacity</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead holistic student development</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage students to apply</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning to benefit others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Christian service learning)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish high expectations for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching and student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Community Engagement and Development</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish and nurture a Catholic school community with relationships based on Gospel values</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build school-community</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partnerships to enhance student educational outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support marginalised school community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. School Improvement</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead school improvement to enhance student educational outcomes</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Personal Motives</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Desire to use leadership strengths</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to positively influence the lives of</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>school community members</td>
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</table>

The majority of aspirants expressed attraction to principalship because of the opportunity provided by the role to lead school Catholic identity, specifically through
the provision of Gospel-based teaching and learning programs. Reflecting mid-
program findings were the perceptions of two aspirants who considered opportunities
to lead school-based evangelisation initiatives an attractive aspect of principalship.
Likewise, one aspirant conveyed a desire to form, communicate and drive
achievement of school vision and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of
the Catholic Church.

Aspirant responses continued to highlight the appeal of leading instruction
through the role component, teaching and learning. Specifically, aspirants cited their
desire to lead the development of teaching staff to enhance their ability to nurture the
intellectual, spiritual, social, physical and emotional dimensions of students.
Aspirants, when discussing teacher development, expressed enthusiasm at the
prospect of leading professional learning in areas such as contemporary technology,
pedagogy, psychology and stimulating classroom environments. Additionally, two
new teaching and learning insights appeared at this point in the data collection.
Firstly, one aspirant conveyed attraction to the principalship because of the potential
of the role to establish Christian service learning opportunities for students where
classroom learning could be applied to benefit others, especially marginalised school
community members. This aspirant cited her intention to establish close links with
the parish to create these opportunities, reflecting the conclusions of Miller and
Engel (2011) who emphasised the role of the principal in building such relationships
to successfully convert social justice intentions to action. Secondly, one aspirant
discussed his ambition to work with the school community to establish and
communicate clear expectations for teaching and student learning, reflecting the
conclusions of a number of researchers cited in the literature review (Blase & Blase,
2000; Marzano et al., 2005; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013;

As was the case at the program’s mid-point, most aspirants expressed attraction
to the opportunity provided by principalship to establish and nurture a Catholic
school community characterised by relationships based on Gospel values. Aspirants
articulated their desire to proactively build school-community partnerships and, by
doing so, enhancing the capacity of teachers to achieve the holistic development of
students. One aspirant, a decrease from two aspirants at the program’s mid-point,
identified the opportunity to care for marginalised community members as an attractive feature of the community-building aspect of Catholic principalship.

Slightly more than half of the aspirants indicated the appeal of the role component, school improvement compared with two aspirants at the program’s mid-point. Four aspirants discussed this role component in a generic manner as a means through which to enhance school capacity to achieve student educational outcomes. One aspirant specifically referred to the attractiveness of school improvement as a way to enhance the quality of teaching and student learning.

At the conclusion of the program, the majority of aspirants cited desire to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership as a factor enhancing their interest in principalship. One aspirant identified the opportunity provided by the role to lead authentically and develop a school community characterised by sensitivity to the needs of others, respectful action, flexibility and understanding. A second aspirant expressed her desire to lead honestly, non-hierarchically and in an uncomplicated manner for the benefit of staff, students and their family members. A third aspirant reflected her aspiration to authentically share leadership and positively influence staff wellbeing, development and commitment. A further two aspirants discussed their drive to create a culture of trust, characterised by development of staff capacity and wellbeing. Finally, one aspirant commented on her intention to effectively distribute leadership, engage in subsidiarity and source and/or provide professional learning to meet staff needs. In the literature review, Bickmore, Bickmore and Raines (2013), d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan (2002) and Tekleselassie and Villarreal III (2011) described such motivations as internal rewards with the potential to enhance aspiration.

6.3.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they attributed discernible perception changes regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship to the influence of one active learning experience supported by three program-related features. The active learning experience was the development and longitudinal refinement of a leadership vision statement. The three supporting program features were: the program curriculum; acting principalship or internship; and collegial support networks. Summaries of mid-program and end-of-program
influences provoking discernible perception changes are provided in Tables 6.12 and 6.13 respectively.

Table 6.12
Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship: Mid-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes

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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflection on program theory and related activities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Active Learning Experiences</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leadership vision statement development and refinement</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Testing leadership vision statement and confirming the authenticity of ambition through acting principalship/internship</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Collegial Support Networks</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with program colleagues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with aspirant principals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>

All aspirants, at some point in the data collection, confirmed reflection on program theory and related activities as a program-related feature that influenced their capacity to formulate leadership vision statements and clarify attraction to principalship. This finding reflects the conclusions of several researchers presented in the literature review (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). These researchers recommended the use of a rigorous, coherent and systematic curriculum within
principal preparation programs to assist aspirants to understand the role of the principal, clarify role attraction and develop healthy self-efficacy perceptions.

Table 6.13
Factors Enhancing Interest in Principalship: End-of-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Program Curriculum</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflection on program theory and related activities</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active Learning Experiences</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership vision statement development and refinement</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Testing leadership vision statement and confirming the authenticity of ambition through acting principalship/internship</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collegial Support Networks</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with program colleagues</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing leadership vision statement with aspirant principals</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aspirants also identified the influence of the active learning experience of acting principalship or internship on their perceptions. The three aspirants who experienced acting principalship or internship during the program’s first year commented on the value of these experiences as means through which to test the veracity of their leadership vision statements and confirm the authenticity of their promotional motives. Likewise, the five aspirants who experienced acting principalship or internship during the program’s second year commented on the formative influence of these experiences on their perceptions. Aspirant perceptions
regarding the value of acting principalship or internship reflect the conclusions of several researchers identified in the literature review (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 1996; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). These researchers collectively asserted that a feature common to exemplary principal preparation programs are active learning experiences that provide aspirants with opportunities to apply program learning and acquire an authentic experience of principalship.

The final program-related feature exerting a positive influence on aspirant perceptions regarding the appeal of Catholic principalship was development of collegial support networks and interaction with network members. Aspirants cited continuous interaction with program colleagues, their principals and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principal as influential experiences. Specifically, aspirants commented that these interactions enabled them to confirm their attraction to principalship and refine leadership vision statements. Aspirants indicated that interaction with network members occurred in three ways. Firstly, at the commencement of each face-to-face program module, aspirants were paired with a colleague. Aspirants were then invited by the program convenor to discuss their emerging leadership vision statements, changes that had occurred since the last module, reasons for changes and perceptions regarding the appeal of principalship. Secondly, between program modules, aspirants were asked to share their evolving leadership vision statements and perceptions regarding the appealing aspects of the role with their principals. Thirdly, aspirants were exposed to the experiences of guest principals during ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions at the conclusion of each face-to-face program module. Moreover, during these sessions, aspirants were provided with opportunities to share their emerging leadership vision statements and perceptions regarding the attractive aspects of the role with guest principals.

In the literature review, program colleagues, aspirant principals and guest principals involved in principal preparation programs were identified as members of collegial support networks (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). The literature review also highlighted the connection between the strength of collegial support networks and aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship. Specifically, network members have the potential to expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) that, in turn, encourage belief in
ability and aspiration (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). However, there appears to be little published literature concerning the influence of collegial support network members on aspirant perceptions regarding the appeal of Catholic principalship.

6.3.5 Section two summary.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants identified two primary factors enhancing their interest in Catholic principalship. The first factor was the opportunity provided by the principalship to lead the role component, teaching and learning. The second factor was a desire to lead the role component, community engagement and development. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, the most discernible change was the manner in which aspirants expressed their ambitions. That is, aspirants conveyed their attraction to principalship through a leadership vision statement formulated and refined over the course of the program. Aspirant vision statements reflected five drivers: desire to develop school Catholic identity; aspiration to lead teaching and learning; drive to lead community engagement and development; motivation to lead school improvement; and ambition to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership. When discussing the influences provoking perception changes, aspirants identified the influence of one active learning experience supported by three program-related features. The active learning experience was the formulation and ongoing refinement of a leadership vision statement, considered a crucial means through which to identify leadership values and clarify role attraction. Aspirants then refined and tested the veracity of their vision statements and the authenticity of their principalship motives through three program-related features: reflection on the program curriculum and related activities; acting principalship or internship; and interaction with the members of collegial support networks established through the program.

6.4 Section Three: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship

Section three discusses the themes associated with aspirant pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest
in Catholic principalship. Themes associated with the influences provoking discernible perceptions changes are also examined.

6.4.1 Aspirant pre-program perceptions.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship, referred to as ‘disincentives’ in the literature (Bezzina, 2012; Cranston, 2005b; d’Arbon, 2006), centred on the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. To a lesser extent, aspirants discussed concerns related to the detrimental impacts of role intensification; principalship decision-making complexity and underdeveloped support networks to assist decision-making; and low self-efficacy to commence the role. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.14.

When discussing disincentives associated with the role component, stewardship of resources, all aspirants raised concerns with regard to their capacity to prudently manage school finances. Moreover, half of the aspirants considered the demanding nature of systemic compliance and accountability requirements a distasteful aspect of principalship. Likewise, aspirants expressed anxiety related to the requirement of the principal to mediate legal issues, notably the potential for litigation. Aspirants also cited four other stewardship-related disincentives associated with Catholic principalship: resolving conflict; managing the school board; managing facilities construction/refurbishment (capital development planning); and administering complex human resource management functions such as employment contract administration and conducting appraisals.

Aspirant perceptions regarding stewardship-related disincentives reflect the conclusions of numerous researchers presented in the literature review. Specifically, a number of researchers confirmed that principals are required to manage an array of technical and administrative tasks in time and resource-poor environments (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; Pounder et al., 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). Other researchers concluded that, as a result of these role demands, some aspirants perceive principalship to be highly stressful and are deterred by the resultant detrimental effects on health and wellbeing and personal and professional relationships (Bezzina,

Table 6.14

**Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship**

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<th>Case study number</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Stewardship of Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• School financial management</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Compliance and accountability</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Legal issues/litigation potential</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conflict resolution</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School board management</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Managing capital development</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human resource management</td>
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<td><strong>2. Role Intensification</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Role intensification: Reduced time for leadership of important role components and staff and student contact</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Role intensification: Adverse impact on work-life balance</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td><strong>3. Principalship Decision-making Complexity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Uncomfortable nature of principal-level decision making</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Underdeveloped networks to support high-stakes decision-making</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low self-efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Foreign nature of role component</td>
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<td>• Poor principal distributed leadership practices</td>
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<td>• Structural role barriers to learning</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Principal observation</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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Aspirants who expressed concerns regarding the need for the principal to resolve conflict and legal issues whilst coping with litigation potential reflect the conclusions of several researchers. Specifically, Bezzina (2012) termed these concerns ‘community and society disincentives.’ He, along with Cusick (2003), Fraser and Brock (2013) and Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2011) resolved that increased demands from parents together with threats of litigation, poor support for school programs and abuse of staff have the potential to deter aspiration.

Connected with the disincentives emanating from leadership and management of the role component, stewardship of resources, several aspirants considered principalship intensification an unappealing aspect of the role. Specifically, two aspirants expressed concerns regarding the expansion of the role from an initial focus on educational leadership to one involving multiple, time-intensive administrative responsibilities such as those associated with occupational health and safety compliance and capital development planning. Both aspirants expressed the negative impact of role intensification in terms of the erosion of time available to the principal to lead other role components such as teaching and learning and interact in meaningful ways with staff and students. A third aspirant focused on the detrimental impact of role intensification on principal capacity to achieve work-life balance. Aspirant perceptions reflect the conclusions of researchers including Gronn (1999) who coined the phrase ‘greedy work’ to encapsulate the constantly changing nature of principalship in terms of breadth, depth and intensity. As stated previously, other researchers confirmed the highly stressful nature of principalship and the detrimental effects of role intensification on principal health and wellbeing, personal and professional relationships and capacity to achieve work-life balance (Bezzina, 2012; Chapman, 2005; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Riley, 2014). Bezzina (2012) concluded that aspirants who observe their principals struggling to cope with these realities and subsequent impacts may experience diminish appetite for promotion.

Several aspirants also expressed consternation emanating from their poorly developed support networks and cited the need to form relationships with practicing principals to mitigate their concerns. These aspirants discussed the crucial role network members would play, especially during their novice years as principals when they would face an array of challenging technical role aspects and the
complexities associated with making high-stakes decisions. Aspirant perceptions reflect the conclusions of a number of researchers (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009) who asserted the value of support network members as sources of role-specific knowledge, vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986), crucial for the formation of healthy self-efficacy perceptions.

With regard to self-efficacy as a disincentive, several researchers cited in the literature review asserted that aspirants who doubt their experience, expertise and capability cope with the demands of principalship are less likely to apply for vacancies (Bezzina, 2012; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). Further, several researchers concluded that low self-efficacy most often finds a home in female aspirants (Bezzina, 2012; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b; Oplatka & Tamir, 2009). These conclusions applied to the sole female aspirant who identified low self-efficacy as a disincentive. At the time this aspirant commenced the program, she was also promoted to her first assistant principalship and expressed feelings of ineptitude as a result of her lack of experience.

All aspirants, when discussing the origins of their disincentive perceptions, commented on the ‘foreign’ nature of stewardship-related role responsibilities to their initial training as teachers and subsequent experiences of leadership. In the literature review, several researchers asserted that this reality is the result of principal failure to distribute leadership (Bezzina, 2012; Draper & McMichael, 2003; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003). These researchers concluded that aspirants who are not exposed to quality, shared leadership are more likely to feel ill prepared for principalship and, consequently, may experience diminished aspiration. Although five aspirants inferred this point, one aspirant explicitly named it when discussing feelings of ineptitude with regard to the management of school finances. The aspirant considered the tendency of his principal to “jealously guard” this area of school operations a significant factor limiting his capability.

Even if effective distributed leadership practices were characteristic of the Western Australian Catholic education system, the structure of the majority of assistant principal roles presents a barrier for aspirant exposure to and mastery of ‘foreign’ role aspects. Specifically, in Western Australian Catholic schools, most
assistant principals teach in the classroom for the equivalent of four days per week with one day dedicated to the discharge of their leadership duties. Consequently, five primary school aspirants from the seven involved in the research cited concerns regarding the time arrangement associated with their roles. All five aspirants expressed the belief that they underperformed as both teacher and assistant principal and had little time to invest in additional leadership duties with the potential to prepare them for principalship.

In contrast, the remaining two primary school aspirants involved in the research did not raise structural role concerns when discussing the origins of their disincentive perceptions. In both cases, aspirant schools had large student enrolments and their principals were willing and financially able to employ additional personnel to cover the majority of the teaching load associated with each role. Specifically, both aspirants taught in the classroom for the equivalent of one day per week. Likewise, the secondary school aspirant involved in the research, a beneficiary of a role structure similar to both primary school aspirants, did not raise structural role concerns when discussing the origins of his disincentive perceptions.

Just over half of the aspirants also attributed their pre-program disincentive perceptions to daily surveillance of their principals as they struggled to cope with the demands of the role. Aspirants described the detrimental influence of resultant stress on principal health and wellbeing and the quality of personal and professional relationships. Aspirant perceptions reflect the findings of several researchers who asserted that daily observation of principals experiencing role stress has the potential to diminish aspiration (Bezzina, 2012; Chapman, 2005; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Riley, 2014). Further, numerous researchers concluded that stress is the result of a demanding role discharged in highly accountable, yet time and resource-poor environments (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; Pounder et al., 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011).

6.4.2 Aspirant mid-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program’s first year, aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship had changed. Specifically,
all aspirants reported diminished apprehension with regard to disincentives identified pre-program. The influences responsible for these perception changes are examined in section 6.4.4 of this chapter. Four aspirants, however, expressed additional concerns. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15
Aspirant Mid-program Perceptions: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study number</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pre-program perceptions:</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced apprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principalship Decision-making</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety associated with principal-level decision making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Role Intensification</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse impact on principal health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced capacity for educational leadership</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced student contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When discussing new disincentives at this point in the research, one aspirant raised a personal leadership weakness as a concern, the result of program-inspired reflection. This aspirant, appointed to her first assistant principalship at the start of the year, acknowledged that principalship requires the capacity to make tough, potentially unpopular decisions. The aspirant admitted that her natural inclination to please people conflicted with this reality. This observation reflects the findings of Fraser and Brock (2013) and Wildy, Clarke and Slater (2007) who asserted that commencing principalship requires adjustment from a comfortable, familiar role to one that is uncertain and demands the ability and willingness to make difficult decisions that may not engender the admiration of others. Likewise, Bezzina (2012) and Daresh and Male (2000) observed that some aspirants find such decision-making unpleasant and, as a result, may experience reduced appetite for promotion.
Another aspirant raised concerns regarding the adverse health and wellbeing outcomes associated with role intensification. This aspirant referred to two specific examples when discussing the origins of adverse health and wellbeing outcomes: the need for the principal to constantly mediate between conflicting parties; and the expectation that the principal will provide support for school community members experiencing crisis. The aspirant cited her principal’s poor principal physical health and emotional exhaustion as symptoms of imbalance emanating from these role aspects. This observation reflects the findings of several researchers who asserted that the stressful nature of the role has the potential to adversely impact principal health and wellbeing, harm personal and professional relationships and convey a negative impression of the role to aspiring principals (Bezzina, 2012; Chapman, 2005; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Riley, 2014).

Another aspirant raised a second disincentive created by role intensification, reduced time available to the principal to attend to other role components, notably leadership of teaching and learning. This aspirant discussed his perception of principalship as a role besieged by constant change in terms of breadth, depth and intensity (Gronn, 1999; Riley, 2014). The aspirant referred to conflict resolution and the technical, administrative and compliance tasks associated with capital development planning as examples of time-intensive role aspects. With regard to conflict resolution, the perceptions of this aspirant reflect the findings of Bezzina (2012), Cusick (2003), Fraser and Brock (2013), Riley (2014) and Tekleselassie and Villarreal (2011) who collectively asserted that this role aspect erodes the valuable, limited time available to the principal to lead and manage other role components. Moreover, for this aspirant, there appeared to be a mismatch between his principalship ideals and the reality of the role. Bezzina (2012) categorised this incongruous situation as a personal disincentive with the potential to diminish aspiration.

Similarly, the final aspirant expressed a third disincentive emanating from role intensification, reduced student contact. When discussing time-intensive role demands, this aspirant referred to the requirement of the principal to meet growing systemic accountability requirements and the time-intensive nature of conflict resolution. As discussed previously, these concerns are the result of both ‘greedy
work’ (Gronn, 1999) or role intensification (Riley, 2014) and the clash between the values of the aspirant and the reality of the role, a personal disincentive described by Bezzina (2012).

6.4.3 Aspirant end-of-program perceptions.

At the conclusion of the program, aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship had changed when compared with those offered at the program’s mid-point. Specifically, the four aspirants who identified new disincentives at the conclusion of the program’s first year reported diminished apprehension with regard to their concerns at the end of the program. The influences responsible for these perception changes are examined in section 6.4.4 of this chapter. New disincentives identified by all aspirants at this point in the research were notably personal, the result of five from eight aspirants achieving principalship with the remainder actively applying for vacancies. That is, as the reality of principal appointment set in, aspirants focused on concerns associated with relocation to their new contexts to commence principalship. Four primary school aspirants involved in the research were preparing to leave Perth to commence principalship in country or remote schools. The secondary aspirant involved in the research was preparing to undertake principalship in Perth. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.16.

