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Who will lead?: Implications and recommendations for the development and appointment of Sydney Catholic Schools' leaders.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Master of Philosophy

University of Notre Dame Australia

School of Education

Maria Maher

B.Ed., M.Ed. (Leadership), M.A (Theological Studies)

2018

Certification

Declaration of Authorship

I, Maria Maher, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Education, University of Notre Dame Australia, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Name: Maria Maher

Date: 4th May 2018

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Glossary of Terms and Definitions

ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AITSIL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AP	Assistant Principal
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage
IW Region	Inner West Region
LOTE	Languages Other Than English
NSW	New South Wales
PEARL	Program for Emerging and Aspiring Religious Leaders
RE	Religious Education
REC	Religious Education Co-ordinator
SACS Board	Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools Board
SCS	Sydney Catholic Schools
URL	Uniform Resource Locator

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Abstract

This thesis explores the future of leadership in Sydney's Catholic schools to clarify teachers' and leaders' understanding of leadership in the context of their experience in Catholic primary schools. A review of leadership literature describes and critically assesses contemporary definitions and practices in educational leadership and determines their effectiveness in developing identification practices and leadership-formation structures and programs for use by Catholic Education Offices throughout Australia. A multiple case design is employed to gain insight into current leadership practices in Catholic primary schools in the Inner West region of Sydney. To facilitate this, Catholic school leaders and teachers were interviewed and surveyed. Results indicate a need to review current identification frameworks and practices and further development opportunities. Leaders and teachers identify Catholic Faith, Student Learning and Professional Learning as significant for authentic Catholic school leadership, with most leaders citing a principal's invitation as the catalyst for their considering a leadership position and then learning from experience. Recommendations are proposed for robust processes that first identify candidates for Catholic school leadership and then provide them with appropriate training programs and experiences that nurture their Catholic faith and leadership development.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Personal background statement

More than twenty years ago, my husband and I were looking to enrol our terminally ill child in a Catholic high school in Sydney. Coming from a Catholic primary school, several schools were suggested by teachers and friends. In discussions with school principals, we were honest about the situation, which included the real possibility of numerous absences from school in the future. In general, the response was sad faces and compassionate words, but no clear vision for our daughter's education. This was until we met a principal who acknowledged that she did not know all the regulations pertaining to an enrolment such as that of our daughter's. She then added that she did not know what measures were in place at her school, for our child in the immediate future. However, she described her school as a Catholic faith community with competent teachers working collaboratively to benefit every student. We were pleased to find an authentic Catholic school leader who, in being truthful and charitable, demonstrated their faith; hope in their staff to know how to respond to individual students' needs; and love for their school community and the students it served. Following our daughter's enrolment, we were to experience a principal, who was a member of a religious congregation, confident in bringing the word and face of Christ to everything she did in leadership of her school. This personal experience was the impetus behind my own desire to determine whether authentic Catholic educational leaders, who demonstrate the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, are born or made. This is a question that I have asked myself many times since our daughter's high school enrolment, her recovery and my return to teaching and leading in Sydney's Catholic schools.

As a baptised catholic, my personal experience of Catholic education spans some 55 years. First, as a school and university student, then as a primary school teacher, mother, catechist, assistant principal, Masters student and currently as a student researcher. As described in the short

anecdote above, it was as a mother that I became acutely aware of the need for our Catholic schools to be led by principals who can be the face of Christ to all. I was enrolled in a Catholic school as a young child growing up in Sydney. The school was led and staffed by professed religious women when I began in 1960. Whilst I continued at the same school until I completed Year 12 in 1973, the decline in religious vocations meant that the teachers at the school were predominantly lay women, with a small percentage of lay men. My experience as a parent of three children attending Catholic schools was a continuation of this trend, resulting in lay leadership and the establishment of advisory boards chaired by lawyers and business leaders. As a teacher and leader in Sydney's Catholic schools, I learned that principals and their school leadership teams are now contracted in much the same way as their corporate peers. Being identified and accepted to lead a Catholic school requires a combination of self-nomination, principal, consultant and parish priest referrals, and interview.

In question are the efficacy of these processes and the capability of those charged with identifying authentic Catholic leaders. This responsibility requires specific professional development and training, to transition to enable the transition from Catholic school teachers to Catholic school leaders, in an increasingly secular Australian society.

1.2 Background

Sydney's Catholic schools are now vastly different to the Woods-MacKillop Schoolhouse in Penola, South Australia, where Catholic education in Australia had its beginnings. From these small beginnings, a little known Mary Mackillop and her professed sister colleagues began the first Catholic school in Australia. A large dose of religious instruction tempered with the three R's (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) would most certainly have been the rule of her classroom. Fast forward past two world wars and the Depression, through which the religious congregations continued to lead and staff Catholic schools until 1965 when the first lay principals and teachers

were employed (Canavan, 2007). The passage of time, an expanding secular society, and a constantly changing digital world have brought us to the current day when lay principals and teachers are the norm in Catholic schools (McCrinkle, 2013).

What would Mary and her Sisters think if they saw the fruits of their labour today? How do lay teachers and leaders live as Catholics in a dynamic digital world? How do they collaborate, question, learn from and acknowledge others? How do they get to know their communities and support the marginalised? How is an authentic Catholic identity evident in their schools?