All four primary school aspirants who had achieved principalship and another who was actively applying for vacancies lamented the impending separation from their personal support networks. Two aspirants from this group were parents of young children. Both expressed concerns regarding the loss of regular, face-to-face contact between their children and family members, especially grandparents. Further, both aspirants anticipated difficulties associated with a loss of practical support provided by these people, chiefly before and after school care for their children. A third aspirant with adult children at university and a husband with a career in Perth made the decision to relocate alone to her country town and commute back to the city periodically. This aspirant was unsettled by the impending loss of face-to-face contact with her family support network. The remaining two aspirants, both unmarried and without children, discussed anxiety related to the geographical
separation between themselves and their emotional support bases in the form of family and friends.

Table 6.16  
**Aspirant End-of-program Perceptions: Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mid-program perceptions: Reduced apprehension</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Principal Application and/or Appointment</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separation from personal support networks</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separation from collegial support networks</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial disincentives</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruitment issues</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work-life imbalance</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Fish-bowl’ effect</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parish priest issues</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principal appointment issues</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relinquishing highly-satisfying current role for principalship</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unrealistic role demands</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working with difficult, unreasonable people</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three of the five aspirants also articulated concerns that movement from their existing schools to commence principalship in different locations would diminish the quality of contact with the members of their established collegial support networks. These networks were comprised of fellow program aspirants, assistant principal colleagues and current and former principals. Additionally, these aspirants anticipated difficulty establishing fresh networks in their new contexts, the result of geographical isolation combined with the demands of novice principalship. These findings reflect the conclusions of several researchers who considered the loss of personal and collegial support networks as a result of commencing principalship in
country and remote settings disincentives (Clarke et al., 2007; d'Arbon et al., 2002; d'Arbon et al., 2001; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003a, 2003b; Fraser & Brock, 2013).

Two aspirants also raised financial concerns associated with relocation from Perth to their respective country towns to commence principalship. Firstly, both aspirants expressed disappointment at the financial burden associated with packing and renting their homes in Perth and transporting belongings to inferior CEOWA-subsidised accommodation in their new settings, a finding highlighted by Pritchard (2003). Secondly, both aspirants discussed financial hardship emanating from reduced disposable income, the result of having to pay the shortfall between the rental income received from their family homes and existing mortgages in addition to paying the non-subsidised rental costs for CEOWA accommodation. There appears to be little published literature concerning this finding. Thirdly, both aspirants commented on the financial disadvantage created by the negative difference between their existing assistant principal salaries and those they were due to receive as principals. Specifically, remuneration for Western Australian Catholic school principals is determined by student enrolments: the higher the number of students, the higher the salary. As assistant/deputy principals are paid at a rate of 80% of a principal’s salary (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014b, 2014c), there exists potential for income loss as aspirants from large metropolitan schools migrate to smaller regional or remote schools to commence principalship. There appears to be little published literature concerning this finding. Finally, one of the aspirants, a mother of two young children, anticipated complications emanating from the withdrawal of her children from their existing school in Perth before enrolling them at a new school where she would be both parent and principal. In addition to the potential for social unrest and resultant emotional distress, the aspirant expressed concerns with regard to the costs associated with purchase of new uniforms and sundry materials. There appears to be little published literature concerning the former complication whilst the latter financial disincentive reflects the findings of Pritchard (2003).

One aspirant raised a concern regarding perceived bias against female aspirants by male-dominated appointment panels, a finding highlighted by Bezzina (2012), McLay (2008) and Neidhart and Carlin (2003b). With regard to gender-based disincentives, another aspirant discussed the issue of ‘old-fashioned’ parish priests
with bias against female principals. This aspirant attended a handover meeting with her predecessor soon after achieving appointment as principal of a Catholic primary school in a country town. At the meeting, the parish priest made several sexist and disparaging comments regarding the capacity of female principals to lead and manage effectively. The aspirant speculated that a poor relationship between her and the priest had the potential to thwart attempts to develop a fruitful school-parish relationship. This finding reflects the conclusions of both The Australian Catholic Primary Principals’ Association (2005) and Pascoe (2007) who highlighted the need for some Catholic principals to navigate complex school-parish relationships and acknowledged the potential of this reality to diminish aspiration.

For this aspirant, the handover meeting also generated a second concern, unrealistic role demands. Specifically, the former principal made it clear to the aspirant that her new role would not only involve leadership and management through the five Catholic principalship role components identified in the literature review, it would require her to be a ‘Jack of all trades.’ The aspirant cited several examples of unrealistic role demands including unblocking school toilets; cleaning gutters; mowing the school oval; chairing the local parish council and potentially acting as coach for the town football team. In the literature, this disincentive represents principalship ‘greedy work’ (Gronn, 1999) or role intensification (Riley, 2014). Further, aspirant perceptions are confirmed by other researchers who assert that principalship is becoming increasingly complex, the result of pressure to complete a range of tasks in time and resource-poor environments (Chapman, 2005; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; A. Harris, Muijs, et al., 2003; Pounder et al., 2003; Tekleselassie & Villarreal III, 2011). In accord with the recommendations of Halsey (2011), this aspirant expressed her intention to clearly delineate the boundary between her personal and professional commitments to prevent being inundated by community demands and expectations.

The secondary school aspirant involved in the research, a deputy principal, considered leaving his current, highly satisfactory role to commence principalship a disincentive. For this aspirant, one source of contentment was the willingness of his recently appointed principal to provide him with the time and opportunity to lead strategic initiatives and the positive influence of both on his leadership capacity. Unlike the majority of his assistant principal counterparts from the program, in a
typical week, the aspirant taught for the equivalent of one day with the balance expended on leadership and management duties without the end-of-line responsibilities borne by his principal. In his words, leaving a “pristine” role to commence the principalship was disconcerting, because he was aware that the role would be daunting and filled with unknown challenges. This perception reflects the findings of Bezzina (2012) and James and Whiting (1998). Both researchers concluded that highly satisfied assistant/deputy principals who have gained exposure to meaningful levels of influence and decision-making without the need to take the final step to principalship might experience diminished aspiration.

Another aspirant raised concerns regarding the requirement of the principal to work with difficult, unreasonable people. This concern was the result of program-inspired reflection. Specifically, the aspirant reached the conclusion that she could master the technical aspects of principalship, such as school financial management, with time and experience. The aspirant, however, considered the requirement of the principal to diplomatically work with emotional, unreasonable and unpredictable people challenging, even traumatic. This perception reflects the findings of a number of researchers who concluded that some aspirants perceive the role of principal to be highly stressful and, consequently, may experience diminished interest in promotion (Bezzina, 2012; Chapman, 2005; Cooley & Shen, 2000; Draper & McMichael, 2003; Fraser & Brock, 2013; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003a; Riley, 2014). This aspirant also became a first-time mother during the program and, as a result, raised concerns regarding her capacity to effectively balance the intensity of the principalship and parenthood. A second aspirant, the father of two young children, also expressed anxiety with regard to this issue. Bezzina (2012) asserted that for aspirants considering starting a family or for those who already have young children, the complexity of the role, associated time-demands and subsequent stress do little to encourage aspiration.

Two aspirants, due to commence principalship in a country town and remote community respectively, anticipated challenges associated with the attraction and retention of quality staff in their new contexts. Specifically, both aspirants expressed concerns that the geographically isolated nature of their schools would attract few suitable applicants for vacancies, possibly forcing the employment of sub-standard staff. The aspirants speculated that recruitment of unsuitable recruits might adversely
affect staff morale and diminish the quality of teaching and student learning. Further, both aspirants were concerned about their capacity in this situation to muster the collective effort of staff to achieve school vision and, in doing so, provide support for the evangelising mission of the Church. The aspirants also expressed anxiety with regard to making a non-appointment decision, the result of which could place additional pressure on existing staff to cover the vacancy and produce similar adverse outcomes. Aspirant concerns reflect the conclusions of Pietsch and Williamson (2009) who confirmed that recruitment and selection of suitable staff in country and remote locations, particularly those with leadership experience, is problematic. Further, Pietsch and Williamson (2009) and Clarke, Wildy and Pepper (2007) asserted that beginning principals in these settings may be confronted by staff with limited knowledge regarding the use of educational technologies, contemporary teaching practices and/or cultural and community awareness.

The aspirant due to commence principalship of a remote school raised a second disincentive connected with her new context, the so-called ‘fish bowl effect.’ This effect, described by Clarke and Stevens (2009), Halsey (2011) and Wallace and Boylan (2007), is the result of working and residing in remote settings and refers to the constant, albeit unintentional, surveillance of the principal and staff by members of the school community. The aspirant described herself as an introverted, reflective individual requiring personal space to process the events of the day and discharge role-related stress. Consequently, the prospect of high levels of community scrutiny associated with her new reality was a cause for concern. Further, the aspirant considered the high probability of having to discipline poorly behaved students whilst living amongst and socialising with their parents and family members a disincentive.

6.4.4 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they attributed discernible perception changes regarding Catholic principalship disincentives to the influence of four program-related features. These features were the program curriculum; active learning experiences; collegial and top-down support networks; application for principalship vacancies; and, for some aspirants, subsequent appointment. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.17.
Table 6.17
Factors Diminishing Interest in Principalship: Mid-program and End-of-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes and categories</th>
<th>Case study number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mid-program perceptions</strong></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Program Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distributed leadership to mitigate role intensification</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓            3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active Learning Experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School board observation, finance and capital development sub-committee participation</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓        7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting principalship or internship</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓            3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support Networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collegial support network: ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓        7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Top-down support network: CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>End-of-program perceptions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Program Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distributed leadership to mitigate role intensification</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓            3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active Learning Experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acting principalship or internship</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓        5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support Networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collegial support network: ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓        7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Top-down support network: CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules</td>
<td>✓   ✓  2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Principal Application and/or Appointment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Principal appointment</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓   ✓        5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Application for principalship vacancies</td>
<td>✓   ✓   ✓            3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just over half of the aspirants considered reflection on program theory, notably the concept of distributed leadership, a factor influencing their disincentive
perceptions. Distributed leadership refers to the development of staff leadership capabilities by the principal and applies broadly to all personnel, not only those employed as designated leaders (A. Harris, 2008, 2012; A. Harris, Day, et al., 2003). In addition to the benefits associated with staff development, aspirants considered distributed leadership an effective way to reduce principalship role intensity and create time for leadership and management of other role components such as teaching and learning and community engagement and development. This finding reflects the benefits of participation in exemplary principal preparation programs highlighted in the literature review, specifically expansion of aspirant knowledge through the provision of a rigorous, coherent and systematic curriculum (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009).

The literature review also indicated that a feature common to effective principal preparation programs is the provision of well-planned, active learning experiences that provide aspirants with opportunities to apply theory and acquire an authentic experience of principalship (Davis et al., 2005; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Most aspirants confirmed this conclusion during the interview conducted at the end of the program’s first year when they articulated the benefits associated with school board observation and participation as members of their board’s finance and capital development sub-committees. Specifically, aspirants commented that these experiences assisted the minimisation of disincentive perceptions emanating from the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, the school board and capital development projects.

When discussing changing perceptions regarding school financial management, aspirants highlighted the benefits of working with and learning from their principals, business managers and finance sub-committee colleagues. Specifically, aspirants cited the design, implementation and monitoring of the school budget, determination of measures to correct anomalies and reporting in an accountable and transparent manner to the school board and the CEOWA as significant learning experiences. Aspirants also discussed the benefits associated with observing their principals leading and managing the school board and co-planning and overseeing the construction, refurbishment and maintenance of school buildings and facilities.
The seven aspirants who experienced acting principalship or internship over the course of the program also indicated that these learning experiences reduced apprehension generated by disincentive perceptions. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of several researchers who recommended the use of the internship as a way to familiarise aspirants with principalship role components, associated demands and requisite capabilities (Davis et al., 2005; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Orr et al., 2006). Other researchers highlighted the self-efficacy benefits associated with such experiences (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009), the result of exposure to mastery experiences and the real-time control of resultant physical and emotional reactions (Bandura, 1986). That is, periods of acting principalship or internship presented aspirants with multiple opportunities through which to confront, experience and manage concerning role aspects, such as school financial management, whilst controlling ensuing physical and emotional reactions.

All aspirants identified the development of collegial and top-down support networks and interaction with network members as a program-related feature influencing their disincentive perceptions. With regard to collegial support networks, aspirants commented positively on the influence of ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. Through the program, aspirants developed relationships with guest principals who had experienced and survived disconcerting role aspects. Through these interactions, aspirants were exposed to vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1986) and formed the understanding that their disincentive perceptions were natural and, like guest principals, they too had the capacity to manage and overcome them. Guest principals also provided aspirants with formal and informal social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) in the form of verbal encouragement, convincing them of their capacity to cope with the role and its demands. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of several researchers including Orr and Orphanos (2011), Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009).

Most aspirants also attributed disincentive perception changes to the influence of top-down support network members. Development of these networks were defined in the literature review as a feature of exemplary principal preparation programs (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Aspirants forged top-down support networks as they established relationships with expert program facilitators, notably CEOWA support staff with line management authority.
or specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship deemed ‘foreign’ by aspirants. As networks evolved, aspirants were exposed to the vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1986) of facilitators. Specifically, as facilitators discussed career challenges, successes and resultant learning, aspirants formed the belief that they too had the capacity to succeed in similar circumstances. Equally important in the context of these exchanges was the provision of social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) by facilitators as they affirmed aspirant leadership capabilities. Network members also provided aspirants with assurances that they would be available to provide timely advice and support during and beyond the crucial novice years of principalship. Aspirants explained that knowing whom to contact for support and when to do so was an important factor allaying concerns emanating from the requirement of the role to lead and manage the technical responsibilities. These responsibilities included managing school finances, addressing human resource issues, meeting systemic compliance and accountability requirements and resolving conflict and legal issues. This finding reflects the conclusions of Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005).

Finally, all aspirants identified new concerns emanating from their principalship ambitions as the program neared completion. These disincentives, inspired by self-reflection, were the result of application for principalship vacancies and, for five aspirants, subsequent appointment. As explained previously, aspirants expressed concerns regarding the impending loss of personal and/or collegial support networks prompted by the movement from metropolitan to country or remote settings to commence principalship (Clarke et al., 2007; d'Arbon et al., 2002; d’Arbon et al., 2001; Dorman & d'Arbon, 2003a, 2003b; Fraser & Brock, 2013). Several aspirants also named the related complication of establishing new support networks in geographically isolated contexts whilst attempting to cope with the demands and intensity of novice principalship. Moreover, aspirants raised nine additional appointment-related concerns: principal appointment panel gender bias (Bezzina, 2012; McLay, 2008; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003b); remuneration disadvantage (Pritchard, 2003); parish-priest issues (Australian Catholic Primary Principals’ Association, 2005; Pascoe, 2007); unrealistic role demands (Gronn, 1999); people leadership complications (Bezzina, 2012; James & Whiting, 1998); work-life balance concerns (Bezzina, 2012); staff recruitment difficulties in country and remote locations (Clarke et al., 2007; Pietsch & Williamson, 2009); diminished
privacy as a result of community scrutiny (Clarke & Stevens, 2009; Halsey, 2011; Wallace & Boylan, 2007); and role relinquishment (Bezzina, 2012; James & Whiting, 1998).

The prominence of personal disincentives emanating from aspirant application for principalship vacancies and/or appointment highlights an area of program deficiency. That is, whilst the program curriculum, active learning experiences and support networks appear to have effectively alleviated aspirant pre-program and mid-program concerns, the program does not appear to have appropriately prepared aspirants for disincentives associated with the reality of appointment. This is especially the case for aspirants preparing to depart Perth to commence principalship in country and remote areas.

6.4.5 Section three summary.
Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship disincentives focused mainly on the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources such as the requirement of the principal to manage school finances. Aspirants cited two perception origins: the ‘foreign’ nature of these responsibilities to their initial training and subsequent experiences of leadership; and daily surveillance of their principals as they struggled with role demands. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they reported reduced apprehension with regard to disincentives previously identified. By the conclusion of the program, disincentives identified by aspirants were notably personal, the result of five from eight aspirants being appointed as principals with the remainder actively applying for vacancies. Aspirants specified the influence of four program-related features on their changing perceptions regarding disincentives: the program curriculum; active learning experiences; collegial and top-down support networks; and application for vacancies and/or achievement of principalship.

6.5 Section Four: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship
Section four discusses aspirant pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. Themes associated with the influences provoking discernible perceptions changes are also examined.
### Aspirant pre-program perceptions.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship were almost evenly split between those with low, moderate and high belief in their ability to undertake the role. Specifically, three aspirants expressed low self-efficacy, two aspirants articulated moderate self-efficacy and three aspirants conveyed high self-efficacy perceptions. Aspirants provided a number of reasons to account for their perceptions with most pronouncing conviction that the program would appropriately prepare them for the role. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.18.

#### Table 6.18

*Aspirant Pre-program Perceptions: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study number</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate self-efficacy</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>High self-efficacy</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors influencing perception</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastery of current leadership role, desire for new challenge</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to principal-specific professional learning required to enhance self-efficacy</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to acting principalship required to enhance self-efficacy</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity, time and resources provided in current role to lead initiatives enhancing self-efficacy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal support and encouragement enhancing self-efficacy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Confidence provided by relational capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>First leadership appointment: Novice assistant principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acting principalship: Role/capability comprehension and confirmed role fit</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</table>
With regard to the three aspirants who expressed low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship, one attributed her perceptions to a lack of leadership experience. That is, at the same time the aspirant commenced the program, she also undertook her first leadership role as a primary school assistant principal. Further, the aspirant ascribed her low self-efficacy perceptions to an absence of exposure to principal-focused professional learning. A second aspirant expressed high self-efficacy to lead as an assistant principal, the result of seven years of experience, but equally low self-efficacy to commence principalship. The aspirant cited a lack of opportunity to experience the role through acting principalship as a confidence-limiting factor. Similarly, the third aspirant attributed her low self-efficacy perceptions to an absence of opportunity to access principal-focused professional learning including acting principalship. Nonetheless, the aspirant indicated confidence with regard to her existing leadership foundations upon which she intended to build her principalship knowledge and skills. This aspirant attributed her confidence to her perceived interpersonal prowess or capacity to relate to and lead others. All three aspirants expressed their intention to use the program to assess their suitability for and readiness to commence principalship. Likewise, each aspirant expressed confidence in the capacity of the program to prepare them for the role and related demands.

Aspirant intentions to access principal-focused professional learning and experience acting principalship to bolster self-efficacy perceptions reflect the conclusions of several researchers cited in the literature review. Specifically, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009) resolved that participation in exemplary principal preparation programs provides aspirants with opportunities to experience Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources: mastery experiences; control
of resultant physical and emotional states; vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Likewise, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005), Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin and Wilson (1996), Orr (2006) and Orr and Orphanos (2011) confirmed that periods of acting principalship or internship deliver multiple benefits to aspirants. Benefits include the opportunity to apply program theory; develop an improved understanding of role components and requisite capabilities; and experience self-efficacy sources, especially mastery experiences, the control of resultant physical and emotional states and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986).