This research explores the topic of future leadership in Catholic schools. Its recommendations will support the sustainability of a Catholic identity and culture in Sydney's Catholic schools. McCrinkle (2015) reported that Catholic schools currently educated more than twenty-one percent of Australian school students. It is imperative that the education they and future students receive exemplifies the highest possible standard across all spiritual, academic, social, and physical domains. This requires its present and future educational leaders to be highly skilled and knowledgeable educators, highly motivated and spiritually-mature individuals with a love of learning that they are willing to share with their peers and students in their schools.

There is a need for a better understanding of what it means to teach and lead in a Catholic school in contemporary Australian society. The Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board, in revising its 1999 document *Let Your Light Shine: The principal in the Catholic School*, states that Catholic principalship is a vocation, and that 'the position requires of the principal a vibrant Christian spirituality in the Catholic tradition, sound theological and educational understandings, and life-giving leadership skills' (p. 7). Six years later, Richard Rymarz, a visiting research professor at Australian Catholic University, was not so optimistic. In *The new evangelisation: Issues & challenges for Catholic schools* (2012), Rymarz contends that 'no matter how many coats of Marist or De La Salle varnish are applied to non-Catholic or non-practicing Catholic staff, they are not, thereby transformed into vibrant role models for their students' (p. 166).

What is important is that all staff members in Catholic schools have an understanding of Gospel values, which underpin the mission and vision of Catholic education and that staff give witness to them in their daily lives. Jesus Christ modelled faith hope and love in his daily interactions. Hence, people recognised him as a leader and followed him because of his authenticity and responsibility in carrying out God's plan for salvation.

1.3 Rationale and Significance

My Catholic faith and my concern for Catholic education continuing to be an option for parents in Australia underpin this study. As described earlier, Catholic education was born out of a need to educate the marginalised, predominantly those children living in rural areas where schools did not exist. Groups of Catholic religious women answered the call and schools were established and prospered. Today, Catholic schools exist in regional and most suburban areas of Australian cities. It is important that these schools offer an education that is first and foremost authentically Catholic. That is, they need to teach and champion Catholic gospel values and be led by men and women who understand what it means to be Catholic in a secular society and how to institute and nurture the Catholic faith in their school communities. Today, Catholic school leaders are generally lay Catholic men and women, who have been trained as teachers and then moved into leadership positions as a result of their teaching and/or school experiences. The question remains as to whether this is a dependable path to maintaining authentic Catholic leadership of Sydney's Catholic schools that exist in an increasingly secular Australian society. With the Catholic Church operating the world's largest non-governmental school system (Gardner et al. 2005), it is imperative that the identification and further development of its school leaders continue to be reviewed and improved to meet the needs in individual countries.

This study presents the traits, virtues, core values and frameworks of authentic leadership, and examines them in light of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*

(2008) that states that: 'educational outcomes for all young Australians is central to the nation's social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives' (p. 6). The results of this study contribute to the literature examining the Catholic identity of contemporary Catholic schools. More specifically, this study focuses on the principal and his/her leadership style and assesses leadership styles and frameworks for identification. Finally, the study acts as a catalyst for further discussion and research into the effect of leadership in Catholic primary schools.

1.4 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' and leaders' understanding of leadership in the context of their experience of leadership in Catholic primary schools. It critically assesses contemporary definitions and practices in educational leadership and determines their efficacy in developing identification practices and leadership-formation structures and programs for use by Catholic Education Offices throughout Australia. This research analyses the inter-relationship between nature and nurture in the identification and further development of potential educational leaders in Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS). Trait theory, organisation theory, and experiential learning theory (ELT) are used to present a systematic view of this relationship. The results of this analysis will be in the form of recommendations to promote the sustainability of Catholic educational leadership in SCS.

It is vital that Catholic Education Offices throughout Australia regularly review their ongoing leadership needs and ensure best practice for the identification and formation of their future leaders. Documenting and analysing what is currently occurring in Catholic school leadership provides contemporary evidence to test the theories of leadership examined in the literature and provide: (1) An informed understanding of the current frameworks, policies and practices for the identification and further development of faithful educational leaders in Sydney's catholic schools;

and (2) Recommendations that will improve ways of identifying and further developing aspiring, future leaders for their leadership role in Sydney's Catholic schools.

To sustain Catholic education as an authentic, viable option open to all Australian families, it is important that from the many who are called to teach in a Catholic school, that the few chosen to lead are identified with integrity and further developed with well-researched, contemporary programs and experiences.

1.5 Research Questions

Theoretical, conceptual, operational, and methodological frameworks are used to structure this qualitative study of leadership in Sydney's Catholic schools. Together, they provide an overview of the way in which this research study will be conducted.

Two research questions guide the current study:

1. What leadership attributes do current Catholic primary school principals and other leaders possess?
2. How are current leaders identified and further developed for Sydney's Catholic primary schools?

The first question arises in response to the preamble to the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) where it is stated that: 'Education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this era with confidence' (p. 4). It provides two goals to be used by all Australian school systems for the education of young Australians: 'Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence. Goal 2: All young Australians become: successful learners; confident and creative individuals; and active and informed citizens' (p. 4). To achieve these goals, ongoing strategic policy development is essential for all Australian schools. For SCS, policies that

provide a clear benchmark, which all leaders and teachers should strive to achieve, require leaders with a diverse range of skills and attributes.

Regarding how leaders are identified and developed, the literature reveals that a variety of programs are in place to identify and develop SCS principals and leaders. In line with this is the recent SCS initiative Program for Emerging and Aspiring Religious Leaders (PEARL). The authenticity of these processes is significantly important. In this instance, authenticity is defined as coming from the original and explained in this context as Christ-like. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the question of how current leaders are identified and developed for Catholic Primary schools.

Together, these two research questions lay at the heart of contemporary Catholic school leadership issues. In answering them, this study will contribute valuable insights into future directions for the identification and further development of our Catholic school leaders.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

Chapter 1 of this thesis has introduced the study. It starts with the researcher's personal background statement and a brief history of Catholic education in Australia. It provides a context for the researcher in describing an interest in Catholic school leadership from student to parent to Assistant Principal (AP), as a background to the rationale and significance of the project. The purpose of the study and the research questions it attempts to answer are outlined along with this synopsis of what is to follow.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature relevant to this study. It begins with the broad topic of leadership and describes in detail four styles of leadership: transactional, transformational, host, and servant, that align with contemporary leadership frameworks used in Catholic primary schools. The three leadership theories used to analyse the data in this study (organisation,

experiential learning and trait theory) are included before a focus on Educational Leadership and more specifically, Catholic principalship.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to answer the research questions, beginning with an introduction describing qualitative research, case study, and phenomenography as these inform the methods of population selection, data collection, and data analysis. It is argued that a multiple-case design with embedded units of analysis is the most appropriate methodology for this study. Also included in this chapter is a discussion of the issues, considerations, and limitations pertaining to the study. The most significant issue is the difficulty in providing general advice on the basis of the data gathered here, due to the small sample of only four schools.

Chapter 4 reports on the results of the analysis of the data collected. The data comprises the transcripts of twelve interviews with school leaders (principals, assistant principals, and religious education coordinators), and fifty online teachers' surveys. Narrative-style recording is used to describe the categories of description in each of the four schools that make up the multiple-case design. A cross-case analysis using the categories of description supported by the literature is then used to discuss the interview and survey data.

Finally, in Chapter 5, recommendations are made. These are a result of the data analysis, discussed in relation to the leadership literature. In answering the research questions, these recommendations may impact future discussions and/or research regarding changes to the identification and further development of future leaders in Sydney's Catholic schools. The recommendations will support the sustainability of a Catholic identity and culture in Sydney's Catholic schools. A conclusion is drawn, proposing the viability of this study being expanded across a larger number of schools, including those in Catholic dioceses outside of Sydney.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This review summarises current practices for leadership succession in Sydney’s Catholic primary schools, beginning with defining leadership, a brief history of leadership and the types of leadership prevalent in Catholic primary schools: transactional, transformational, host, and servant leadership. Organisation theory, experiential learning theory, and trait theory are examined in light of their significance in developing the conceptual framework for the study. The review culminates with the exploration of contemporary leadership frameworks specific to Catholic education to provide a working definition of educational leadership and more specifically Catholic principalship, which will form the foundation of this study.

2.1 Leadership

The topic of leadership has been one of interest throughout the centuries (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011). From the teachings of the early philosophers 500-300 B.C., to the contemporary online approaches to leadership training, there is an abundance of research, theories, definitions and best practice information regarding the topic. Confucius, in c.500 B.C., listed the virtues of love, proper conduct, piety, and the doctrine of the mean, whilst Aristotle, in c.350 B.C., incorporated the building of relationships (*pathos*), the advocating for a moral vision (*ethos*), and persuasion by logic to manage actions (*logos*) (Turner & Muller, 2005). A more recent interpretation of leadership is put forward by Northouse (2007): ‘Leadership is an influence process that assists groups of individuals towards goal attainment’ (p. 12).

More than forty years ago, in a review of leadership research, Stogdill (1974) concluded that there are ‘almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept’ (p. 259). Stogdill’s comment regarding the abundance of definitions makes a

common understanding of leadership difficult as most people associate leadership with their own style or other styles they like and try to emulate. In addition, the human experience of leadership explored by Kellerman (2004) describes leadership in terms of a human rather than moral concept, giving rise to consideration of the effects of personal motivation, the situation and the type of organisation and its people and goals, for which the leader is responsible. Furthermore, Gardner (2013), in attempting to interpret the meaning of leadership, defines it as 'the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by a leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers' (p. 17). This highlighting of the leader's capacity to motivate others, create a leadership sphere of influence and nurture a leadership style within specific settings, summarises the contemporary leader.

Leadership of an organisation requires an individual or team to be capable of building relationships and networking, not merely exerting power and authority to elicit productivity and change (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Those in leadership require not only a proficiency in the skill set to match the needs of the organisation, but also a discernible set of human traits: 'Traits that are to some degree separate from the function of leadership, but which find their fruition in it' (Brewer & Harris, 1978, p. 67). Further to this, Barker (2003) introduces the virtues of leadership: humility, courage, integrity, compassion, humour, passion, and wisdom. An example of such a leader in the context of Catholic education was St Mary of the Cross MacKillop who 'never saw a need without trying to do something about it' (Kane & Kane, 2009). In this way, her personal traits and virtues were intrinsically linked to the initiatives she employed in her quest to provide an education for all Australian children in the late 1800s.