Two aspirants, both experienced assistant principals, confirmed moderate self-efficacy to commence principalship. These aspirants attributed their perceptions to mastery of their respective leadership roles and inner drive to seek a new leadership challenge in the form of principalship. However, despite these feelings, both aspirants reflected that to feel truly ready to undertake the role, they required the confidence that comes from participation in a comprehensive principal preparation program. These aspirants, in accord with their low self-efficacy colleagues, expressed confidence that the program would adequately prepare them for the role and associated rigours.

The three aspirants who signalled high self-efficacy perceptions indicated the belief that they had mastered their respective leadership roles and felt well prepared for the challenge of principalship. One aspirant was deputy principal at a Year seven-12 secondary school, the second was head of junior school at a Kindergarten-Year 12 composite school and the third was assistant principal at a large, three-stream Kindergarten-Year six primary school. All three aspirants attributed their perceptions to two factors. Firstly, the aspirants commented that they were the beneficiaries of supportive immediate and/or past principals who nurtured and encouraged their leadership ambitions and created opportunities for them to lead challenging, strategic initiatives such as whole-of-school ICT integration. Secondly, the aspirants acknowledged that their principals had provided the resources necessary for them to lead these initiatives and the time to do so by minimising the teaching component associated with their roles. The two primary school aspirants also expressed confidence that the Aspiring Principals Program would adequately prepare them for the role and associated rigours.
Bickmore, Bickmore and Raines (2013) and Walker and Kwan concluded that aspirants are more likely to seek principalship if they are exposed to positive, encouraging role models. These researchers asserted that role models are usually principals who believe in the leadership capacity of aspirants, develop their talents through shared leadership practices and engagement with professional learning and encourage application for principalship vacancies. Moreover, Bandura (1986), Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009) considered praise from superiors an important source of social persuasion, imperative for the formation of healthy aspirant self-efficacy perceptions. Additionally, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) concluded that engagement with leadership opportunities has the potential to expose aspirants to Bandura’s (1986) self-efficacy sources, especially mastery experiences and the control of resultant physical and emotional states, and bolster confidence to commence principalship.

The secondary aspirant also highlighted two specific self-efficacy benefits associated with a pre-program period of acting principalship at his school. This six-month opportunity arose when his principal accepted an appointed at another school on the east coast, prompting the need for an immediate replacement. Firstly, in accord with a number of researchers (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 1996; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011), the aspirant commented on the benefits associated with the experience, notably improved understanding of principalship role components and requisite leadership capabilities. Secondly, the aspirant attributed his high self-efficacy perceptions to the encouragement and support he received from staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community during the experience. These people, referred to by Versland (2009) as members of bottom-up support networks, represent a form of social persuasion, an important self-efficacy source defined by Bandura (1986). Moreover, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009) asserted that principals who feel supported by teaching and support staffs tend to have a robust sense of self-efficacy compared with those who felt the opposite, primarily because support is an indicator of leadership quality.

6.5.2 Aspirant mid-program and end-of-program perceptions.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, high self-efficacy
perceptions were either confirmed or achieved. Specifically, the three aspirants who nominated low self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship pre-program expressed moderate self-efficacy at the conclusion of the program’s first year. Likewise, the two aspirants who perceived moderate self-efficacy before the program indicated high self-efficacy at the program’s mid-point. The three aspirants that reported high self-efficacy perceptions prior to the program remained unchanged. By the conclusion of the program, all aspirants indicated high self-efficacy to commence principalship. A summary of aspirant perceptions is provided in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19
*Aspirant Pre-program, Mid-program and End-of-program Perceptions: Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship*

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<thead>
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<th>Case study number</th>
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<td><strong>Mid-program perception</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5.3 Influences provoking discernible perception changes.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they attributed self-efficacy perception confirmation or changes to the influence of four program-related features: the program curriculum and method of facilitation; active learning...
experiences; support networks; and ‘role competence.’ Summaries of mid-program and end-of-program influences are provided in Tables 6.20 and 6.21 respectively.

Table 6.20
*Self-efficacy to Commence Principalship: Mid-program Influences Provoking Discernible Perception Changes*

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<th>Themes and categories</th>
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<td>• Reflection on factors diminishing interest in principalship</td>
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<td>• School board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• LSI 360-degree data and coaching for capability improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Program colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Aspirant principals</td>
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<td>• Coaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>• CEOWA support staff as program module facilitators</td>
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<td>c) Bottom-up Support Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School community during periods of acting principalship or internship</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>4. Role Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mastery of current leadership role, desire for new challenge</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</table>
Aspirants indicated that exposure to program theory aided their understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance and, in doing so, enhanced their self-efficacy to commence the role. As described previously, a number of researchers concluded that a feature common to exemplary principal preparation programs is a rigorous, systematic curriculum that provides aspirants with a well-rounded understanding of the role and requisite capabilities (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006;
Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009). Other researchers asserted that engagement with such a curriculum has the potential to enhance self-efficacy to commence principalship (Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009).

Linked to the curriculum was the manner in which facilitators delivered program theory. Specifically, aspirants valued the use of adult learning principles by facilitators including the use of images and video to compliment the presentation of theory. Likewise, aspirants commented that opportunities to reflect upon theory before discussing perspectives with fellow aspirants were effective ways to access and share past mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986). In some cases, these discussions also exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). There appears to be no published literature confirming the link between the use of adult learning principles by facilitators within principal preparation programs and aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Aspirants also identified the positive influence of five, program-related active learning experiences on their self-efficacy perceptions. These experiences, cited in the literature review as features of exemplary principal preparation programs (Davis et al., 2005; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011), have the potential to expose aspirants to Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). The first influential experience unanimously mentioned by aspirants was development and refinement of a leadership vision statement. As explained in section two of this chapter, this active learning experience assisted aspirants to clarify their leadership values and, in doing so, identify the factors enhancing their interest in principalship. Aspirant vision statements also underpinned formal and informal discussions between aspirants and the members of their collegial support networks. Discussion with network members exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986).

The second influential active learning experience identified by most aspirants was identification and management of principalship disincentives. That is, aspirants considered structured reflection on principalship disincentives and the development
of mitigation strategies influential experiences. Post-reflection, aspirants were exposed to aspects of the role deemed distasteful through school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation over the course of the program. Aspirants indicated that this longitudinal program feature assisted minimisation of their pre-program disincentive perceptions. Specifically, aspirants discussed the positive influence of these experiences on their understanding of the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources, notably the management of school finances, the school board and capital development planning. Through these experiences, aspirants were also exposed to Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources. Specifically, aspirants participated in mastery experiences and controlled resultant physical and emotional states as they worked collegially with personnel to co-lead the management of school finances and the construction and/or refurbishment of school buildings and facilities. Through these experiences, aspirants also received social persuasion in the form of leadership capability affirmation from their principals, board members and/or sub-committee representatives. Aspirants encountered vicarious experiences as they observed their principals working positively and proactively with school board members, enhancing confidence in their capacity to do likewise as novice principals.

The third influential active learning experience, identified by seven of the eight aspirants, was acting principalship or internship. Aspirants, when engaged as acting principals or interns, experienced mastery experiences and engaged in the real-time control of associated physical and emotional states such as stress reactions (Bandura, 1986). Aspirants also used these opportunities to develop top-down and bottom-up support networks and were subsequently exposed to vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) from the former group and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) from the latter. As stated previously, the self-efficacy benefits associated with this program feature reflect the research conclusions of a number of researchers including Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005), Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin and Wilson (1996), Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) and Versland (2009).

Aspirants also identified three additional self-efficacy benefits associated with periods of acting principalship or internship. Firstly, aspirants confirmed the value of these experiences as ways to apply program theory to reality, especially that
pertaining to role components and capabilities. This benefit was emphasised by Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005), Orr (2006) and Orr and Orphanos (2011). Secondly, aspirants affirmed the value of these experiences as means through which to test the validity of their leadership vision statements and assess the authenticity of their promotional motives. Thirdly, aspirants valued the opportunity to confront, experience and manage role-related disincentives.

The fourth influential active learning experience identified by most aspirants was the use of LSI, 360-degree data within coaching sessions. Specifically, aspirants valued the capacity of the LSI to identify their leadership capability strengths and limitations. Aspirants also appreciated the ability of their coaches to use LSI data to guide the generation, implementation, evaluation and ongoing refinement of capability improvement goals and achievement strategies. Moreover, aspirants suggested that coaching sessions provided them with opportunities to access the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Vicarious experiences occurred in the context of longitudinal coaching sessions as aspirant coaches regaled them with stories of leadership challenge, success and subsequent learning. Social persuasion transpired as coaches affirmed aspirant progress against leadership capability improvement goals.

The final influential active learning experience was leadership of the QCS school improvement project, cited by half of the aspirants as a valuable self-efficacy enhancer. In the first instance, aspirants affirmed the value of the project as a means through which to comprehend the role component of school improvement. Additionally, as aspirants worked with their principals throughout the program’s second year to select a QCS component for review and conducted the process at their schools, coaches performed the role of critical friend. As aspirants led the project, their coaches encouraged the implementation of strategies to achieve goals generated within coaching sessions. As was the case for the previous activity, aspirants identified the positive influence of coach-related vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) on their self-efficacy perceptions. Further, aspirants considered the mastery experience associated with leadership of the project and the need to manage resultant physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1986) influential self-efficacy sources. Finally, aspirants cited the self-efficacy benefits associated
with receipt of social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) in the form of positive feedback from component-review team members, staff and principals.

All aspirants referred to the positive influence of support network members on their self-efficacy perceptions. Aspirants identified program colleagues, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals, their principals and coaches as important members of their collegial support networks. As aspirants engaged in conversation with these people, they were exposed to vicarious experiences in the form of tales of leadership challenge, success and resultant learning (Bandura, 1986). Consequently, aspirants developed the realisation that they too had the leadership wherewithal to succeed in similar situations. Network members also provided social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) as they affirmed the leadership capabilities of aspirants and encouraged the pursuit of principalship ambitions. These findings reflect the conclusions of a number of researchers who affirmed the positive influence of support networks on aspirant self-efficacy perceptions (Davis et al., 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; McCarthy, 1999; Orr, 2006; Orr & Orphanos, 2011; Young et al., 2009).

Moreover, aspirants articulated the positive influence of top-down support network members on their self-efficacy perceptions, notably CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules. As explained previously, CEOWA personnel possessed technical knowledge considered ‘foreign’ to the initial training and leadership experiences of aspirants including that required for the prudent management of school finances, capital development planning and resolution of conflict and legal issues. Aspirants reported two self-efficacy benefits associated with top-down support network members. Firstly, as CEOWA support staff facilitated program modules, not only did they impart principal-specific knowledge, they served as sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Secondly, CEOWA support staff reassured aspirants that they would be available to offer timely advice and support during and beyond their novice years as principals. These findings reflect those of Orr and Orphanos (2011) and Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) who emphasised the self-efficacy benefits associated with interaction between central office support staff and aspirants in the context of principal preparation programs. Further, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2005) claimed that knowing whom to contact for support and when to do so is particularly
comforting for novice principals who may experience dislocation from both previous support networks and the established principals’ network.

Aspirants also discussed the positive influence of bottom-up support network members on their self-efficacy perceptions. As defined previously, members of this support network sub-group included staff, students, their parents and carers and people from the broader school community (Versland, 2009). Aspirants considered feedback from these people, received during periods of acting principalship or internship, valuable sources of social persuasion (Bandura, 1986). That is, as aspirants enacted the role of principal through these experiences, bottom-up support network members provided verbal encouragement that, in turn, affirmed aspirant leadership capacity and enhanced self-efficacy to commence principalship (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005), and Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin and Wilson (1996) emphasised the crucial nature of acting principalship or internship as means through which to build bottom-up networks and experience this self-efficacy source.

Finally, most aspirants identified ‘role competence’ as a final factor influencing their self-efficacy perceptions. Role competence, a phrase coined by one aspirant, refers to mastery of a current leadership role and the urge to experience the unfamiliar and challenging professional territory offered by the principalship. Aspirants, when discussing the link between role competence and self-efficacy perceptions, attributed their promotional urges to three factors. Firstly, aspirants intimated that years of exposure to mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986) through their respective leadership roles and the subsequent monitoring and control of physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1986) confirmed that they could achieve likewise in the context of principalship. Secondly, aspirants considered social persuasion (Bandura, 1986), in the form of leadership affirmation received from the members of their existing bottom-up support networks, a factor enhancing their self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1986; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Versland, 2009). Finally, aspirants discussed the self-efficacy benefits associated with constant exposure to the vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1986) of fellow aspirants during the conduct of the Aspiring Principals Program in addition to social persuasion (Bandura, 1986) generated through both formal and informal interactions.
6.5.4 Section four summary.
Before the Aspiring Principals Program, three aspirants expressed low, two aspirants articulated moderate and three aspirants conveyed high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, high self-efficacy perceptions were either confirmed or realised. Four program-related features positively influenced aspirant self-efficacy perceptions: the program curriculum and method of facilitation; active learning experiences; support networks; and role competence or aspirant sense that they had mastered their current leadership role and desired the challenge of principalship.

6.6 Chapter Conclusion
This chapter presented a discussion of the themes emanating from the cross-case analysis of the eight case study narratives provided in Chapter Five: Research Results and the refined data tables associated with stage two of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: data display. Discussion throughout this chapter used a number of tactics recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) for stage three of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis: drawing and verifying conclusions. These tactics included comparison and contrast of themes and their respective categories with the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review. The upcoming chapter, Review and Conclusions, provides a response for each of the four specific research questions used to guide this study. This chapter also presents research conclusions; a proposed integrated model of principal preparation; implications and recommendations for the profession; and potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation.
Chapter Seven: Review and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, four aspirant perceptions were explored by the research: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. The eight aspirants who commenced the program in January 2011 and graduated in December 2012 were the study’s participants.

The research was qualitative in nature and used interpretivism, specifically symbolic interactionism, as its theoretical perspective. Collective case study was chosen as the research methodology. Three qualitative, semi-structured interviews (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program) were the primary instruments used to collect data for the research. Data analysis took the form of the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model of data management and analysis. During the model’s data reduction stage, four additional materials were used to triangulate interview transcript data: researcher field notes created during each interview; aspirant journals for each year associated with the program; aspirant leadership vision statements; and cover letters and application forms submitted by aspirants for principalship vacancies. During the data display stage, data were presented in the form of tables and eight, thickly described case study narratives; one for each aspirant involved in the research. When drawing and verifying conclusions from the data, aspirant narratives and data tables were subjected to cross-case analysis using a number of tactics recommended by Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014). Tactics included the comparison and contrast of themes and their respective categories with the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review.

This chapter provides a response for each of study’s four specific research questions and presents research conclusions. An integrated model of principal preparation is also proposed for the consideration of local, national and international program designers. Implications for the profession together with six
recommendations, three suggested areas of further research and six possible additions to the body of published literature pertaining to principal preparation are tabled. The chapter concludes with an addendum and personal impact statement. An overview of this chapter is provided in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1
*Overview of Chapter Seven: Review and Conclusions*

7.2 Section One: Research Questions Answered

7.2.1 Response for specific research question one: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

7.2.2 Response for specific research question two: Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

7.2.3 Response for specific research question three: Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

7.2.4 Response for specific research question four: Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

7.3 Section Two: Research Conclusions

7.4 Section Three: A Proposed Integrated Model of Principal Preparation

7.4.1 Program design principles.

7.4.2 Program theory.

7.4.3 Active learning experiences.

7.5 Section Four: Implications and Recommendations for the Profession

7.5.1 The Bishops of Western Australia.

7.5.2 Members of the CECWA School Personnel Committee.

7.5.3 Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia.

7.5.4 CEOWA specialist personnel.

7.5.5 CEOWA Learning and Development Consultants.

7.5.6 Western Australian Catholic school principals.

7.5.7 Researchers interested in the field of principal preparation.

7.6 Conclusion

7.7 Addendum and Personal Impact Statement
7.2 Section One: Research Questions Answered

7.2.1 Response for specific research question one: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants largely perceived Catholic principalship to be a managerial occupation, dominated by the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. For example, aspirants considered school financial management, satisfying systemic accountability requirements and human resource management functions core principalship responsibilities. When discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirants focused on the technical knowledge required of the principal to prudently manage these responsibilities in addition to transformational leadership prowess.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they expressed Catholic principalship through five, interrelated role components: Catholic identity; teaching and learning; stewardship of resources (human, environmental, financial and capital resources); community engagement and development; and school improvement. Aspirant articulation of the role components, Catholic identity, stewardship of resources and school improvement were notably thorough and largely reflected the established body of knowledge presented in the literature review. Aspirants also identified three capabilities required for effective performance when leading and managing through each role component: vision and values; knowledge and understanding; and leadership competence. With regard to vision as a capability, aspirants discussed principal capacity to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision and, in doing so, support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church. With regard to values, aspirants highlighted the importance of principal capacity to understand and model Gospel values, demonstrated by Jesus, in word and action when leading and managing. Aspirants also referred to principal knowledge and understanding required to effectively lead and manage through the role components, stewardship of resources and school improvement. Finally, aspirants discussed principal leadership competence as a capability. Specifically, aspirants articulated the importance of principal constructive transactional capabilities when managing staff, transformational capabilities when leading the achievement of shared
organisation vision and transcendental capabilities when leading and managing, especially through the role component, school improvement.

However, the research revealed six ‘gaps’ in aspirant knowledge, suggesting program deficiencies. Firstly, with regard to the role component of Catholic identity, aspirants did not identify the requirement of the principal to nurture the faith dimension of the school community through the provision of opportunities to reflect, pray and participate in sacramental and liturgical celebration. Secondly, when compared with the literature review conducted for the research, aspirant responses indicated a cursory understanding of the role of the principal as educational leader. Thirdly, aspirants inadequately addressed the role of the principal as leader of community engagement and development. Fourthly, aspirants failed to emphasise four vital responsibilities associated with the role component, school improvement. Specifically, aspirants did not stress the importance of the principal promoting the purpose of school improvement to the school community; distributing leadership for the school improvement process to develop the leadership capacity of staff; communicating the outcomes of QCS component-reviews to the school community; and integrating QCS component-review action plans with the school strategic plan. Fifthly, when discussing the capabilities required for effective performance, aspirants focused solely on the knowledge and understanding required to lead and manage stewardship of resources and school improvement, but ignored that pertaining to other role components. Finally, aspirants did not refer to the need for the principal to have strategic planning proficiency, important when ‘charting the course’ for the achievement of school vision.