Over time, there have emerged several leadership theories and types developed by various individuals and organisations. In some cases, one or more have been adopted by leaders and those aspiring for leadership positions, as their preferred style of leadership. Fielder (1967) proposed that there is no single best leader or way to lead. Instead, the leader's style should be selected according

to the situation. Gardner (1990) supports this and concludes that the age level, educational background, and competence of the individuals to be led will influence the leader's effectiveness, along with group motivation and morale.

Given that there is no single best leader or way to lead, this review examines four styles of leadership that align with contemporary leadership frameworks used in Catholic primary schools. They are transactional, transformational, host, and servant leadership. Transactional leadership is included because SCS enters into contractual agreements regarding wages and work conditions with all of its employees in accordance with Australian employment guidelines. This contrasts with the inclusion of transformational, host and servant leadership, which are all forms of charismatic leadership. These involve a relationship or interaction between the leader and the led (Dubrin & Dalglish, 2003).

Turner and Muller (2005) describe transactional leadership as that which 'rewards constituents for meeting performance targets and takes action when things are not going as planned' (2005, p. 51). Transactional leaders use material rewards and agreements to motivate their followers, which in the corporate sector are wages and associated work conditions (Sinclair, 2003). Burns (1978), in using a political frame of reference, notes that the transactional leader 'approaches their followers with an eye to trading one thing for another: jobs for votes, subsidies for campaign contributions' (p. 4). Followers in this instance work within established structures to be paid. Hence, the leader's position is seen as one of power over the established systems and structures and their role can sometimes be mistaken for management because of the focus on the day-to-day happenings within the organisation. Transactional leadership is about ensuring that timelines are met, production is of a high quality and stakeholders in the organisation fulfil their role.

In contrast, Turner and Muller (2005) define transformational leadership as that which 'develops a vision for the organisation and engenders pride, respect and trust' (p. 51). Transformational leadership energises people by providing them with an exciting vision for the

future rather than providing them with rewards and punishment (Browning, 2013). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their constituents with high expectations, respect, and positive modelling, and challenge them with creative new ideas. In this instance, the leader's personal characteristics and the relationship he/she builds within the organisation are of paramount importance to their success.

All leaders are active in making history within their organisation (Boleman & Deal, 2003). To this end, Senge explains that 'historical forces create the circumstances in which leaders emerge, but the characteristics of the particular leader have their impact on history' (as cited in Publishers, 2013, p. 5). As with all types of leadership, there cannot be a leader if there is no follower. So it is with host leadership. The leader as host is identified through their guest(s) (McKergow, 2009). Host leadership sees the leader as responsible for creating a space and being active in it and inviting others to it. The success of what is initiated under the auspice of host leadership becomes the result of the interaction between host and guest in the space at a given time. From this active modelling of leadership by the host, learning opportunities exist for the guest(s) that can give rise to their exercising of host leadership at another time. Hence, the metaphor 'Leader as host, host as leader' (McKergow, 2009, p. 19), and its reality over time expressed in a variety of ways such as this Arabic proverb: 'The host is both the first and the last' (McKergow, 2009, p. 23) and the teaching from Jesus: 'So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last' (Matthew 20:16, New Revised Standard Version). It is understood that the host leader works from a position that is invitational, open and welcoming to all. A significant strength of this leadership style lies in its ability to identify and nurture future leaders from within the organisation.

As with the host leader, the servant leader is present to others through their actions, spoken words, and body language as described by Starratt (1994). The servant leader's affirming, critical, and enabling presence underpins the ethical nature of their leadership style. In this way, they 'make judgements based on competence and values, rather than self-interest' (Publishers, 2013, p. 377).

Trait theory provides the theoretical framework for examining servant leadership because the nature of the person, their personality, and innate capabilities predict their emergence as a leader. Greenleaf (1977) questioned whether a person could be both a servant and a leader. In his study of issues related to power and authority, he revealed that ‘the only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly-evident servant nature of the leader’ (p. 20). Servant leaders become advocates for the constituents in their organisation, encouraging their use of collaborative problem-solving strategies and creativity in meeting the challenges they face. As a result, their leadership can empower others to better manage themselves and, in some instances, take leadership of projects themselves.

This brief review supports an understanding of leadership as ‘a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values embraced by both the leader and the led’ (Boleman & Deal, 2003, p. 339). Furthermore, leaders are influenced significantly by the social, economic and physical environments that they operate in. Leadership, therefore, will continue to be studied because of the evolving nature of human interactions and the need to identify and develop effective leaders to suit the needs of an organisation in an ever-changing society.

2.2 Leadership theories

Three leadership theories (see Table 2.1) will provide the foundation for the data analysis in this study.

Table 2.1 Relevant Leadership Theories

Leadership Theory	Reason for Inclusion
--------------------------	-----------------------------

Organisation theory	SCS is a learning organisation
Experiential learning theory	Practical experience is a necessary element of educational leadership learning programs
Trait theory	Identification of educational leaders requires an understanding of an individual's innate capacities and capabilities.

An organisation is formed when a group of people, assembled in accordance to their work-related skills, work together to achieve common objectives (Pfeffer, 1997). According to Johnson and Fauske (2005), organisation theory, 'offers a lens for critically examining the many human dimensions of an organisation, regardless of its purpose and function' (Johnson & Fauske, 2005, p. 5). Johnson and Fauske (2006) remark that 'the numerous activities witnessed in educational organisations – leading, teaching, learning, counselling, coaching, etc. – take place in an organisational context' (p. 6). This contemporary understanding of education systems and the schools within them, as learning organisations, suggests that Organisation theory provides a framework for examining their unique nature and leadership requirements. Since individual or team leadership is evident in all educational/learning organisations regardless of their size or culture, the model of leadership is significant.

Within an organisation there are structures and processes for bringing individuals together so that their combined individual strengths contribute to the success of the organisation. They exist in most aspects of human activity. From the late 19th century there have been adjustments made to organisation theory by researchers in response to a shift from organisations steered by absolute authority, logic and order to the more contemporary work of Senge (1990, p.14) introducing inclusivity in his five disciplines of learning organisations which are: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision and team learning.

As a learning organisation, SCS has a hierarchical model of leadership in its central office, headed by the executive director. This is duplicated in each of its primary schools with the principal supported by the assistant principal (AP) and religious education coordinator (REC), along with curriculum coordinators in the larger schools. Senge (1990) reveals the unique nature of contemporary learning organisations and the situational factors that affect their leadership. Hence, it is emerging that a one-size-fits-all approach to the identification and development of future leaders of Catholic schools needs review. Herein lay implications for the development of new practices. Questions arise regarding which individuals should be leading particular schools and whether or not training programs are required for aspiring educational leaders. Kemp (2010), reports that incorporating periods of practical experience in training programs for aspiring educational leaders improves the transition from teacher to leader.

ELT provides the theoretical framework to support the inclusion of practical experience in training programs for principals. An investigation of this kind is needed to better understand the impact of workplace on the effectiveness of educational leaders. In his book *Leadership in Organizations*, Yukl (2002) points out that effective leadership skills are mostly learned from experience and not from training programs. Kemp (2010) draws from a review of the literature by Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984), Lewin (1914) and Piaget (1920), to formulate his definition of experiential learning as 'education characterised by active learning experiences, usually outside the traditional classroom' (p. 118). In explaining ELT, Kolb (1984) highlights the role of an individual's personal experience of a concept or situation in the learning process. Coleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) acknowledge that ELT incorporates and values content from experts. Robertson (2013) notes that work-based professional learning, with real life challenges, is the most authentic and results in improved leadership practice.

For leaders of learning organisations, work-based professional learning provides opportunities for leaders to investigate their beliefs and values in challenging situations (Robertson,

2013). Recognition of this comes from Kolb (2008), who identifies the four modes of the experiential learning cycle – ‘experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting’ (p. 17) – as a process through which deep learning takes place. Experiential learning in the form of internships for aspiring educational leaders is considered a valuable component of leadership formation programs. Identifying who should be given such opportunities requires a review of all potential leaders.

The research into and the link between leadership characteristics and human traits, dates from the 1860s work of Francis Galton, who was the first to study the genetic basis of leadership (Johnson, Vernon, McCarthy, Molson, Harris & Jang, 1998; Yukl, 2002; Dubrin & Dalglish, 2003). However, the issue for those trying to understand and integrate trait theory into their leadership-identification practices is which traits matter most (Johnson, McCarthy, Molson, Harris & Jang, 1998), not just whether or not they are genetically inherited. Zaccaro (2007, p. 10) identifies a confluence for the research about leadership traits and that about the impact of context and situation on leadership. He argues that traits affect ‘who the leader is’ and ‘situational parameters’ affect ‘what the leader does’ in an attempt to explain their coming together in effective leadership. Dubrin and Dalglish (2003) describe inherited capacity as requiring the right situation to develop. They also point out that ‘the trait approach does not tell us which traits are absolutely needed in which situations’ (p. 52).

This is worthy of consideration by today’s systems administrators who choose educational leaders, since the contemporary practice is to identify future leaders from a cohort of classroom teachers who may have the ‘personal qualities common to leaders’ (Gibb, 1947, p. 268); however, they may never have been in situations to demonstrate them. In these instances, they would fail to be identified for promotion to a leadership position and hence further leadership-skills development. Understanding the importance of personality traits that predict leader effectiveness can help learning organisations with their identification and selection processes, training, and development programs and practices (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011). Therefore, in

the case of leadership of a learning organisation, in particular a Catholic primary school, it can be argued that the identification of authentic educational leaders requires a framework that recognises both the unique nature (traits) of the person and the unique context (situation) of the schools for which they are to be a leader.

2.3 Educational leadership

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) states that 'education equips young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills, and values to take advantage of opportunity and to face the challenges of this era with confidence' (p. 4). It provides two goals to be used by all Australian school systems for the education of young Australians. In all schools, it is the responsibility of the principal to understand these goals and empower teachers to affect best practice of them. Mombourquette (2013), in her study titled *Principal Leadership: Blending the Historical Perspective with the Current Focus on Competencies in the Alberta Context*, named seven essential leadership competencies for effective educational leadership (p. 9). The list (see Table 2) includes: fostering relationships, embodying vision, leading learning, providing instruction, developing leadership in others, managing operations and resources, and understanding and responding to the larger societal context. These leadership competencies encapsulate the desirable and/or essential leadership competencies found throughout the educational leadership literature examined in this review. Together with the two goals from the Melbourne Declaration, this is a useful tool for educational organisations to develop a working definition of educational leadership in a contemporary Australian context.