When discussing the influences provoking discernible perception changes, aspirants identified three program-related features. Firstly, aspirants attributed improved understanding of role components and requisite capabilities to the program curriculum, especially the explicit study of Leadership Framework domains and capabilities, the QCS Framework and school improvement tool and contemporary leadership theory. Secondly, aspirants discussed the influence of active learning experiences through which they were able to apply program theory and acquire an authentic sense of principalship. Specifically, aspirants nominated school board observation and finance and capital development sub-committee participation as experiences that positively influenced their perceptions of the role component,
stewardship of resources and related capabilities. Aspirants also cited the use of LSI, 360-degree data and coaching sessions for capability improvement as pivotal experiences influencing their perceptions regarding the capabilities required for effective performance. Moreover, aspirants expressed several benefits associated with leading a QCS, school improvement project. These benefits included improved understanding of the role component, school improvement; enhanced appreciation of the capabilities required for effective performance; and the opportunity to apply strategies generated in coaching sessions. Aspirants emphatically endorsed acting principalship or internship as means through which to experience and comprehend role components introduced through the program and test and refine their leadership capabilities. Thirdly, aspirants affirmed the influence of program-developed collegial support networks on their perceptions regarding role components and requisite capabilities. Specifically, aspirants indicated that their perceptions changed over the course of the program as a result of interaction and discussion with their principals, coaches and guest principals invited to host ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions.

7.2.2 Response for specific research question two: Factors enhancing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants identified two primary factors enhancing their interest in Catholic principalship. The first factor was the opportunity provided by principalship to lead the role component, teaching and learning, especially the development of teaching staff to ensure the holistic development of students. The second factor was a desire to lead the role component, community engagement and development. Specifically, aspirants cited the appeal of the role to build a school community characterised by relationships based on Gospel values; develop partnerships between teaching staff and parents to enhance student educational outcomes; and care for marginalised school community members. Aspirants also cited five other factors enhancing role interest. Specifically, aspirant interest was driven by a desire to: lead the role component, Catholic identity; form a leadership team capable of the prudent stewardship of resources; apply leadership theory studied and advice received from advisors; mentor aspiring female leaders; and learn from the experience of principalship.
As aspirants participated in and completed the program, the most discernible change was the manner in which they expressed their ambitions. Specifically, aspirants conveyed their attraction to principalship through a leadership vision statement developed and refined over the course of the program. Aspirant vision statements reflected a combination of five drivers: desire to develop school Catholic identity; aspiration to lead teaching and learning; drive to lead community engagement and development; motivation to lead school improvement; and ambition to positively influence the lives of school community members through quality leadership.

When discussing discernible perception changes, aspirants highlighted the influence of one active learning experience supported by three program-related features. The active learning experience was the formulation and ongoing refinement of a leadership vision statement. The three supporting program features were: reflection on the program curriculum and related activities; acting principalship or internship; and development of collegial support networks and interaction with network members. Reflection on program theory and related activities coupled with leadership vision statement formulation and refinement assisted aspirants to identify their leadership values and clarify their attraction to principalship. Aspirants also affirmed the importance of acting principalship or internship experiences as means through which to test the veracity of their leadership vision statements and confirm the authenticity of principalship ambitions. Finally, aspirants discussed the benefits associated with the longitudinal sharing of their vision statements with the members of their collegial support networks: program colleagues, their principals and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. These benefits included the opportunity to assess the efficacy of vision statements and make appropriate refinements, confirm attraction to the role and evaluate the authenticity of principalship ambitions.

7.2.3 Response for specific research question three: Factors diminishing interest in principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship focused mainly on the technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Specifically, aspirants raised concerns with regard to the requirement of the principal
to manage school finances, resolve legal issues and cope with threats of litigation and adhere to systemic compliance and accountability expectations. Aspirants also cited non-stewardship related disincentives including the detrimental impacts of role intensification; principalship decision-making complexity; and low self-efficacy to commence principalship. Aspirants cited two origins for their perceptions: the ‘foreign’ nature of these role aspects to their initial training and subsequent experiences of leadership; and daily surveillance of their principals as they struggled with role demands.

As aspirants participated in and completed the program, they reported reduced apprehension with regard to disincentives identified during both the pre-program and mid-program data collection phases. However, at the conclusion of the program, disincentives identified by aspirants were notably personal, the result of five from eight aspirants being appointed as principals with the remainder actively applying for vacancies. For example, aspirants who achieved principalship in country or remote locations cited disincentives associated with the impending loss of personal support networks; separation from existing collegial support networks; and anticipated difficulties establishing new networks in geographically isolated contexts whilst adjusting to the demands of novice principalship.

When discussing the influences provoking discernible perception changes, aspirants identified four program-related features. Firstly, aspirants affirmed that reflection on program theory positively influenced their disincentive perceptions, notably the concept of distributed leadership as a means through which to mitigate the adverse effects of role intensification. Secondly, aspirants cited the benefits associated with two active learning experiences: school board observation and sub-committee participation; and acting principalship or internship. Through these experiences, aspirants were provided with opportunities to experience and manage disincentives such as those emanating from the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, oversee capital development planning and lead the school board. Additionally, through these experiences, aspirants were exposed to the self-efficacy sources of mastery experiences, real-time control of associated physical and emotional states, vicarious experiences and social persuasion. The result of these experiences was re-evaluation of disincentive perceptions and enhanced self-efficacy to commence principalship. Thirdly, aspirants were encouraged by the vicarious
experiences and social persuasion provided by members of their collegial support networks, especially ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. These network members affirmed aspirant capabilities and provided assurances that disincentives were a natural part of the role that could be managed. Aspirants also identified the influence of top-down support networks on their perceptions. Network members comprised CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules. As aspirants worked with members of their top-down networks, they were not only exposed to specialist knowledge pertinent to Catholic principalship, they were exposed to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Aspirant concerns were further mitigated by assurances provided by CEOWA support staff that they would be available to provide technical advice and support as required during and beyond the novice years of principalship. Fourthly, aspirant application for principalship vacancies toward the conclusion of the program and, for five aspirants, subsequent appointment stimulated fresh, notably personal disincentive perceptions.

The prominence of personal disincentives emanating from aspirant application for principalship vacancies and/or appointment highlights an area of program deficiency. That is, whilst the program appears to have been effective in alleviating aspirant pre-program and mid-program concerns, it does not appropriately prepare aspirants for disincentives associated with the reality of appointment. This is especially the case for aspirants preparing to depart Perth to commence principalship in country and remote areas.

7.2.4 Response for specific research question four: Self-efficacy to commence principalship.

Before the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship were almost evenly split between those with low, moderate and high self-efficacy. Specifically, three aspirants expressed low, two aspirants articulated moderate and three aspirants conveyed high self-efficacy to undertake the role. As aspirants participated in and completed the program, high self-efficacy perceptions were either confirmed or achieved.

Aspirants attributed self-efficacy perception confirmation or changes to the influence of four program-related features. Firstly, aspirants indicated that their self-efficacy perceptions were positively influenced by the program curriculum, notably
program theory that provided an enhanced understanding of Catholic principalship role components and requisite capabilities. Aspirants also confirmed the influence of module facilitators, especially those who provided opportunities to reflect on program theory prior to collegial dialogue. These opportunities allowed aspirants to access and share past mastery experiences with colleagues and, in the course of these conversations, exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

Secondly, aspirants highlighted the influence of five program-related active learning experiences on their perceptions, each grounded in one or more of Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources. These active learning experiences were leadership vision statement development and refinement; identification of disincentives and development of mitigation strategies; acting principalship or internship; use of LSI 360-degree data and coaching sessions for capability improvement; and leadership of a QCS school improvement project. In addition to exposure to self-efficacy sources, these learning experiences provided aspirants with multiple opportunities to apply program theory and acquire an authentic experience of principalship.

Thirdly, aspirant self-efficacy perceptions were influenced by interaction and discussion with members of program-developed collegial, top-down and bottom-up support networks. The members of collegial support networks: program colleagues; aspirant principals; coaches; and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals, exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Moreover, as aspirants developed relationships with CEOWA support staff, members of top-down support networks that facilitated program modules, they accessed vicarious experiences and experienced social persuasion. Aspirants also expressed confidence provided by the knowledge that CEOWA support staff would be available to provide real-time advice and support as they transitioned to principalship. Finally, aspirants considered social persuasion received from members of their bottom-up support networks during periods of acting principalship or internship powerful influences on their self-efficacy perceptions. Bottom-up network members comprised staff, students, their parents and carers and members from the broader school community.
Fourthly, aspirants identified ‘role competence’ as a factor influencing their self-efficacy perceptions. Role competence, a phrase coined by one aspirant, refers to mastery of a current leadership role and the resultant urge to experience the unfamiliar and challenging professional territory offered by principalship. Aspirant perceptions were driven by three factors. Firstly, aspirants had been exposed to years of mastery experiences in the context of their respective leadership roles and control of resultant physical and emotional states. Secondly, aspirants were recipients of social persuasion provided by the members of bottom-up support networks associated with their schools. Thirdly, aspirants benefited from constant exposure to the vicarious experiences of program colleagues in addition to social persuasion generated through formal and informal interactions.

7.3 Research Conclusions

Despite its limitations, the Aspiring Principals Program positively influenced aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Specifically, most aspirants commenced the program with the perception that principalship was a managerial occupation dominated by technical responsibilities associated with the role component, stewardship of resources. Aspirants completed the program with a more holistic appreciation of principalship, involving leadership and management through five, interrelated role components requiring the application of three broad leadership capabilities. Program deficiencies included an inadequate focus on the principalship role components of teaching and learning, community engagement and development and, to a lesser extent, Catholic identity and school improvement; and the use of the strategic plan to ‘chart the course’ for the achievement of school vision.

The program assisted aspirants to clarify and articulate their perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship. Specifically, prior to program commencement, aspirants were predominantly attracted to principalship because of the opportunity provided by the role to lead teaching and learning and community engagement and development. At the conclusion of the program aspirants expressed attraction to leadership of the same role components in addition to a desire to lead Catholic identity, school improvement and use their leadership strengths to positively influence the lives of school community members.
The program was effective in assisting aspirants to identify, experience and mitigate pre-program and mid-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship disincentives. These disincentives included the requirement of the principal to manage school finances, resolve legal issues, cope with threats of litigation, meet systemic compliance and accountability requirements and contend with the detrimental effects of role intensification. However, fresh and notably personal disincentives emanating from aspirant application for principalship vacancies toward the end of the program and, for five aspirants, subsequent appointment highlights an area of program deficiency.

The program proved to be a means through which aspirants confirmed or achieved high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship. Prior to the program, three aspirants expressed low self-efficacy, two aspirants expressed moderate self-efficacy and three aspirants expressed high self-efficacy perceptions. By the conclusion of the program, all aspirants expressed high self-efficacy to undertake the role.

Across the four dimensions of the research, aspirants attributed discernible perception changes to the influence of three program-related features. The first feature was a well-facilitated, rigorous, systematic and coherent curriculum based on the Leadership Framework, the QCS Framework and school improvement tool and contemporary leadership theory. The second feature were active learning experiences that provided aspirants with multiple opportunities to apply program theory and, in doing so, acquire an authentic experience of principalship. These experiences also exposed aspirants to one or more of Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources: mastery experiences; control of resultant physical and emotional reactions; vicarious experiences; and social persuasion. Highlighted by aspirants as the most significant active learning experience was acting principalship or internship. Notably, these experiences were not a formal part of the program and generally occurred as aspirant principals undertook leave. The final feature was development of collegial, top-down and bottom-up support networks and interaction with network members. Network members provided aspirants with role-specific knowledge, pledged support during the crucial early years of principalship and served as valuable self-efficacy sources, mainly through the provision of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.
7.4 A Proposed Integrated Model of Principal Preparation

As a result of the conduct of this research, including the study’s findings and conclusions, the researcher proposes an integrated model of principal preparation for the consideration of local, national and international designers of principal preparation programs. It is suggested that the model be subjected to research to determine its efficacy. The model is designed for generic use, making it possible for designers of principal preparation programs from any system or sector to make modifications to suit their contexts. The proposed model is illustrated in Figure 7.1.

![Figure 7.1: A proposed integrated model of principal preparation](image)
The centre of the model represents the proposed goal of principal preparation programs; enhanced aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship. This goal is based on the conclusions of a number of scholars who assert that principals with high self-efficacy are calm; tenacious; set and pursue goals with vigour (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005) using a combination of ‘expert’, ‘informational’ and ‘referent power’ (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992); and are gifted with the ability to adapt strategies for achievement to suit the needs and conditions present in their schools (McCormick, 2001; Paglis & Green, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005; Wood & Bandura, 1989). To achieve this goal, the model suggests the use of three, interrelated dimensions represented by the remaining pieces: program design principles; program theory; and active learning experiences.

7.4.1 Program design principles.

The model’s first piece, program design principles, is comprised of nine recommended ‘building blocks’ that could be used by designers when planning new or modifying existing principal preparation programs. The first design principle is the use of a convenor to organise the program, direct its delivery, convoke modules and serve as a constant point of reference for aspirants. It is recommended that four criteria be used when selecting a program convenor. Firstly, the convenor must have the capacity to develop positive relationships with aspirants and be willing to act as a timely source of information, advice, support and affirmation. Integral to the relationship-building process is the ability of the convenor to develop an understanding of aspirant workplace contexts and backgrounds including aspirations, challenges and successes. Secondly, the convenor must have the capacity to understand the needs of the governing system or sector and be capable of garnering support for the program including securing ongoing funding. Thirdly, the convenor must be capable of building relationships with practicing principals and, where possible, central office support staff with specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship before recruiting and training them as program facilitators. Finally, the convenor must be a competent facilitator and trainer of adult learning principles and have the capability to organise and effectively oversee the program underpinned by the following eight design principles.
The second design principle is the development and use of rigorous entry protocols. Principal preparation programs have the potential to be expensive ventures that require significant investment of time, resources and energy on behalf of both aspirants and the governing system or sector. Quality programs also have the potential to enhance the leadership capabilities and self-efficacy perceptions of even the most qualified and experienced aspirants. Consequently, it is in the best interests of the governing system or sector to select the highest quality candidates to participate in the program. It is recommended that entry processes be transparent, thorough and effective in discerning between aspirants with the capacity to learn from the experience and those with fixed leadership mindsets.

After recruitment of a program cohort, the third design principle involves the use of 360-degree testing using a credible and research-based psychometric tool to determine aspirant leadership capability strengths and weaknesses. Post-compilation of results, it is recommended that aspirants be provided with regular opportunities over the course of the program to reflect on their profiles and work to amplify identified strengths and minimise weaknesses. To enrich leadership capabilities, it is suggested that aspirants be paired with a trained coach-mentor who is familiar with the system or sector; principalship role components and requisite capabilities; principalship disincentives; and the leadership roles of aspirants. To enhance the effectiveness of the relationship, aspirants should be provided with the opportunity to select their preferred coach-mentor from an available pool. In terms of the conduct of the coach-mentor/aspirant relationship, it is recommended that, wherever possible, a coaching approach be adopted to facilitate learning. This approach is characterised by the collegial development of leadership capability improvement goals based on 360-degree data. Strategies to achieve goals are subsequently devised and enacted through the leadership roles of aspirants before being evaluated and refined. Likewise, strategies for goal achievement should be applied through a range of program-related active learning experiences conducted in aspirant workplaces. A mentoring approach could be adopted in time-critical situations, such as crisis events experienced during periods of acting principalship, where aspirants are required to act quickly to resolve issues. In these situations, it may be appropriate for coach-mentors to provide aspirants with step-by-step instructions. Post-resolution of the issue, however, it is suggested that coach-mentors adopt a coaching approach to
assist aspirants to reflect upon the situation and process resultant learning. At the conclusion of the program, it is recommended that aspirants participate in a second, 360-degree test to highlight the extent of leadership capability improvement.

The fourth design principle involves the use of a well-planned, rigorous, coherent and systematic curriculum. It is recommended that the program curriculum be modularised with content based on relevant national professionals standards, contemporary leadership theory and a well-defined process for school improvement. Linked with curriculum development is the fifth design principle, the longitudinal delivery of program modules (e.g. over one or two years) involving a significant element of face-to-face interaction between aspirants, the program convenor and module facilitators. Face-to face interaction is vital for the development of aspirant support networks and exposure to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. The sixth design principle focuses on the facilitation of module theory and activities by personnel trained in the use of adult learning principles. A recommended pattern of facilitation for program modules is delivery of theory complimented by the use of images and/or video; provision of opportunities for aspirants to reflect upon their learning using stimulus materials such as case studies and questions; sharing perspectives with fellow aspirants; and whole-group sharing of learning coordinated by the module facilitator.

With regard to program modules addressing theory or practices ‘foreign’ to the initial training and/or leadership experiences of aspirants, it is suggested that central office support staff with specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship be recruited and trained as facilitators. Module examples include those related to school financial management, capital development planning, human resource management, industrial relations and legal issues. It is also highly recommended that practicing principals be invited to participate in program modules to share their experiences of leadership success, challenge and resultant learning and affirm aspirant leadership strengths. It is suggested that the program convenor recruit and brief a wide variety of principals for these sessions. Principals invited could include novices through to the very experienced; males and females; those with primary and/or secondary school experience; those with backgrounds in single gender and/or co-education schools; and those serving in metropolitan, country and/or remote school contexts.
The seventh design principle is the use of active learning experiences through which aspirants are provided with opportunities to apply program learning and acquire an authentic experience of principalship. Active learning experiences may assist aspirants to understand principalship role components and requisite capabilities; clarify role attraction; test the authenticity of their aspirations; and identify, experience and mitigate disincentives. Perhaps the most important benefit of active learning experiences, however, is their potential to expose aspirants to Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources: mastery experiences; control of resultant physical and emotional reactions; vicarious experiences; and social persuasion. During the conduct of some active learning experiences, it is recommended that coach-mentors be used to assist aspirants to reflect upon and process their learning. Likewise, it is suggested that the program convenor design and facilitate activities within face-to-face theoretical modules that promote the sharing of aspirant learning emanating from these experiences.

The eighth design principle involves the development of aspirant collegial, top-down and bottom-up support networks. Support networks have the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship by providing exposure to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Collegial networks may develop as aspirants interact with one another and their principals, coach-mentors and guest principals involved in the program through structured program activities and incidental conversations. Top-down support networks may develop as aspirants and central office support staff, engaged as program facilitators, work with one another in the context of program modules and active learning experiences such as periods of acting principalship. Bottom-up support networks may develop as aspirants engage with staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community in the context of their current leadership roles and during periods of acting principalship.

The final design principle involves the use of assessment and evaluation. Firstly, standards-based assessment tasks, linked to active learning experiences, should be incorporated into the program. This form of assessment has the potential to add rigour to the program and provide aspirants with opportunities to showcase their learning. With regard to self-efficacy development, standards-based tasks may expose aspirants to mastery experiences, control of resultant physical and emotional
reactions and social persuasion in the form of constructive feedback from the program convenor who assesses tasks. Secondly, the program convenor should ensure that review data is routinely collected from aspirants, their principals, coach-mentors, program facilitators and guest principals to ensure a focus on the continuous evaluation and improvement of program structure, content and activities. Aspirants who know that their program is the subject of serious and continuous review for improvement purposes are more likely to have faith in the program as a tool for leadership development and, as a consequence, develop healthy self-efficacy perceptions. Likewise, review data and improvement actions are likely to convince the governing system or sector that the program is rigorous and worthy of continued investment.