Leaders of learning organisations require 'the ability to inspire confidence and support among people who are needed to achieve organisational goals' (Chan & Maubourgne, 1992 as cited in Dubrin & Dalglis, 2003). At times, this is associated with status, authority, and position (O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010, p. 3)). These concepts are evident in the hierarchical leadership

structure of SCS and its 111 primary schools, and they also have implications for leadership succession within the organisation. It is, therefore, important to examine the motivation, efficiency, and efficacy of current leadership-identification practices used to fill positions in SCS. Consequently, the importance of a leadership framework that clearly articulates the desired innate nature of the Catholic school leader, the role they are to perform, and the accountabilities used to adjudicate their leadership, cannot be underestimated.

2.4 Catholic principalship

Adding the word 'Catholic' to a search of the literature adds a significantly different dimension. It elicits an immediate broadening of the parameters to include key words such as: church, religion, Christ, Christian, bible, gospel, apostle, mission, ministry, sacramental life and universal (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994). This broadening sees the inclusion of the Vatican's Catholic Church documents regarding all aspects of education in its schools. The Second Vatican Council's ninth document, *The Declaration on Christian Education (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965)* provides direction on aspects of education pertaining to the Catholic Church. In interpreting this document for reflection in 1988, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, the Roman Curia responsible for schools and educational institutes, describes the distinguishing characteristics of a Catholic school as such:

Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love (p. 1).

In *New wineskins: Reimagining Australia's Marists*, Michael Green FMS concurs and redefines Australian Catholic schools as 'the Church's spiritual families' (2014, p. 154). He highlights

the challenges of maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of Australian Catholic schools, seeing these as the depth of spirituality and the degree of ecclesial involvement of their teachers.

In the document *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads* (2007), the NSW and ACT Catholic bishops put forward a challenge to leaders, teachers, students, and parents in Catholic schools to ensure their schools are: truly Catholic in their identity and built upon the new evangelisation; enabling of achievement of high levels of Catholic religious literacy and practice; and led and staffed by people who contribute to these goals. Adding to this, the Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Schools (SACS) Board, in revising its 1999 document *Let Your Light Shine: The Principal in the Catholic School* (2006), emphasises that Catholic principalship is a vocation. It is their view that ‘principals should have a vibrant Christian spirituality in the Catholic tradition, sound theological and educational understandings, and life-giving leadership skills’ (p. 7). When the theological virtues of faith, hope and love, and the human virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994), are added to this, a lens for examining the necessary attributes for Catholic principalship emerges. Together, these documents provide criteria for understanding both the Catholic identity of a school and a personal and professional vision of Catholic principalship (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Summary of Criteria for Examining Catholic Principalship

Criteria	Source
Faith, Hope & Charity (Theological Virtues) Prudence, Justice, Fortitude & Temperance (Human Virtues)	Theological & Human Virtues Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994)
Religious Leadership & Leadership for Learning. (Core Purpose) Human Resources Leadership, Strategic Leadership & Organisational Leadership (Supporting Processes) Personal Dimension of Leadership (Personal Dimension)	Catholic School Leadership Framework CEO Sydney (2010)

Humility, Courage, Integrity, Compassion, Humour, Passion & Wisdom	Virtues of Leadership Barker (2003)
Fostering effective relationships Embodying visionary leadership Leading a learning community Providing instructional leadership Developing and facilitating leadership, Managing school operations and resources Understanding and responding to the larger societal context	Educational Leadership Competencies Mombourquette (2013)

Rymarz (2012) supports the SACS Board and reminds us that Catholic school systems' employment policies should prioritise the recruitment of teachers who can 'manifest and articulate their communion with the Church' (p. 167), as ultimately it is from this pool that Catholic principals are chosen. The schools 'must be run by individuals and teams who are inspired by the Gospel, who have been formed in Christian pedagogy, in tune with Catholic Schools' educational project' (*Instrumentum Laboris*, 2014, p. 10). Neidhart and Lamb (2013) point out that the role of faith leader needs to be at the forefront of Catholic principalship at a time when principals of Catholic schools are asked to 'balance an educational agenda with a religious mission' (p. 70). As a criterion for examining Catholic principalship, the SCS' *Catholic Schools Leadership Framework* (2010) incorporates three areas: core competencies, supporting processes and personal dimensions (see Table 2.2). It is in the core competencies section that both religious leadership and leadership for learning have equal status. This supports the notion of balance put forward by Neidhart and Lamb (2013).

2.5 Conclusion

Twenty-first century Catholic parishes and their schools have undergone significant change with the laity being offered and accepting various roles, including teacher and/or educational leader. This

review has summarised definitions, styles and theories of leadership found in academic literature, and provided a definition of educational leadership. Regarding the topic most significant to this study, Catholic principalship, the aim has been to position it within the context of Australian educational goals and the changing culture of Catholic schools. The study questions the current understanding of Catholic identity in Catholic schools, and challenges those charged with identifying and further developing authentic leaders, to review their current leadership frameworks and practices.