7.4.2 Program theory.

The model’s second piece, program theory, offers a possible curriculum structure for principal preparation programs and a method of facilitation. It is recommended that program theory involve a detailed examination of four, interrelated role components through which the principal leads and manages and three capabilities that could be applied when doing so. The four suggested role components are: teaching and learning, stewardship of resources (human, environmental, financial and capital resources), community engagement and development and school improvement. School improvement focuses on enhancement of the quality of all activities, processes and services described through the remaining three role components.

The three suggested capabilities are: vision and values, knowledge and understanding and leadership competence. The capability of vision refers to the intellectual capacity of the principal to understand the vision of the system or sector to which his or her school belongs. Based on these understandings, the principal is required to demonstrate competence when working with staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community to form, communicate and drive achievement of school vision. The capability of values refers to the ability and willingness of the principal to demonstrate standards when leading and managing. Values modelled by the principal may include a passion for learning, high standards
for self, integrity, ethical behaviour and the promotion of democratic values such as active citizenship and inclusion.

Knowledge and understanding refers to the capacity of the principal to comprehend the responsibilities associated with the four role components identified previously. Implementation of knowledge in a practical way, appropriate for task, forms part of this capability. An example from the role component, teaching and learning is the requirement of the principal to be cognisant of the latest research and legislative developments influencing curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, reporting and student wellbeing (Australian Council for Educational Leaders, 2009; Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013).

Leadership competence refers to the wherewithal of the principal to understand and convert contemporary leadership theory to action when enacting the role on a daily basis. For example, the literature confirms the importance of principal constructive transactional leadership capabilities when managing staff. Constructive transactional capabilities include the ability of the principal to work with staff to clarify expectations, set appropriate goals, suggest strategies for improvement as they work, provide feedback, praise and recognition when warranted and exchange rewards for accomplishments (Avolio, 2010; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005).

A second example present in the literature is principal transformational capabilities. Such capabilities are considered important when attempting to harness the collective effort of the school community to achieve school vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Transformational strategies used by the principal to achieve this aim include the use of individual consideration, intellectual stimulation (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013), inspirational motivation and idealised influence (Marzano et al., 2005).

A third example revealed by the literature is principal transcendental leadership capabilities, considered vital for working with people, especially when leading school improvement. These capabilities relate to the capacity of the principal to develop non-hierarchical unity and a reflective, values-centred culture through the
use of genuine, collaborative dialogue (Beckwith, 2011; Cardona, 2000; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). The principal as transcendental leader also engages in regular reflective practice, is deeply aware of leadership strengths and weaknesses, is quiet but fully present, open in mind, body and heart, listens unconditionally and models leadership that places service of others before self (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). A final example highlighted by the literature is principal distributed leadership capability. The principal enacts this capability when working with all staff to ascertain leadership capacity and aspirations before providing opportunities appropriate for development (A. Harris, 2008).

As explained in the previous section, program design principles, facilitation of program theory by personnel trained in the use of adult learning principles may enhance aspirant learning and inspire the development of support networks, crucial for the development of healthy self-efficacy perceptions. Specifically, well-trained facilitators use strategies that stimulate reflection and inter-aspirant discussion and, as a result, nurture the development of aspirant collegial support networks. Likewise, practicing principals invited to host sessions during theoretical modules may become members of aspirant collegial support networks as they share their experiences of leadership and resultant learning and affirm aspirant strengths. Collegial interaction between aspirants, module facilitators and guest principals also has the potential to expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

Further, facilitation of theoretical program modules by central office support staff with specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship has the potential to benefit aspirants in three ways. Firstly, aspirants may be provided with information regarding the principalship deemed ‘foreign’ to their initial training and/or leadership experiences such as that relating to school financial management. Secondly, aspirant interaction with central office support staff may enhance the development of top-down support networks and provide exposure to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Thirdly, relationships with central office support staff may provide aspirants with a sense of comfort in that they know who to contact for advice and support during the difficult times they will encounter during and beyond their novice principalship years.
7.4.3 Active learning experiences.

The model’s final piece comprises seven recommended active learning experiences that may be subjected to standards-based assessment. Through these experiences, aspirants may be provided with opportunities to apply program theory, attain an authentic sense of principalship and develop or confirm high self-efficacy to commence the role. Each of the following experiences is grounded in one or more of Bandura’s (1986) four self-efficacy sources: mastery experiences; the control of resultant physical and emotional reactions; vicarious experiences; and social persuasion. These experiences also have the potential to enhance aspirant self-efficacy perceptions by developing collegial, top-down and/or bottom-up support networks. Interaction with network members may also expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

The first active learning experience is the use of a structured framework through which aspirants reflect upon and discern their leadership values and develop a leadership vision statement that may be used with a variety of audiences including their current and future school communities. A by-product of vision statement development is aspirant clarification regarding the factors enhancing interest in principalship. As the program proceeds, it is recommended that aspirants be provided with opportunities to share their emerging vision statements with their principals, program colleagues, coach-mentors and guest principals involved in the program before making appropriate refinements. Sharing vision statements also has the potential to develop aspirant collegial support networks, important sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

The second experience involves structured program activities prompting aspirant reflection regarding principalship disincentives. Such activities could be simple, self-reflection questions such as ‘What principalship responsibilities do you find daunting and challenging?’ and ‘Why did you identify these responsibilities?’ As the program proceeds, it is recommended that the program convenor provide aspirants with opportunities to share their perceptions with colleagues, their principals, coach-mentors, central office facilitators of theoretical modules and guest principals. In the context of these discussions, aspirants could also be encouraged by the convenor to explore strategies to mitigate concerns. This learning experience not only has the potential to reduce aspirant anxiety with regard to the challenging
aspects of principalship, it may assist development of collegial and top-down support networks. These networks, as stated previously, represent important sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

The third, fourth and fifth experiences involve the inclusion of aspirants on their school boards and, where they exist, board finance and capital development sub-committees for the duration of the program. These three experiences have the potential to provide aspirants with opportunities to develop a comprehensive understanding of aspects of the role component, stewardship of resources including the school board constitution, school financial management and capital development planning. Some aspirants consider these role aspects disincentives and the opportunity to experience them may mitigate concerns. Moreover, these learning experiences may assist aspirants to develop collegial support networks, the result of longitudinal interaction between themselves and their principals, school business managers and board and sub-committee members. Network members may expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Moreover, aspirant leadership of initiatives associated with these experiences, such as overseeing the construction of new buildings and facilities, may expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of mastery experiences and control of resultant physical and emotional reactions. Finally, these experiences represent opportunities for aspirants to develop bottom-up support networks, valuable sources of social persuasion, as consultation occurs with school community members including students and their parents.

The sixth experience involves aspirants leading a school improvement project in their workplaces. Leadership of the project has the potential to enhance aspirant understanding of the role component, school improvement including the use of the school improvement framework and tool sanctioned by the governing system or sector. If a school improvement framework and tool does not exist, program designers may consider the use of an ‘off-the-shelf’ product such as the Australian Council for Educational Research national school improvement tool. Leadership of the project also has the potential to expose aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of mastery experiences and control of resultant physical and emotional reactions. Additionally, the project may assist the development of aspirant collegial networks by prompting interaction between aspirants, their principals and members of their
school improvement teams. Bottom-up support networks may also be developed as aspirants form and nurture relationships with school community members involved in the project. Network members represent sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion, important for the development of healthy aspirant self-efficacy perceptions. Finally, there is potential for the school improvement project to double as a means through which aspirants implement, evaluate and refine leadership capability improvement strategies devised during coach-mentor sessions.

The final experience, acting principalship, assumes prime importance because it presents aspirants with an opportunity to apply program theory and the cumulative learning from the previous six experiences. Specifically, acting principalship has the potential to assist aspirants to apply program learning and develop an improved understanding of the role and requisite capabilities; test the veracity of their leadership vision statements and confirm the authenticity of principalship motives; and confront, experience and mitigate disincentives. Where possible, it is recommended that periods of acting principalship be organised in contexts suited to the ambitions of aspirants. Such experiences have the potential to provide aspirants with a realistic experience of the role post-appointment and thoroughly prepare them for the challenges they are likely to face. It is also recommended that coach-mentors work with aspirants during periods of acting principalship to assist role adjustment; provide support; and encourage the application, evaluation and refinement of leadership capability improvement strategies developed during coaching sessions. Acting principalship experiences may also enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence the role by facilitating exposure to mastery experiences and the control of resultant physical and emotional reactions. Social persuasion received from members of collegial, top-down and bottom-up support networks during these experiences may also positively influence aspirant self-efficacy perceptions.

7.5 Implications and Recommendations for the Profession

The findings and conclusions of this research have implications for the following individuals and groups. Specifically, six recommendations, three areas of further research and six additions to the body of published literature pertaining to principal preparation are proposed.
7.5.1 The Bishops of Western Australia.

This research has relevance for the Bishops of Western Australia who, ultimately, are the employers of principals in their respective dioceses. The Bishops require their principals to support the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church whilst satisfying the secular educational demands and priorities of the state and federal governments. The findings and conclusions of this research provide the Bishops with insight into the capacity of aspirants, who may ultimately replace existing principals as they vacate their roles, to meet these requirements. It is therefore recommended that a summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations be forwarded to the Bishops, through the Chair of the CECWA, for their consideration.

7.5.2 Members of the CECWA School Personnel Committee.

This research has implications for the members of the CECWA School Personnel Committee who are responsible for devising succession planning initiatives, including the Aspiring Principals Program, to address the anticipated principal shortage. Specifically, the research highlights the effectiveness of the program as a means through which to create a pool of role-ready, resilient aspirants to replace exiting principals as they retire en masse by 2020. Moreover, the implementation of recommended program changes has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the program. Consequently, it is recommended that a summary of research findings, conclusions and recommendations be forwarded to committee members for their consideration.
7.5.3 Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia.

The research has implications for the Executive Director as the person with delegated responsibility from the Bishops of Western Australia to form, recruit and appraise Catholic school principals. Specifically, the research confirms the effectiveness of the Aspiring Principals Program as a means through which to prepare aspirants for the rigours of Catholic principalship, thereby enabling the Executive Director to meet the Bishops’ expectations. The research also offers five insights that warrant his attention and possible action.

Firstly, deficiencies exist with regard to the Leadership Framework for Catholic Schools in Western Australia. The Leadership Framework is a seminal document that informs Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs and the principal selection and appraisal processes. Specifically, when compared with the literature review conducted for this research, the Leadership Framework inadequately articulates the principalship role components of teaching and learning and community engagement and development. Further, there is no mention of the role component, school improvement within the Leadership Framework.

Secondly, a lack of knowledge and/or reluctance on behalf of some principals to distribute leadership translates to a lack of opportunity for aspirants to garner ‘on the job’ exposure to important role responsibilities such as the management of school finances and the resolution of legal issues. For some aspirants, this situation also creates disincentive perceptions and adversely impacts self-efficacy to commence principalship. Thirdly, a barrier to distributed leadership and aspirant learning is the current structure of most assistant principal roles. Specifically, assistant principals who teach for 80% of a typical week have little time to invest in activities or lead initiatives with potential to assist their formation.

Fourthly, because assistant principals are remunerated at a rate of 80% of their principal’s salary and principal salaries are determined by student enrolments, potential exists for some assistant principals to be financially disadvantaged despite promotion to principalship. This is especially the case for assistant principals from large, metropolitan primary schools considering applying for principalship of small country or remote schools. One potential consequence is that talented, well-formed candidates may make a decision not to apply for vacancies. Often, such schools are
those most in need of quality leadership. Further, some aspirants who achieve promotion in these contexts appear to be financially disadvantaged by the costs associated with moving from Perth to country or remote settings to commence principalship.

Finally, the research has revealed the positive influence of acting principalship and internship on aspirant perceptions regarding role components and requisite capabilities, factors enhancing and diminishing interest and self-efficacy to commence principalship. Presently, this vital active learning experience is not part of the program and occurs by chance as aspirant principals undertake leave. Consequently, it is recommended that the Executive Director endorse acting principalship or internship as an integral component of the Aspiring Principals Program. Further, to mitigate aspirant disincentive perceptions emanating from the need to migrate from Perth to country and remote locations to commence principalship, it is recommended that acting principalship opportunities occur in contexts suited to their ambitions.

7.5.4 CEOWA support staff.

The research highlights the positive influence of CEOWA support staff that facilitated program modules on aspirant self-efficacy perceptions. Personnel not only conveyed principal-specific knowledge, they exposed aspirants to vicarious experiences and social persuasion, supported aspirants during periods of acting principalship and pledged the provision of real-time support during and beyond their novice years as principals. It is recommended that support staff be apprised of these findings and encouraged to continue as module facilitators in future iterations of the program.

7.5.5 CEOWA Learning and Development Consultants.

The research exposed six program deficiencies that warrant the attention and action of the CEOWA Learning and Development Consultants currently responsible for Western Australian Catholic education leadership programs. Firstly, with regard to the role component of Catholic identity, the program does not emphasise the importance of the principal providing school community members with opportunities to participate in reflection, prayer and sacramental and liturgical celebration.
Secondly, when compared with the literature review conducted for this study, the program does not adequately address the responsibilities associated with the role component, teaching and learning. Thirdly, the program fails to provide aspirants with a realistic understanding of the role of the principal as leader of community engagement and development. Fourthly, the program does not highlight four vital elements associated with the role component, school improvement. Specifically, the program fails to emphasise the importance of the principal promoting the purpose of school improvement to the school community; distributing leadership for the school improvement process to interested staff as a means through which to develop leadership capacity; communicating the outcomes of QCS component-reviews to the school community; and integrating QCS component-review action plans with the school strategic plan. Fifthly, the program inadequately highlights the importance of principal knowledge and understanding pertinent to leadership and management of role components other than stewardship of resources and school improvement. Finally, the program does not address the principles of strategic planning as a way to ‘chart the course’ for achievement of school vision. It is recommended that a meeting be convened with CEOWA Learning and Development Consultants to discuss these deficiencies and explore remediation strategies.

7.5.6 Western Australian Catholic school principals.

The research confirms that principals contribute to aspirant formation in both positive and negative ways. Specifically, aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship, especially disincentive perceptions, are influenced by in situ observation of their principals as they enact the role on a daily basis. Principals, therefore, must be mindful of their words, actions and reactions. Further, principals are valued members of aspirant collegial support networks who contribute to the formation of healthy self-efficacy perceptions in three ways. Firstly, principals who permit aspirants to lead and manage aspects of the role provide mastery experiences and opportunities to control resultant physical and emotional reactions. Secondly, structured and incidental discussions between aspirants and their principals are opportunities for the provision of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. These discussions also assist aspirants to acquire a deeper understanding of the role and its capabilities, clarify role attraction and develop strategies to mitigate disincentive perceptions. Thirdly, ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals who openly share tales of
leadership success, challenge and resultant learning and affirm aspirant leadership capabilities expose aspirants to vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Considering these influences, it is recommended that a summary of research findings and conclusions be forwarded to all Western Australian Catholic principals through their respective associations. As part of this recommendation, it is suggested that the Executive Director encourage principals to support aspirants and consider participation in the program as coach-mentors and/or ‘Inside Leadership’ hosts.

7.5.7 Researchers interested in the field of principal preparation.

For researchers interested in principal preparation, this study provides a basis for further research. This study could be replicated in systems and/or sectors locally, nationally or internationally. Comparative case studies across systems and sectors may provide a more in-depth understanding of the influence of principal preparation programs on aspirant perceptions regarding role components and requisite capabilities; factors enhancing and diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship. However, in the light of the recommendations of numerous researchers (Firestone, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 2014), it is strongly suggested that researchers read and consider the context of the research presented in Chapter Two prior to making decisions. Alternatively, it may be worthwhile conducting post-doctoral research to explore if, how and why the perceptions of aspirants involved in this study change as they experience principalship during their novice years. To truly ascertain the value of the program as a medium for principal preparation, it may be worthwhile exploring the perceptions of novice principals who participate in the program compared with those who enter the principalship via the traditional apprenticeship pathway.

The research has also revealed six possible, although highly contextualised, additions to the body of published literature pertaining to principal preparation. Firstly, the research suggests a unique relationship between aspirant reflection on program theory, leadership vision statement formulation and capacity to identify and articulate the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship. Additionally, aspirants cited two valuable means through which to test the veracity of vision statements and assess the authenticity of their principalship motives. The first
medium was formal and informal discussions with members of collegial support networks, notably aspirant principals, program colleagues and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals. The second medium was acting principalship or internship.

Secondly, financial concerns identified by aspirants as they prepared to move from metropolitan to country settings to commence Catholic principalship represents potential new knowledge for the field. Specifically, several aspirants expressed financial hardship associated with reduced disposable income; the result of having to pay the shortfall between rental income received for their family homes and existing mortgages in addition to the non-subsidised rental costs for accommodation in their new contexts. Likewise, for some aspirants, notably assistant principals from large metropolitan primary schools, financial disadvantage created by the negative difference between their existing salaries and those they would receive as principals of small country schools was revealed as a disincentive.

Thirdly, the research highlighted one aspirant’s concerns regarding the withdrawal of her children from an existing metropolitan school before enrolling them in a new school where she would be both parent and novice principal. The potential for her children to be exposed to social unrest and emotional distress as a result of this reality was raised as a concern. This finding represents a potential new principalship disincentive.

Fourthly, the research appears to have confirmed the positive influence of principals, members of collegial support networks, on aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship. Specifically, structured and incidental discussions between aspirants and their principals and between aspirants and principals invited to host program ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Further, willingness on behalf of some principals to provide aspirants with opportunities, time and resources to experience the role and lead initiatives exposed aspirants to mastery experiences and control of resultant physical and emotional reactions.

Fifthly, the research focused attention on the positive influence of adult learning principles, used by facilitators of program modules, on aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship. Specifically, aspirants cited opportunities to reflect upon program theory before engaging in discussion with program colleagues as effective
methods through which to access and share past mastery experiences. In some cases, these discussions also exposed aspirants to the self-efficacy sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion.

Finally, the research appears to have revealed a relationship between the four aspects of this study. Specifically, high self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship was confirmed or achieved as aspirants acquired a more comprehensive understanding of the role and its capabilities, clarified the factors enhancing role interest and identified, experienced and developed strategies to mitigate disincentives.

7.6 Conclusion

“Action today can prevent a crisis tomorrow” (Shallenberger, 2014, p. 45). The Western Australian Catholic education system has adopted this mentality with their Aspiring Principals Program that aims to create a pool of role-ready, resilient aspirants to replace existing principals as they transition, en masse, to retirement by 2020. The research suggests that the program has the potential to achieve its aim. Nonetheless, the program is not perfect and the research has revealed deficiencies that could be addressed to enhance its effectiveness. Furthermore, the problem created by the looming retirement of existing principals and fewer willing, well-formed aspirants to take their places is not a problem localised to the Western Australian Catholic education system; it is a serious issue nation-wide and internationally. One outcome of the research is a proposed integrated model of principal preparation that could be used by local, national and international designers as they seek to create new or modify existing programs to proactively address this problem.