In a review of leadership frameworks and practices, it should be remembered that Catholic schools and their communities are unique. In each, the students and their families coming from differing socio-economic and cultural backgrounds all need to be made to feel welcome and cared for. In addition, the mandated National Curriculum must be understood and differentiated to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Equally, staff require ongoing professional learning opportunities to improve their teaching and the learning environment, including the funding of its natural and manufactured resources. When addressing the leadership needs of a Catholic school, this list is dwarfed by the necessity to permeate all that is undertaken, with the theological and human virtues emanating from *the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994). Therefore, leadership frameworks that direct the identification of Catholic school leaders should call for a clearer understanding and development of these virtues in those who are identified as having the potential to lead.

To test this, there is a need to examine today's leaders' and teachers' understandings of leadership through their experience of it and make recommendations for reviewing current practices for the identification of future leaders, in establishing who will lead. The following chapter details the methodology used to facilitate this research project.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter defines and describes the research paradigm and methodology used to examine current practices for the identification and further development of Catholic school leaders in the Sydney Diocese of New South Wales. It begins with an explanation of the interpretive paradigm and phenomenography to contextualise the study. Case study methodology and its associated sample selection, data collection, data analysis, and reporting phases are then described in detail. Justification for the research paradigm and approach, along with the instruments used to conduct the study, is evidenced herein. To conclude the chapter, issues and considerations are addressed, namely researcher objectivity, limitations and the study's generalisability across a wider platform.

3.2 Research paradigm

Research is an investigation undertaken in a systematic way (Burns, 1997). It is a process with a beginning and an end. Whilst this study is predominately qualitative, some quantitative data collection and analysis has been conducted. As a qualitative social sciences research project, as described by Miller and Brewer (2003), it looks at a part of society, Catholic primary schools, and the roles and relationships of individuals, leaders, and teachers within them. The beginning of any study lies in deciding upon a theoretical framework or paradigm to underpin and hence guide the study (Mertens, 2005). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) highlight the importance of assigning a research paradigm because the intent, motivation, and expectation for the research rely on it. The interpretive paradigm has been chosen for this study because the researcher is relying on the 'participants' views of the situation being studied' (Cresswell, 2003, p. 8), whilst at the same time recognizing that the background and experiences of the researcher have an impact on the research.

Phenomenographic analysis of the data collected in both the interviews and surveys has ensured the interpretive paradigm permeates all phases of the research.

3.3 Phenomenography

The research approach known as phenomenography was utilised to uncover participants' understanding of Catholic school leadership upon reflection of their experience of it. Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) define phenomenography as a research approach aimed at describing the different ways a group of people understand a phenomenon. Developed in Sweden in the 1970s by Ference Marton, phenomenography has continued to be used to study the distinctions between different people's understandings of a phenomenon, which arise from their lived experience. The participants in this study were all familiar with Catholic school leadership: however, their lived experience of it varied significantly. The research sought to understand these variations in lived experience as it contributes to participants' understanding of what it means to lead in a Catholic school. Using phenomenography has equipped the researcher with the tools to explore the variation in how SCS' teachers and leaders understand Catholic primary school leadership.

Using this phenomenographic approach, this research sets out to 'map the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects of a phenomenon, in the world around them' (Marton, 1981, p. 177). The intent was to understand leadership from the point of view of both leaders and those they lead. Understanding leaders' perspectives and styles of leadership in different schools was necessary to appreciate the specific nature of their role: how they were identified and appointed, and what ongoing formation or development programs they engaged in. In short, this study looks at the depth of understanding about Catholic school leadership of those participants experiencing it in SCS. Incorporating a phenomenographic approach to both the data collection and data analysis phases facilitated the generalisability of the study's findings.

Stake (1978), in his support of the generalisability of case-study research, noted that people arrive at their understandings mostly through direct and indirect experience. In support of this, Yates, Partridge and Bruce (2012) concur that using the phenomenographic approach 'yields insights into variations, making it possible to develop greater understanding of the phenomenon as it is experienced, and to draw upon these experiences to improve and enhance current practice' (p. 96).

3.4 Case Study

All research requires the choice of a research methodology to provide what Nachmias and Nachmais (1996) describe as the rules for communication, reasoning, and inter-subjectivity by the researcher. These rules allow for a common language between researchers and their audiences, logical structures to be followed, and the validity of the shared results. Case study allows for the retention of the holistic and meaningful characteristics of a real-life phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Leadership in Catholic primary schools is a contemporary real-life phenomenon. Therefore, case study as a methodology with its context, Catholic school leadership, befits this research, which proposes to make recommendations for the identification and further development of future Catholic primary school leaders.

To fulfil this purpose, the research sought to answer the 'what' and 'how' questions about leadership in contemporary Catholic schools by examining participants' experience of Catholic primary school leadership. Yin (2003) explains that 'what' questions ask for descriptions of phenomena and 'how' questions elicit answers that are explanatory. Larsson & Holmstrom (2007) support this when describing the different ways of understanding a phenomenon. They concur that there are two distinct aspects, the 'what' or focus; and the 'how' which describes how the meaning is/was created. This explanation has had a direct impact on the development of the research questions for this case study.