7.7 Addendum and Personal Impact Statement

The research has already had an impact. The draft thesis has been forwarded to the Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia and a discussion convened regarding research findings; conclusions; the proposed model; implications and recommendations for the profession; and potential additions to the existing body of theory pertaining to principal preparation. As a result of this meeting, the literature review was forwarded to the CEOWA Director, School Improvement for use as a
data source to inform the review and refinement of the Leadership Framework, commencing January 2015. A meeting has also been held between the researcher and his Learning and Development colleagues from the CEOWA School Improvement directorate responsible for leadership programs. At this meeting, program deficiencies identified through the research were tabled and discussed. Consequently, a restructure of the program’s theoretical component is underway with the refined version scheduled for implementation at the end of January 2015.

Conducting the research has also positively influenced my capacity as a CEOWA Learning and Development Consultant responsible for the formation and development of leaders at all levels of the Western Australian Catholic education system. The process of proposing a research topic, reviewing relevant literature, formulating research questions, collecting and analysing data, drawing and verifying conclusions and making recommendations has exponentially enhanced my professional capacity. Further, despite my belief in the potential of the Aspiring Principals Program to prepare aspirants for principalship, prior to conducting the research, my observations were anecdotal. The research has confirmed my perceptions. However, of greater importance are research findings, conclusions and recommendations that have the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the program. I look forward to working with my colleagues from the CEOWA to implement these changes to form an even more role-ready, resilient pool of aspirants to meet future demand. I am also excited at the prospect of sharing research findings with fellow local, national and international program designers who share my passion for principal preparation.
Appendix A
The Aspiring Principals Program

1. Introduction

The Aspiring Principals Program (the program) is a two-year principal preparation program convened by the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) for selected assistant principals and deputy principals from Western Australian Catholic schools aspiring to principalship. Participation in the program is fully funded by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) School Personnel Committee. Program commitment involves 23 days of face-to-face professional learning, 14 days in year one and nine days in year two. Aspirants are also required to complete tasks and activities in both the workplace and at home (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

2. Purpose

The purpose of the program is to create a pool of aspirants with the knowledge, skills and networks required to rapidly adjust to the rigours of the role post-appointment and survive the early, turbulent years of principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). The program attempts to achieve this aim in four ways. Firstly, the program strives to provide aspirants with a thorough understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Important in the development of these understandings is the use of a 360-degree psychometric tool to identify aspirant leadership capabilities. Equipped with data provided by the tool, aspirants work with a trained coach to form capability improvement goals. To achieve these goals, strategies are developed within coaching sessions and enacted through the role of the aspirant before being evaluated and refined. Secondly, the program guides aspirants through a process to develop a leadership vision statement. Amongst other outcomes, the development process challenges aspirants to identify their leadership values and clarify their attraction to principalship. Thirdly, program activities provoke aspirant reflection with regard to principalship disincentives before exploring mitigation strategies. Fourthly, the program attempts to enhance aspirant self-efficacy to commence principalship by, amongst other measures, providing opportunities to develop support networks. These networks comprise aspirant principals, program
3. Selection Process

In any given year, approximately 10 aspirants, eight primary school assistant principals and two secondary school deputy principals, are selected to participate in the program. The size and nature of the cohort, however, is determined by the anticipated number of beginning principals required to replace their experienced colleagues as they leave the system through transition to retirement or attrition. Nonetheless, completion of the program does not guarantee aspirants appointment to principalship nor is it a prerequisite for the role (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Program entry is comprised of a three-stage process. The first stage involves submission of a written application. The application requires candidates to provide demographic data and respond to a series of questions. Specifically, candidates are asked to reflect on and describe their reasons for seeking principalship, their leadership style and leadership experiences with regard to the four domains of the Leadership Framework: Catholic identity; stewardship; education; and community. When addressing this part of the application, candidates are required to state their understanding of each domain, provide examples of initiatives led and subsequent outcomes. The second stage is a written endorsement of responses by candidate principals. The third stage involves a selection panel, comprised of a CEOWA representative, a primary school principal, a secondary school principal and a parish priest, reviewing applications and shortlisting candidates for an hour-long interview. When preparing for interviews, panellists conduct thorough checks of both listed and non-listed referees including candidate parish priests and current and former principals (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

4. Program Facilitation, CEOWA Personnel and Practicing Principals

The majority of facilitators for modules within the theoretical programs associated with both years of the program are CEOWA support staff with specialist knowledge pertinent to principalship. Support staff include human resource,
industrial relations, finance and capital development (building and facilities construction) consultants. Other program facilitators are current and ex-Catholic school principals. Facilitators are trained using David Kolb’s theory of experiential learning. Kolb’s theory is called experiential learning because it emphasises the role that experience plays in the learning process (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Facilitators are trained in the four broad adult learning styles described by Kolb: concrete experience; reflective observation; abstract conceptualization; and active experimentation (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e; Kolb et al., 2001). Kolb asserts that the process of learning represents a cycle whereby a learner first experiences immediate or concrete experiences before reflecting upon their learning. Reflections are then absorbed and translated by the learner before being actively tested and/or experimented with (Kolb et al., 2001). This cyclical process enables the learner to create both new learning and experiences (Kolb et al., 2001).

For example, within program modules a facilitator may introduce new theory as a lecture (abstract conceptualisation) before reinforcing concepts through the use of images or video footage (concrete experience). Participants are then asked to engage in individual reflection on the theory using a series of questions (reflective observation) before discussing their perspectives with colleagues in small groups (active experimentation). Small group responses are then probed by the facilitator during a whole group feedback and discussion session (active experimentation) (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

For both years associated with the program, each day of the theoretical program begins with aspirant reflection regarding changes in their leadership perspective and/or practice as a result of participation in previous modules. Post-reflection, aspirants are encouraged to share their thoughts with a colleague before the facilitator gathers the thoughts of small groups in a whole-group feedback session. The reflection process is intended to provide aspirants with an opportunity to critically reflect upon their learning and build collegial relationships with fellow aspirants (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Likewise, every day of the theoretical program associated with both years of the program concludes with a 30-minute ‘Inside Leadership’ session. During these sessions, the program convenor uses the topic of the day and a series of pre-prepared questions to explore the leadership perspectives and experiences of a practicing
Catholic school principal. A variety of principals are invited to participate in ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions: male and female; novices through to significantly experienced; principals with country, remote and metropolitan school experience; and those from co-education and single-gender schools. ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions are intended to provide aspirants with an opportunity to reflect on theory introduced during the module in the light of the experiences and wisdom of the guest principal. Moreover, interaction between guest principal and aspirants is designed to build collegial support networks. When designing ‘Inside Leadership’ sessions, guest principals are encouraged by the program convenor to use personal stories, anecdotes and metaphors when discussing learning associated with principalship successes and challenges (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

5. The Aspiring Principals Program Year One: Theoretical Underpinnings

The program’s first year is predominantly based on a constructive transactional model of leadership as it applies to Western Australian Catholic principalship. However, transformational leadership theory, described in section 6 (The Aspiring Principals Program Year Two: Theoretical Underpinnings), is also introduced during the latter part of the program’s first year. The constructive transactional model of leadership is used to frame an in-depth study of the managerial aspects of the role and the capabilities for effective performance as expressed through the domains and capabilities of the Leadership Framework (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Constructive transactional leadership applies primarily to managerial situations and is relational in that it involves an exchange process between the leader and staff (Burns, 1978). In the context of this relationship, the leader invites staff to complete duties and tasks in exchange immediate, tangible rewards (Avolio, 2010; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). In Catholic schools, the first stage of constructive transactional leadership occurs at appointment when a staff member signs an employment contract in exchange for salary and other benefits. In return, the staff member becomes accountable to the principal for the professional execution of the role they are employed to perform (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2012a, 2012b).
When recruiting staff, the principal as constructive transactional leader is required to adhere to policy statements and procedures generated by the governing system. When inducting new staff, the principal is expected to assist recruits to understand their roles, performance expectations, rewards for exceptional performance and penalties for under achievement (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2012a, 2012b). When supervising staff, the principal clarifies expectations of staff, works collaboratively to set appropriate goals, consults with staff as they perform their roles, suggests strategies for improvement, provides feedback, praise and recognition when warranted and exchanges rewards for accomplishments (Avolio, 2010; Lowe et al., 2013; Marzano et al., 2005). Managing in this way, the principal is likely to inspire staff achievement of goals, the result of their direct involvement in the management process (Avolio, 2010; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013).

Some researchers consider transactional leadership to be an out-dated model for contemporary organisations (Bass, 1990; Silins, 1994). However, research into the needs of beginning principals in the Western Australia Catholic education system concludes that part of the aspirant formation process should focus on the transactional aspects of leadership if schools are to function in an orderly manner (Sayce & Lavery, 2010). Specifically, because Western Australian Catholic schools are required to adhere to CECWA policy statements and procedures, designed by standing committees to meet legislative requirements, principals are required, at times, to lead in this way (Sayce & Lavery, 2010).

5.1 Year One: Structure and components.

The program’s first year, illustrated in Figure 1, is comprised of six components. These components are 360-degree leadership profiling and coaching; a theoretical program; development of a leadership vision statement; leader-to-leader activities; school board, finance and capital development sub-committee participation; and journaling. The commitment for this year of the program is 14 days of face-to-face professional learning. Aspirants are also required to participate in workplace-based activities and complete tasks at home (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).
Component one, 360-degree leadership capability profiling and coaching, commences immediately upon aspirant acceptance into the program. The tool used to generate aspirant 360-degree data is known as the Life Styles Inventory (LSI). The LSI is administered by Human Synergistics, a New Zealand-based consulting firm that focuses on culture change through leadership development. The LSI is based on the research findings of seven noted psychologists: Karen Horney; Clay Lafferty; Abraham Maslow; David McClelland; David McGregor; Carl Rogers; and Harry Stack-Sullivan. Since 1990, the LSI been used by over 1,000,000 leaders from 240,000 organisations to identify and improve leadership capabilities (Human Synergistics, 2014).

To formulate the LSI, each aspirant is asked to respond to 240 online, multiple-choice questions regarding their leadership style and behaviours. Aspirants are also invited to select eight data sources (one senior to them, three at the same level and
four subordinate) willing to provide perspectives on their leadership style and behaviours by responding to the same 240 questions. Questionnaire results are presented visually using two circular diagrams called ‘circumplexes’ (Human Synergistics, 2014). An example of aspirant self and data set ‘circumplexes’ is provided in Figure 2. Viewing ‘circumplexes’ side-by-side provides aspirants with an easy-to-interpret, visual representation of their leadership behaviours and style as perceived by themselves and others.

**Figure 2:** The LSI ‘circumplexes’ (Human Synergistics, 2014)

The leadership capabilities presented at 11 o’clock (ability to set realistic goals and achieve them), 12 o’clock (self-actualising capacity), one o’clock (humanistic and encouraging behaviours) and two o’clock (affiliative behaviours) are collectively termed ‘constructive styles’ and represent self-enhancing thinking and behaviours. These thoughts and behaviours indicate an aspirant’s proficiency at setting and accomplishing tasks and his or her level of satisfaction, ability to develop healthy relationships and work effectively with others (Human Synergistics, 2014). The leadership capabilities presented at three o’clock (approval seeking behaviours), four o’clock (conventional practices), five o’clock (dependent relationships) and six o’clock (avoidance behaviours) are collectively termed ‘passive/defensive styles’ and represent self-protecting thinking and behaviours. These thoughts and behaviours
indicate an aspirant’s tendency to meet their need for security when interacting with people (Human Synergistics, 2014). The leadership capabilities presented at seven o’clock (oppositional tendencies), eight o’clock (power-based behaviours), nine o’clock (competitive dispositions) and 10 o’clock (perfectionistic tendencies) are collectively termed ‘aggressive/defensive styles’ and represent self-promoting thinking and behaviours. These thoughts and behaviours are used by an aspirant to maintain status and position and fulfil security needs through completion of task-related activities (Human Synergistics, 2014).

The LSI informs aspirants of their predominant leadership style and indicates leadership capability strengths and weaknesses prior to commencement of the program. Generally, leadership capabilities indicated by blue shading (constructive) above the norm are considered strengths whilst those indicating excessive red (aggressive/defensive) and green (passive/defensive) are considered weakness (Human Synergistics, 2014). Prior to the start of the program’s first year, an external consultant and trained coach meets with each aspirant to interpret personal profile data before introducing the cumulative perspective of their data sources and comparing and contrasting the results. Because of the sensitive and potentially confronting nature of the process and results, aspirants are asked not to share their profile with program colleagues (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Aspirants then enter into a confidential relationship with a trained coach, a practicing Catholic school principal, for the duration of the program and participate in a total of 11, hour-long coaching sessions. Within coaching sessions, aspirants work with their coach to formulate ISMART goals (Inspirational, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-driven and Time bound). Coaching goals aim to amplify constructive and minimise passive and aggressive-defensive leadership capabilities identified through the LSI (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). Once goals are identified, coaches use the GROWTH model of coaching (Goals, Reality, Options, Will, Tactics and Habits) to assist aspirants to identify and implement strategies in their workplaces to achieve stated goals (GROWTH Coaching International, 2009). During the program’s first year, aspirants work with their coach through five, face-to-face coaching sessions spread throughout
the year with telephone and email support provided between sessions (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Component two is a nine-module, 14-day, face-to-face theoretical program facilitated over a 12-month timeframe. The program is informed by the Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015 with content and activities based on the four domains of the Leadership Framework; the Quality Catholic Schooling (QCS) Framework and school improvement tool; CECWA policy statements and procedures; and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Australian Professional Standard for Principals (The AITSL Standard) (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Following a full day orientation module that presents an overview of the program, aspirants participate in two full day modules based on the Leadership Framework domain of Catholic identity. These modules, ‘Catholic identity’ and ‘the Bishops’ mandate’, are designed to familiarise aspirants with the role of the principal as the faith leader of a Catholic school community. Aspirants study the Mandate of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia 2009-2015 and develop an appreciation of the vision of the Bishops’ Conference for the system (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). Aspirants also learn about three principalship role dimensions. Firstly, aspirants study the role of the principal as evangeliser of staff, students, their parents and carers and members of the broader school community. Secondly, aspirants examine the requirement of the principal to develop their school as a faith community by, amongst other measures, reflecting the example of Jesus in their attitudes, policies and practices. Thirdly, aspirants explore the importance of fostering dynamic relationships between the school, local parish and diocesan Church (Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, 2009; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Within both modules, reference is made to the QCS components of ‘Vision and mission’, ‘Evangelisation’, ‘Catholic life and culture’ and ‘Social justice and action’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009) and relevant CECWA policy statements and procedures.
Modules four and five focus on the Leadership Framework domain of stewardship. According to the Leadership Framework, stewardship refers to the responsibility of the Catholic school principal to ‘look after things’ in four ways. Firstly, the principal is expected to model and promote care for the natural environmental resources at their school and in the broader community (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Secondly, the principal is expected to recruit, develop and appraise staff using transparent processes and cater for the wellbeing of both staff and members of the school community (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010). Thirdly, the principal is expected to draft, administer and monitor the school budget whilst developing and maintaining school facilities in line with both financial considerations and student needs (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b; The Ontario Institute for Education Leadership, 2013). Fourthly, the principal is expected to monitor, review and report to Church, government and other authorities to ensure compliance and maintain accountability (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009).

Module four, ‘Stewardship: Understanding system structure and policies’, consists of two full days of professional learning based on the governance structure of the Western Australian Catholic education system. Specifically, the module facilitator guides aspirant understanding of the composition and role of the Bishops’ Conference, the CECWA and the six CECWA Standing Committees and the CEOWA (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2009). An important part of this module is the study of selected CECWA policy statements and procedures using case studies and input from current and former principals (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). Within the module, reference is made to the QCS component of ‘Accountability and compliance’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009) and the AITSL professional practice, ‘Leading the management of the school’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).
In modules five, ‘Stewardship: School finances and capital development planning’ and six, ‘Stewardship: Schools and the law’, aspirants continue exploring the Leadership Framework domain of stewardship. In module four, aspirants experience a full day of professional learning based on school finances and capital development procedures. Within this module, there exists a specific focus on the QCS component of ‘Finances and facilities’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009) and the AITSL professional practice, ‘Leading the management of the school’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). In module six, aspirants spend a full day examining the human resource, industrial relations and legal dimensions of school operations. Content and activities within this module are based on the QCS component, ‘Staff wellbeing’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009), relevant CECWA policy statements and procedures and the AITSL professional practices, ‘Leading the management of the school’ and ‘Developing self and others’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011).

Module seven is a full day of professional learning based on the Leadership Framework domain of education. This module examines educational leadership as it is defined through selected QCS components from ‘Student learning’ and ‘Student support’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Module content and activities are also based on relevant CECWA policy statements and procedures and the AITSL professional practice, ‘Leading teaching and learning’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Specifically, aspirants are informed that principals are expected to engender a culture of enquiry amongst staff and students whilst modelling a personal love of learning. This responsibility includes the promotion of professional learning communities amongst teachers, the purpose of which is improvement of teacher knowledge and practice and enhancement of student educational outcomes (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Dinham et al., 2011; Dinham et al., 2013; DuFour, 2002). Aspirants are also informed that the principal, as educational leader, is required to encourage teachers to integrate Catholic values, where possible, through all curriculum areas (Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Convey, 2012; Krebbs, 2000).
Module eight is a full day of professional learning based on the Leadership Framework domain of community. This topic is presented through three lenses: the QCS components of ‘Engagement with families’, ‘Engagement with parish and Church’; and ‘Wider partnerships’ (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009). Aspirants review these components alongside relevant CECWA policy statements and procedures and the AITSL professional practice, ‘Developing and working with the community’ (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011). Throughout this module, aspirants develop an understanding that, as principals, they will be expected to develop, promote and sustain the Catholic life of the school community. This role dimension comprises four aspects. Firstly, principals are expected to develop and model constructive and respectful relationships with all members of the school community. Secondly, principals are required to foster safe and inclusive learning environments for students. Thirdly, principals are expected to embed and promote the Gospel values of the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity and participation into policies and practices. Finally, principals are expected to develop structures based on service, collaborative decision-making, participation and cooperation (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, 2013; Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia, 2008b, 2009; Catholic Education Office Sydney, 2010).

After exploring the four domains of the Leadership Framework, aspirants engage with module nine. This module is comprised of five, full days of professional learning based on the topic of ‘conflict resolution’, one area of consternation for beginning principals (Sayce & Lavery, 2010). Day one focuses on conflict resolution theory. Day two explores practical strategies, including mediation processes that may be applied when working constructively with challenging staff and parents. Days three through five examine strategies that may be applied when working with challenging students. A case study approach and interactive activities are used throughout these days (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Component three focuses on the development of aspirant leadership vision statements. This process is longitudinal in that it commences during module four, ‘Stewardship: Understanding system structure and policies’, and continues for the remainder of the program (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e). The process uses a series of 10 questions based on the work of Daresh (2002) to
guide aspirant reflection with regard to their perspectives on a range of principalship dimensions. These dimensions include the role of the principal as faith leader, steward, educational leader and community builder. The process also guides aspirant reflection with regard to their non-negotiable values (Daresh, 2002). Development of leadership vision statements has two goals: assisting aspirants to clarify their leadership values; and define their attraction to Catholic principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e; Daresh, 2002). It is envisaged that knowledge of self will assist aspirants to gain and maintain a solid footing during the early years of principalship that, in all likelihood, will be turbulent (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e; Daresh, 2002; Sayce & Lavery, 2010; Wildy & Clarke, 2008).

Component four, leader-to-leader interviewing, requires aspirants to participate in three, between-module activities. The activities are scheduled during Terms one (February to April), two (May to July) and three (August to October). Each activity requires aspirants to reflect on a topic pertinent to Catholic principalship before engaging in discussion with their principal and a guest principal allocated to them for the task. For these activities, beginning and experienced principals are selected as guests because of their excellent reviews and willingness to guide and support aspirants. Post-discussion, each aspirant is required to post an initial comment regarding their learning on the program’s online platform before responding to comments posted by fellow aspirants. Forum one requires aspirants to reflect on their understanding of Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance. Forum two requires aspirants to identify and consider the factors that enhance their interest in principalship. Forum three requires aspirants to identify and consider the factors that diminish their interest in principalship (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

This program component has a three-fold purpose. Firstly, these activities aim to develop a professional learning community through which aspirants are able to weigh their principalship intentions and better understand the components, required capabilities, positives and disincentives associated with the Catholic principalship. Secondly, discussion, reflection and online collaboration aim to strengthen aspirant critical thinking skills and build a collegial network with like-minded peers. Finally, it is envisaged that these activities will allow aspirants to build a professional support
network with practicing principals. Network members represent a potential source of advice and support for aspirants as they navigate their novice principalship years, a time that may be characterised a sense of loneliness and dislocation from both previous and new peers (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e; Sayce & Lavery, 2010; Wildy & Clarke, 2008; Wildy et al., 2007).

Component five is designed to augment the constructive transactional leadership capabilities of aspirants by developing them as stewards of school finances and facilities. Upon admission to the program, the Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia writes to each aspirant’s principal and school board Chair to direct aspirant inclusion on the school board as an observer for the duration of the program. In addition to school board observation, aspirants also participate as an active member on their school finance and capital development subcommittees. This program component is intended to provide aspirants with contextual, real-world experience of the complex, transactional aspects of the Leadership Framework domain of stewardship. These aspects include understanding the school board constitution, working collaboratively with board personnel and developing knowledge with regard to school financial management and capital development planning (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Component six requires aspirants to submit a 2,500-word journal at the conclusion of the program’s first year (December). The journal provides aspirants with an opportunity to reflect upon their experience of program modules, activities and perspectives regarding Catholic principalship. Aspirants are encouraged by the program convenor to portray their perceptions using a combination of narrative text, images, photographs or other forms of expression. Additionally, aspirants are required to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

2. What are the attractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?
3. What are the unattractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

4. Rate your belief in ability to commence Catholic principalship (low, medium or high). Why did you select this rating? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives? (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

6. The Aspiring Principals Program Year Two: Theoretical Underpinnings

The program’s second year aims to enhance aspirant understanding of their leadership style, behaviours and capability to lead others using two theoretical models: transformational and transcendental leadership. The Catholic principal uses transformational leadership capabilities when attempting to transform or inspire staff to move from a mindset of egocentricity to one that considers the needs of colleagues and achievement of shared vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Lowe et al., 2013; Walumbwa & Wernsing, 2013). Although all transformational leaders are different, they generally achieve this shift using a combination of four strategies. These strategies are individual consideration; intellectual stimulation; inspirational motivation; and idealised influence (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013).

Individual consideration refers to the willingness and capacity of a leader to mentor marginalised staff (Bass, 1990). By taking time to engage in the mentoring process, staff appreciate the care and guidance offered by the leader and are more likely to follow them as they drive achievement of shared vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). Intellectual stimulation occurs when a leader encourages staff to apply new solutions to existing problems without publically criticising the history of the issue or the mistakes of individuals (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). This strategy has the potential to intellectually stimulate staff and inspire the discovery and application of hidden knowledge and skill to achieve shared vision (Marzano et al., 2005). Inspirational motivation is a strategy most often employed by the leader who is naturally charismatic. Inspirational motivation occurs when the leader communicates high performance expectations through dynamic presence, confidence and projection of power (Marzano et al., 2005). Communication in this manner has the potential to
generate optimism amongst staff, commitment to the organisation and enthusiasm for achievement of shared vision (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013; Bass, 1990; Lowe et al., 2013). Finally, a leader exercises idealised influence when modelling behaviour sought from staff including exemplary personal achievement, ethical words and actions, appropriate risk taking and consideration of the needs of others before self (Marzano et al., 2005).

In the spirit of Jesus Christ, the ultimate role model for the Catholic principal, the second year of the program also emphasises the importance of transcendental leadership capabilities and seeks to develop aspirant capacity in this regard. Transcendental leadership is a relationship-focused disposition adopted by a leader who seeks to nurture contribution-based exchanges between themselves and the staff they lead (Beckwith, 2011; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012). In the context of these exchanges, the transcendental leader not only uses transformational leadership capabilities to form relationships with staff, he or she attempts to develop non-hierarchical unity and a reflective, values-centred culture through the use of genuine, collaborative dialogue (Beckwith, 2011; Cardona, 2000; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). The transcendental leader also engages in regular reflective practice, is deeply aware of leadership strengths and weaknesses, is quiet but fully present, open in mind, body and heart, listens unconditionally and models leadership that places service of others before self (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007). As a result of these actions, the transcendental leader may assist staff to lead on their own by making decisions and accomplishing goals. Perhaps most importantly, staff may develop a transcendent motivation to serve others (Beckwith, 2011; Gardiner, 2006; Kishore & Nair, 2013; Lavery, 2012; Liu, 2007; Rebore & Walmsley, 2009). As stated previously, this leadership disposition is particularly relevant for the Catholic principal because it emulates the form of leadership enacted by Jesus Christ (Lavery, 2011).

6.1 Year Two: Structure and components.

The program’s second year, illustrated in Figure 3, consists of six, integrated components. These components are continuation of coaching sessions based on aspirant LSI profiles compiled prior to the start of the program; a school
improvement project; a theoretical program; continued service on school board and finance and capital development sub-committees; an LSI retest; and journaling. The commitment for this year of the program includes nine days of face-to-face professional learning. Aspirants are also required to participate in workplace-based activities and complete tasks at home (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

During the first full day associated with the second year, the purpose and structure of the program is introduced by the program convenor. On this day, aspirants also work to achieve three goals related to component one, use of LSI data and coaching sessions and two, the school improvement project. Firstly, aspirants revisit their LSI profiles and assess progress made against coaching goals established during the program’s first year. Secondly, aspirants develop and/or refine goals that could be used within the coaching sessions scheduled for the forthcoming year. Thirdly, aspirants generate ideas for their school improvement project to be
conducted at their schools over the course of the year (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The school improvement project requires aspirants to select one of the 24 components from the QCS Framework and lead the review and improvement process using the school improvement tool sanctioned by the CECWA. The process involves five steps. Firstly, aspirants are required to work with their principals and coaches to select a QCS component for review. Secondly, aspirants form a review team comprised of relevant members of staff and/or students, their parents and carers and members of their broader school communities. Thirdly, aspirants lead their teams through a process to review school performance against QCS component descriptors. Fourthly, aspirants lead the collection of evidence to confirm their team’s rating for the component. Finally, aspirants lead the formulation, implementation, evaluation and refinement of an improvement plan for their selected component. These plans are comprised of improvement goals and a range of practical and achievable strategies that could be implemented at their schools to affect improvement. Aspirants are also expected to work with their principals to integrate their component improvement plan with their school’s strategic plan (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2009, 2014e).

The project has a three-fold purpose. Firstly, the project provides aspirants with an opportunity to lead and experience the school improvement process, a requirement of Western Australian Catholic school principalship. Secondly, leadership of the project provides aspirants with an opportunity to trial strategies devised within coaching sessions to amplify leadership capability strengths and minimise weaknesses. Thirdly, the project provides aspirants with a practical way to enhance their transformational and transcendental leadership prowess by applying theory and tools introduced during the theoretical program (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Beyond the orientation day, aspirants collaborate with their coaches, allocated during the program’s first year, to schedule six, hour-long coaching sessions over the course of the year. As described previously, the role of the coach is to assist aspirants to develop ISMART goals and devise and enact leadership capability improvement strategies through their day-to-day leadership roles and their leadership of the school
improvement project. Coaches also fulfil the role of ‘critical friend’ to aspirants as they conduct their projects (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Component three is a seven-module, eight-day theoretical program facilitated over a 12-month timeframe. The program runs concurrently with coaching sessions and aspirant school improvement projects. Specifically, aspirants participate in four, full-day ‘Transforming leadership’ modules. The focus of these modules is transformational and transcendental leadership theory and tools. To develop transformational and transcendental knowledge and capabilities, aspirants are expected to apply theories and tools within their coaching sessions, school improvement projects and day-to-day roles as assistant or deputy principals.

As most aspirants consider applying for principalship at this point in the program, they also participate in a full-day module dedicated to the principal appointment process and the use of transformational and transcendental leadership language within both the application and interview processes. Mid-way through the program’s second year, aspirants also work with the program convenor for a full day to review the successes and challenges associated with their school improvement projects and recalibrate as required. The final component of the theoretical program is a two-day, overnight, reflective practice retreat. During the retreat, aspirants participate in a number of reflection-based activities designed to stimulate exploration of their inner and outer leadership journeys with reference to constructive transactional, transformational and transcendental leadership capabilities and experiences (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

At some point during each face-to-face theoretical module associated with the program’s second year, the program convenor facilitates three specific activities. The first activity provides aspirants with an opportunity to develop, refine and share their emerging leadership vision statements initiated during the program’s first year. The second activity encourages aspirants to work with a critical friend from the cohort to share the progress, successes and challenges associated with their coaching sessions, LSI capability refinement and school improvement project. The third activity provides space for aspirants to debrief with a program colleague and the group with regard to their application of one transformational or transcendental tool, introduced
during the previous ‘Transforming leadership’ workshop, at their schools (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

Component four, participation as an observer on the school board and member of the finance and capital development sub-committees, is designed to continue development of aspirant constructive transactional leadership capability. Prior to the conclusion of the program’s second year (October), aspirants complete component five, a second LSI profile known as an ‘LSI retest.’ Where possible, the same eight data sources used to formulate their original profiles (one senior to them, three at the same level and four subordinate) are invited to answer the same 240 online questions regarding aspirant leadership capabilities. Cumulative data source responses are used to form a second 360-degree leadership profile for each aspirant. Once data has been processed, aspirants meet with an external consultant to debrief the self and data source ‘circumplexes.’ During the debrief, the consultant compares and contrasts the final LSI with that completed prior to the commencement of the program, the purpose of which is evaluation of the leadership capability change process. Specifically, aspirants are able to see whether or not they have been successful in amplifying constructive (blue) and minimising passive (green) and aggressive-defensive (red) leadership capabilities (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).

The final component is aspirant construction and submission of a 2,500-word journal at the conclusion of the program (December). As was the case at the conclusion of the program’s first year, the journal provides aspirants with an opportunity to reflect upon their experience of program modules, activities and perspectives regarding Catholic principalship. Aspirants are encouraged by the program convenor to portray their perceptions using a combination of narrative text, images, photographs or other forms of expression. Additionally, aspirants are required to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

2. What are the attractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?
3. What are the unattractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

4. Rate your belief in ability to commence Catholic principalship (low, medium or high). Why did you select this rating? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives? (Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, 2014e).
Appendix B
Interview Guides

Qualitative Interview One: Interview Guide
January 2011

Establish rapport
• Thanks for allowing me to see you today (shake hands). I appreciate that you have taken time out of your busy schedule to speak with me.
• My name is xxx xxxxxxxx and I have been contracted by the Executive of the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia to conduct a series of three interviews with you over the course of the next two years.
• As you know, the purpose of our interviews is to collect data for research being undertaken by Shane Glasson.
• Explain biography (answer questions as required).

Reiterate research limitations
• As you know, Shane Glasson is the researcher for this study.
• However, because he is the designer, convenor and now the researcher of the Aspiring Principals Program, to ensure neutrality, the CEOWA Executive have engaged me to conduct the interviews.
• This strategy reduces the potential for ‘power differential’ and researcher bias as explained by Shane at your recent meeting (clarify these limitations if necessary).
• As Shane informed you when you met recently, he has also introduced other strategies to mitigate potential power differential and bias such as ‘member checking’ of all interview transcripts and case study narratives and participation in a CEOWA peer-review process (clarify these strategies if necessary).

Reiterate participant rights
• You should be aware by now that involvement in the research is voluntary, completely confidential and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time, even during this interview.
• If you decide to withdraw, it is your prerogative to request that data previously supplied be returned to you or destroyed.
• You have also been asked to select a pseudonym for use within the three interview transcripts, your resultant case study narrative and any quotes that may be published in the future. What pseudonym have you chosen? (Record chosen pseudonym).

Reiterate purpose of the research
• The purpose of the research is to explore your perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program.
• Specifically, it is my intention to discuss four perceptions with you today using the questions that I emailed to you last week.
• The perceptions are your insights regarding the role components of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors that enhance and diminish your interest in principalship; and your self-efficacy or belief in ability to commence principalship (answer questions as required).

Reiterate researcher motivation
• Shane is motivated to conduct the research because of the potential to use the study’s findings to refine the structure and content of the Aspiring Principals Program, thereby enhancing the succession planning capacity of the Western Australian Catholic education system.
• It is also his hope that research findings may assist local, national and international designers of principal preparation programs as they consider modifying existing or developing new programs (answer questions as required).

Explain interview timeline
• This first interview will take about one hour, but we can go longer if necessary, it depends where the questions and your responses take us.
• We will meet again for the second interview in December this year and again for our final interview in December 2012, just after you complete the program.
• Are you ready to go?
• Are you happy for me to record the interview and takes notes as we proceed?
Transition to the interview (* probe responses as necessary)

- Let me begin by asking a question about you.
- Describe your professional background for me. Start at your university training and end at your current role.

Transition to specific research question one: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance

- Thanks for that response. I find it fascinating to uncover the backgrounds of people involved in research like this (or like comment).
- Let’s move on to the specific perceptions the research seeks to explore.
  1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?
  2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?

Transition to specific research question two: Factors enhancing interest in principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the second set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?

Transition to specific research question three: Factors diminishing interest in principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the third set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?
  2. Why did you select these aspects?

Transition to specific research question four: Self-efficacy to commence principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the final set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. Self-efficacy refers to ‘belief in one’s ability to achieve a stated goal.’
1. Thinking about your self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?

2. Why did you make this decision?

**Maintain rapport**
- I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today and have enjoyed the experience.
- Is there anything else that you would like to add to your responses?
- Please feel free to contact me if anything comes to mind that you would like to include in your transcript after I leave here today.

**Explain next steps**
- As soon as I have transcribed this interview from the audio recording, I will forward a copy to you by email.
- It would be great if you could read it thoroughly and confirm its accuracy with me via email.
- If you would like to recommend changes or add to the transcript, please do so using tracked changes and email it back to me.
- I will make the changes before emailing the modified transcript back to you for approval.
- Once your transcript is confirmed, I will email it to Shane, marked with your pseudonym and he will be in touch with you from there.
- I remind you that both the electronic and hardcopy transcripts will be maintained by Shane on a password-protected file and locked filing cabinet respectively for a period of five years after submission of the final thesis for examination. At that time, both will be destroyed.
- Thanks for meeting with me. I look forward to catching up again with you in December this year.
- I will be in touch to schedule a time for us to meet (shake hands and exit).
Build rapport

- Thanks for allowing me to see you today (shake hands). I appreciate that you have taken time out of your busy schedule to speak with me.
- It’s great to see you again. Have you enjoyed your year in the Aspiring Principals Program?
- As you know, today marks the second interview in a series of three, designed to explore your perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program.
- Today, we will be exploring your perceptions using the interview questions that I emailed to you last week.
- I also asked you to re-read the transcript from the initial interview because I am interested in finding out if, how and why your perceptions have changed.

Reiterate participant rights

- Remember, your involvement in the research is voluntary, completely confidential and you are free to withdraw consent at any time, even during this interview.
- Further, if you decided to withdraw, it is your prerogative to request that data previously supplied be returned to you or destroyed.
- Your pseudonym selected at the start of this year (restate pseudonym) will be used within this interview transcript, your resultant case study narrative and any quotes that may be published in the future.
- Do you have any questions about these rights or conditions? (Answer questions as required).

Explain interview timeline

- As was the case with the first interview, this interview will take about and hour, but we can go longer if necessary, it depends where the questions and your responses take us.
• We will meet again for the final interview in December next year, just after you complete the program.
• Are you ready to go?
• Are you happy for me to record the interview and takes notes as we proceed?

**Transition to the interview** (* probe responses as necessary)
• Let me begin by asking you a question about your year, personally and professionally.
• How has it been for you? Share as much or as little as you want.

**Transition to specific research question one: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance**
• Thanks for that response (affirm).
• Let’s move on to the specific perceptions the research seeks to explore.
• You have now completed the first year of the Aspiring Principals Program. With this experience in mind:
  1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?
  2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?
  3. If your perceptions regarding role components and capabilities have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

**Transition to specific research question two: Factors enhancing interest in principalship**
• Thanks for your response (affirm).
• Let’s move to the second set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?
  2. If your perceptions regarding the appeal of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
Transition to specific research question three: Factors diminishing interest in principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the third set of perceptions explored by the research.
1. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?
2. Why did you select these aspects?
3. If your perceptions regarding the unattractive or unappealing aspects of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Transition to specific research question four: Self-efficacy to commence principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the final set of perceptions explored by the research.
- Self-efficacy refers to ‘belief in one’s ability to achieve a stated goal.’
1. Thinking about self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?
2. If your perceptions regarding self-efficacy have been confirmed or changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Maintain rapport

- I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today and have enjoyed the experience.
- Is there anything else that you would like to add to your responses?
- Please feel free to contact me if anything comes to mind that you would like to include in your transcript after I leave here today.

Explain next steps

- As was the case at the start of this year, as soon as I have transcribed this interview from the audio recording, I will forward a copy to you by email.
- It would be great if you could read it thoroughly and confirm its accuracy with me via email.
• If you would like to recommend changes or add to the transcript, please do so using tracked changes and email it back to me.

• I will make the changes before emailing the modified transcript back to you for approval.

• Once your transcript is confirmed, I will email it to Shane, marked with your pseudonym and he will be in touch with you from there.

• I remind you that both the electronic and hardcopy transcripts will be maintained by Shane on a password-protected file and locked filing cabinet respectively for a period of five years after submission of the final thesis for examination. At that time, both will be destroyed.

• Thanks for meeting with me. I look forward to catching up again with you in December next year.

• I will be in touch to schedule a time for us to meet (shake hands and exit).
Qualitative Interview Three: Interview Guide
December 2012

Build rapport

- Thanks for allowing me to see you today (shake hands). I appreciate that you have taken time out of your busy schedule to speak with me.
- It’s great to see you again. Congratulations on completing the program.
- Congratulations on your appointment as principal (if appropriate).
- Have you enjoyed your year in the Aspiring Principals Program?
- As you know, today marks the final interview in our series, designed to explore your perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program.
- Today, we will be exploring your perceptions using the interview questions that I emailed to you last week.
- I also asked you to re-read the transcript from the mid-program interview because I am interested in finding out if, how and why your perceptions have changed.

Reiterate participant rights

- Remember, your involvement in the research is voluntary, completely confidential and you are free to withdraw consent at any time, even during this interview.
- Further, if you decided to withdraw, it is your prerogative to request that data previously supplied be returned to you or destroyed.
- Your pseudonym selected at the start of last year (restate pseudonym) will be used within this interview transcript, your resultant case study narrative and any quotes that may be published in the future.
- Do you have any questions about these rights or conditions? (Answer questions as required).

Explain interview timeline

- This interview will take about an hour, but we can go longer if necessary, it depends where the questions and your responses take us.
- Are you ready to go?
• Are you happy for me to record the interview and takes notes as we proceed?

Transition to the interview (* probe responses as necessary)
• Let me begin by asking you a question about you year, personally and professionally.
• How has it been for you? Share as much or as little as you want.

Transition to specific research question one: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance
• Thanks for that response (affirm).
• Let’s move on to the specific perceptions the research seeks to explore.
• You have now completed the Aspiring Principals Program. With this experience in mind:
  1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?
  2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?
  3. If your perceptions regarding role components and capabilities have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Transition to specific research question two: Factors enhancing interest in principalship
• Thanks for your response (affirm).
• Let’s move to the second set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?
  2. If your perceptions regarding the appeal of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Transition to specific research question three: Factors diminishing interest in principalship
• Thanks for your response (affirm).
• Let’s move to the third set of perceptions explored by the research.
  1. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?
2. Why did you select these aspects?
3. If your perceptions regarding the unattractive or unappealing aspects of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Transition to specific research question four: Self-efficacy to commence principalship

- Thanks for your response (affirm).
- Let’s move to the final set of perceptions explored by the research.
- Self-efficacy refers to ‘belief in one’s ability to achieve a stated goal.’

1. Thinking about self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?
2. If your perceptions regarding self-efficacy have been confirmed or changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Maintain rapport

- I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today and have enjoyed getting to know you over the course of the past two years.
- Is there anything else you would like to add to your responses?
- Please feel free to contact me if anything comes to mind that you would like to include in your transcript after I leave here today.

Explain next steps

- As was the case at the end of last year, as soon as I have transcribed this interview from the audio recording, I will forward a copy to you by email.
- It would be great if you could read it thoroughly and confirm its accuracy with me via email.
- If you would like to recommend changes or add to the transcript, please do so using tracked changes and email it back to me.
- I will make the changes before emailing the modified transcript back to you for approval.
• Once your transcript is confirmed, I will email it to Shane, marked with your pseudonym and he will be in touch with you from there.

• I remind you that both the electronic and hardcopy transcripts will be maintained by Shane on a password-protected file and locked filing cabinet respectively for a period of five years after submission of the final thesis for examination. At that time, both will be destroyed.

• Thanks for meeting with me. I look forward to catching up again with you in the future (shake hands and exit).
Specific research questions

1. What were aspirant perceptions regarding Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

2. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors enhancing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

3. What were aspirant perceptions regarding the factors diminishing interest in Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

4. What were aspirant perceptions regarding self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program? What influences provoked discernible perception changes?

Qualitative interview one (January 2011): Pre-program questions

1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?

2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?

3. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?

4. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?

5. Why did you select these aspects?

6. Thinking about your self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?

7. Why did you make this decision?
Qualitative interview two (December 2011): Mid-program questions
1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?
2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?
3. If your perceptions regarding role components and capabilities have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
4. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?
5. If your perceptions regarding the appeal of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
6. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?
7. Why did you select these aspects?
8. If your perceptions regarding the unattractive or unappealing aspects of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
9. Thinking about self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?
10. If your perceptions regarding self-efficacy have been confirmed or changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

Qualitative interview three (December 2012): End-of-program questions
1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship?
2. What capabilities do principals require to effectively lead and manage through these role components?
3. If your perceptions regarding role components and capabilities have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
4. Why are you attracted to Catholic principalship? What is it about the role that you find appealing?
5. If your perceptions regarding the appeal of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

6. What are the unattractive or unappealing aspects of Catholic principalship?

7. Why did you select these aspects?

8. If your perceptions regarding the unattractive or unappealing aspects of the role have changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?

9. Thinking about self-efficacy to commence Catholic principalship as a continuum from low to medium to high, where would you rate your self-efficacy at this point in time?

10. If your perceptions regarding self-efficacy have been confirmed or changed since our last interview, what factors have influenced your perspectives?
Appendix C
Triangulation Data Source Two
Aspirant Journals (abridged version)

At the conclusion of each year associated with the Aspiring Principals Program, aspirants are required to submit a 2,500-word journal detailing their experiences of program modules and activities and perspectives regarding Catholic principalship. Aspirants are encouraged by the program convenor to portray their perceptions using a combination of narrative text, images, photographs or other forms of expression. Additionally, for each year associated with the program, aspirants are required to provide responses for the following questions:

1. What are the role components of Catholic principalship and the capabilities required for effective performance? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

2. What are the attractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

3. What are the unattractive aspects of Catholic principalship? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?

4. Rate your belief in ability to commence Catholic principalship (low, medium or high). Why did you select this rating? What features of the program or other factors have influenced your perspectives?
Appendix D
Triangulation Data Source Three
Aspirant Leadership Vision Statements (abridged version)

Early in the program’s first year, aspirants are invited by the program convenor to use responses for the following reflection questions, adapted from Daresh (2002), to develop a leadership vision statement. Development of leadership vision statements assists aspirants to clarify their leadership values and attraction to Catholic principalship. Once vision statements are formulated, they are refined over the course of the program in the light of longitudinal conversations with their principals, program colleagues, CEOWA support staff who facilitate program modules and ‘Inside Leadership’ guest principals involved in the program. Aspirant vision statements are also tested during periods of acting principalship or internship and modified accordingly.

Reflection questions
1. What is the purpose of schooling?
2. What role do students play?
3. What role do teachers play?
4. What role do support staff play?
5. What role do parents and other community members play?
6. What does the term ‘curriculum’ mean to you?
7. How do you define an ‘adequate’ education for students at your school?
8. What do you want your school to become?
9. How do you want others to see you?
10. What are your non-negotiable leadership values?
Appendix E
Triangulation Data Source Four
Aspirant Cover Letters and Applications for Principalship Vacancies
(abridged version)

When applying for a principalship vacancy, candidates are required to provide a personal statement (2 pages maximum) in the form of a covering letter addressed to the Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia. Within this letter, candidates are required to outline their reasons for applying for the vacancy and their suitability for the role (commitment to Catholic education, qualifications, experience and educational philosophy). Candidates are also required to complete an application form comprised of the following fields:

1. Personal information (name, address, current school, contact numbers, email)
2. Referee contacts (parish priest, current employer, two professional referees)
3. Tertiary qualifications (qualification, institution, year awarded)
4. Religious accreditation (accreditation registration number, year awarded)
5. Teachers’ Review Board, Criminal record check and Working With Children details (registration numbers and expiry dates)
6. Principal review summary if relevant (strengths and limitations, improvement measures enacted)
7. Professional learning (year/month, event, relevance to principalship)
8. Membership of professional organisations (organisation and member number)
9. Leadership experience (years, school(s), role(s), significant achievements)
10. The ministry of the principalship

Candidates are required to provide their understanding of the following role components of Catholic principalship, an example of an initiative implemented and led at their schools and the outcomes of the initiative (500 words per component):

- Catholic identity
- Education
- Stewardship
- Community
Appendix F
Research Approval Letter
The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee

21 December 2010
Ref. #: 010151F
Shane Glasson
2 Picotee News
Coogee WA 6166

Dear Shane,

I am writing to you in regards to your Low Risk Application for Ethics Clearance for your proposed research project, to be undertaken for the research component of your course at The University of Notre Dame Australia.

The title of the project is: "Developing tomorrow’s school leaders: the Western Australian Catholic Education Aspiring Principals’ Program"

Your proposal has been reviewed by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, and based on the information provided has been assessed as meeting all the requirements as mentioned in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). I am therefore pleased to advice that ethical clearance has been granted for this proposed study.

Please note the following conditions of approval which apply to your research project:

- Ethics approval for this project is valid for 3 years. Under the National Statement you are required to report on the project’s progress on an annual basis and the first annual report is therefore due in December 2011. Once your project is completed you are required to complete the Annual Report as a Final Report on your project. You are also required to notify the HREC Executive Officer in writing if this project is abandoned. The Annual Report form can be found at: http://www.nd.edu.au/research/hrec/apply.shtml.

- As a researcher you are required to immediately report to the HREC Executive Officer anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of the project, including unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability and any complaints made by participants regarding the conduct of the project.

- If the design of the study, the choice of instrument, or its manner of administration is altered in any significant way as the study progresses, you are required to submit an amendment in regards to the changes for ethical consideration to the HREC. The Amendment Form can be found at: http://www.nd.edu.au/research/hrec/apply.shtml.

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I wish you well with what promises to be a most interesting and valuable study.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Nicolete van Dijk
Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Office

cc. Professor Michael O’Neill, Dean, School of Education
   Associate Professor Shane Lavery, Supervisor
Appendix G
Research Approval Letter
The Catholic Education Office of Western Australia
Research Ethics Committee

21 December 2010

Mr Shane Giasson
2 Picotee Mews
COOGEE WA 6166

Dear Shane

RE: DEVELOPING TOMORROW’S SCHOOL LEADERS:
THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASPIRING PRINCIPALS’ PROGRAM

Thank you for your completed application received 16 December 2010, whereby this project will review the perceptions of participants (aspirants) engaged in the Western Australian Catholic Education Aspiring Principals’ Program. The aim of this research project is to explore the capacity of the program to influence aspirant perceptions of the responsibilities of the Catholic school principal, aspirant motivations to pursue the principalship and, aspirant perceptions of disincentives and role-capability.

I give in principle support for the selected Catholic schools in Western Australia to participate in this valuable study. However, consistent with CEOWA policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the individual principal and staff members.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. The CEOWA notes that the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee has granted permission for the duration of this research project (Reference Number: 010151F).

Any changes to the proposed methodology will need to be submitted for CEOWA approval prior to implementation. The focus and outcomes of your research project are of interest to the CEOWA. It is therefore a condition of approval that the research findings of this study are forwarded to the CEOWA.

Further enquiries may be directed to Tanya Wray at wray.tanya@ceo.wa.edu.au or (08) 6380 5379.

I wish you all the best with your research.

Yours Sincerely

Ron Dullard
Appendix H
Sample Letter of Invitation to Participate in the Research

Dear

Congratulations on your successful application for entry to the 2011 cohort Aspiring Principals Program. I look forward to working collegially with you throughout 2011/12 and sharing your journey. Between now and 2020, Catholic Education in Western Australia faces a significant leadership challenge with 70 of our current cohort of 161 principals (43%) expected to reach or exceed retirement age. As a result, the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Executive anticipates that demand for well-prepared successors will increase.

In an attempt to better prepare aspirants for the demands of Catholic principalship, I am undertaking research through The University of Notre Dame Australia. I anticipate that research findings will be used to refine the structure, content and activities of the program to improve its efficacy as a succession planning mechanism. The research also has the potential to benefit designers of principal preparation programs in other jurisdictions. Please refer to the information sheet included with this letter for specific details regarding the purpose of the research, data collection processes and ethical dimensions of the study. A research consent form is also enclosed.

I would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage your participation in this important research. By participating in the study, you have the opportunity to significantly influence the way our system forms future principals. If you chose to accept this invitation, I ask that you email me to confirm your participation. I will then organise a meeting with you at a convenient date, time and venue. During this meeting, I will collect your signed consent form, explain the research and answer questions you may have. In the interim, I encourage you to contact me via telephone on (08) 6380 5234 or email at glasson.shane@ceo.wa.edu.au should the need arise.

Yours sincerely,

Shane Glasson.
Appendix I
Research Information Sheet

Dear

As indicated in the letter of invitation, I am conducting research regarding principal preparation in the Western Australian Catholic education system. The title of my research is: ‘Developing tomorrow’s school leaders: The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program.’ My research is taking place through The University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) and my supervisor is Associate Professor Shane Lavery from the School of Education. My research proposal has received clearance from The UNDA Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (CEOWA) Research Ethics Committee.

Purpose of the research
The purpose of the research is to explore aspirant perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the Aspiring Principals Program together with the influences provoking discernible perception changes. Specifically, it is my intention to explore four specific perceptions: Catholic principalship role components and the capabilities required for effective performance; factors enhancing interest in principalship; factors diminishing interest in principalship; and self-efficacy to commence principalship.

I envisage that research findings will be used to refine the structure, content and activities of the Aspiring Principals Program with the aim of enhancing the succession planning capacity of the Western Australian Catholic education system. Additionally, it is my hope that research findings will assist local, national and international designers of principal preparation programs as they consider modifying existing or developing new programs.

Data collection
If you agree to participate in the research, data will be collected through three, semi-structured interviews over a two-year period. The duration of each interview will be approximately one hour. The first interview will take place prior to the commencement of the program (January 2011). The second will occur at the end of the program’s first year (December 2011). The final interview is scheduled post-
completion of the program (December 2012). Interviews will be conducted at your school or an alternative, mutually agreed venue. Each interview will be conducted by [mask]. [mask] is an educator and an experienced and independent qualitative researcher engaged by the CEOWA Executive. If you chose to participate in the research, [mask] will email you his biography together with the questions for each interview.

During each interview, [mask] will record your conversation using a hand-held digital audio-recorder and will electronically code the resultant file to protect your identity. To further protect your identity, [mask] will ask you to select a pseudonym that will be used for all documentation associated with the research. [mask] and I will be the only people who will know your true identity. After each interview, [mask] will transcribe the audio file onto a Word document. Post-transcription of each interview, [mask] will forward a copy of the transcript to you by email and invite you to verify, recommend changes or add to the transcript before returning it to him, with tracked changes, via email. Both electronic and hardcopy transcripts will be maintained on a password-protected file and locked filing cabinet respectively for a period of five years after submission of the final thesis for examination. At that time, both will be destroyed.

Data analysis

After making recommended changes for each interview transcript, [mask] will send it to me for analysis. As part of the analysis process, I will use your interview transcripts and, with your consent, four additional materials to draft a case study narrative using your selected pseudonym. Your case study will reflect your perceptions of Catholic principalship before, during and upon completion of the program. The additional materials are [mask] notes taken during each interview; your mid-program and end-of-program journals; your leadership vision statement drafted throughout the program; and cover letters and application forms you submit for principalship vacancies during your time in the program. As your case study narrative is progressively constructed, I will send it to you via email and invite you to verify, recommend changes or additions before returning it to me, with tracked changes, via email. After analysing your final interview transcript, I will email your completed case study to you for modification and/or approval. At that point, your case study narrative will appear in the thesis.
During the data analysis process, I will participate in a CEOWA peer-review process co-chaired by [Name] (Assistant Executive Director, Catholic Education in Western Australia) and [Name] (Team Leader, Leadership and Organisational Development Team). The aim of the peer-review process is to ensure the integrity of the research including the ethical and thorough collection and analysis of data and the drawing of research findings and conclusions. The peer-review group will meet monthly for the duration of the research.

It is also important to note that regardless of my role at the CEOWA, in no way am I inclined, or able to positively or adversely affect your future promotional prospects and remain committed to maintaining the highest standard of confidentiality and integrity. I guarantee that at no time will your identity be revealed or the content of your interviews or additional materials be shared with any party. In the event that specific comments or examples made during your interview are chosen for the final thesis, they will appear under your chosen pseudonym.

**Research recommendations**

It is likely that the Executive Director of Catholic Education will require a report regarding the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the research. This report will also be made available to the members of the CEOWA Executive and Team Leaders and the Presidents of the Primary and Secondary Principals’ Associations for circulation amongst their members. Research findings, conclusions and recommendations may also be published in journal articles and used when writing and presenting conference papers.

**Participant rights**

Involvement in the research is completely voluntary and confidential. You are free to withdraw participation at any time, even during an interview. Further, it is your prerogative to withdraw any data previously supplied. If such a request is made, previously collected data will be returned to you or destroyed. If, after reading this information, you chose to participate in the research, I ask that you read and complete the attached consent form to indicate your willingness to be involved.
Further information
Should you have questions regarding any aspect of the research, please contact me on (08) 6380 5234 or glasson.shane@ceo.wa.edu.au or Shane Lavery on (08) 9433 0713 or shane.lavey@nd.edu.au. Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be directed to the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Notre Dame Australia on (08) 9433 0941 or by fax on (08) 9433 0519.

I thank you for your consideration and hope you will agree to participate in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Shane Glasson.

If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0943.
Appendix J
Participant Consent Form

Developing tomorrow’s school leaders: The Western Australian Catholic education Aspiring Principals Program.

I, (participant’s name) ________________________________ agree to participate in the abovementioned research.

- I have received, read and understand the information sheet pertaining to this research project.
- I understand that this project exists for the purpose of research.
- I understand that my involvement in the research is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time including data previously supplied.
- I understand that the research involves the collection of my perceptions regarding Catholic principalship using three interviews (pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program).
- I understand that each interview will be conducted, recorded and transcribed by [name], an educator and experienced and independent qualitative researcher employed by the CEOWA Executive.
- I understand that [name] will contact me and ask that I select a pseudonym to be used in the context of interviews and data analysis including the construction of my case study narrative.
- I understand that the three interviews associated with the research will be recorded by [name] using a hand-held digital audio-recorder and that resultant audio files will be electronically coded to protect my identity before being transcribed for analysis.
- I understand that post-transcription of each interview, [name] will forward a copy of the transcript to me, by email, for verification purposes.
- I agree to return each transcript with changes I deem necessary, via email, to [email] by a mutually agreed date.
- I understand that both the electronic and hardcopy transcripts will be maintained by the primary researcher, Shane Glasson, on a password-protected file and locked filing cabinet respectively for a period of five years post-submission of the final thesis before being destroyed.
• I understand that Shane Glasson will use the transcripts of my three interviews in addition to four additional materials during the data analysis process. These materials are [redacted] notes taken during each interview; my mid-program and end-of-program journals; my leadership vision statement developed throughout the program; and cover letters and application forms lodged for principalship vacancies during my time in the program.

• I understand that as a result of the data analysis process, a case study narrative will be produced reflecting my pre-program, mid-program and end-of-program perceptions regarding Catholic principalship using my nominated pseudonym.

• I understand that Shane Glasson will forward a copy of the case study to me, by email, at each stage of the research for verification purposes. I also understand that the completed case study will be emailed to me for verification prior to its inclusion in the final version of the thesis.

• I agree to return the case study with changes I deem necessary, by email, to Shane by a mutually agreed date.

• I understand that that all information gathered by [redacted] and analysed by the researcher, Shane Glasson, will be treated in a strictly confidential manner. Specifically, I understand that the protocol adopted by The University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the ‘Privacy Act’ are available at [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/)

• I understand that research data gathered for the study may be published provided identifying information is not disclosed. In the event that specific comments or examples made during my interviews or other materials are chosen for the written thesis or any other publication, they will appear under my chosen pseudonym.

• I acknowledge that Shane Glasson will retain a signed copy of this form.

Participant name:    Participant signature:    Date:

Researcher name:    Researcher signature:    Date:
References


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