A multiple case design with embedded units of analysis, as described by Yin (2003) was proposed in the planning stages of the project and subsequently adopted. The context for this case study is Catholic school leadership with the cases being each of four Catholic primary schools in the Inner West (IW) Region of SCS. For each school, two embedded units of analysis have been used. These included teacher surveys and leadership team interviews.

A multiple-case design has facilitated the study by interpreting the varied personal experiences of leadership team members and teachers across a small sample of schools, rather than those of a single school. In designing the case study, a breadth of data was sought that would allow for the comparison of similarities and differences in experiences, leading to an understanding of Catholic school leadership and leadership roles in Catholic schools. The rationale for a multiple case design lies in the understanding that the breadth of data collected and analysed would add to the strength of forthcoming arguments. The multiple-case or collective case design allows for the replication of data needed for such breadth (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Robson, 2011). Furthermore, in the literature, replication is compared with scientific research that relies on multiple experiments to justify its findings. In this instance, the multiple case design provided the researcher with four opportunities to examine Catholic school leadership in SCS as a basis to make recommendations for the future.

The cases, four Catholic primary schools in the Inner West region of SCS, were the bounded entities for this investigation. As highlighted by Yin (2003) and Stake (1995), each of the cases has a specific purpose and provides the necessary boundaries required for successful case study research. Each case provided participants, settings and a timeframe (Creswell, 2003) for conducting the study. Including embedded units of analysis in the case study design has facilitated the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data in each case (Yin 2003). The embedded units of analysis involved individual interviews producing qualitative data and online surveys producing quantitative data. Four distinct phases (see table 3.1) were used to execute this research.

Table 3.1 Research Phases

PHASE	DETAILS
<p>1. Sample Selection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of sampling type: Purposive • Preparation of letters to schools: Principal’s invitation to participate. • Mail out of invitation to participate: Follow-up emails to principals. • Contact with principals offering to participate: Meetings with individuals to clarify the project and collect signed consent forms. • Dates set for interviews and survey distribution
<p>2. Data Collection</p> <p>Note: Throughout this phase, volunteer participants were instructed to reflect on their experience/s of Catholic school leadership before and during their response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended interview questions: development of six interview questions and diagnostic-style prompts. • Teachers’ survey: Survey Monkey used to gather demographic information and Likert and Rank Order scale data from participant teacher volunteers. • Conduct leadership team interviews: principal, assistant principal and religious education coordinator interviewed and recorded separately in each school for approx. 45mins.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute online teachers' surveys: principal in each school to email Survey Monkey URL to all teachers.
<p>3. Data Analysis</p> <p>Note: Throughout this phase, the researcher was looking for those responses that clearly reflected the volunteer participants' understanding based on their experience/s of Catholic school leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recorded interviews transcribed by researcher. • Survey data collated using Survey Monkey software. • Transcripts and survey data examined and emerging themes/categories assigned. • Discussion of the themes/categories evident in each case. • Links with themes/categories in literature review discussed.
<p>4. Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience identification • Categories of description for each case. • Descriptive narrative report for the overall case study containing individual and cross-case analysis of the themes/categories and results.

3.4 Sample selection

Given that the purpose of this study was to make sense of leaders' and teachers' understanding of Catholic school leadership through their experience of it, purposive sampling as described by Johnson & Christensen (2004) was utilised. They describe such a sample as being specific in nature with the researcher inviting participants with explicit characteristics to take part in the study. In seeking to make recommendations for change to current practices and possible further research, the

study had a sample size limited to four schools in one geographic area, to keep the size of the project in line with the requirements of the Master of Philosophy degree being undertaken.

However, the bureaucratic nature of SCS should allow the results to be relevant, if not generalisable, to other schools within the SCS system.

The specific participants who made up the sample for this case study included the leadership teams of four IW Region Catholic primary schools, comprised of the principal, assistant principal (AP) and religious education coordinator (REC), together with the teaching staff of each school. Thirteen primary schools in the IW Region were cited as potential participating schools for the study. In gaining access to the schools, the researcher met with the IW Regional Director, to discuss the nature of this research and possible school participation, prior to seeking SCS' permission to make contact with the principals of the thirteen schools. Following permission to contact the principals being granted by SCS, a letter of invitation and detailed information about the study was sent by mail to each of the thirteen school principals (see Appendices 1 and 2). It stated clearly that participation in this research would be voluntary and all participating schools and participants would remain anonymous.

After a reminder email with the previously-sent documents attached, seven principals replied with four agreeing to take part in the study. The researcher met with each of them at their schools to discuss the study in more detail and collect the signed consent forms from their three leadership team members. Dates for the interviews were set and the principals were provided with the survey URL to email to their teachers. The latter was done to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality. Of the four schools that agreed to take part in the research, the gender, age, and teaching/leadership experience of the leadership team members and teaching staff was recorded. This data was used to describe the diversity of participants in the sample. Conclusions have been drawn from both the interview and survey data and categories of description assigned to describe the leaders' and teachers' experiences of leadership in the cross-case analysis.

3.5 Methods of data collection

This study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Interviews and surveys (see Appendices 4 and 5) designed by the researcher, were used to collect the primary sources of data. The data collection began with semi-structured interviews with the three leadership team members in each of the four participating schools. An online questionnaire was distributed by email to survey approximately fifty teachers from the four participating schools. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection provided a better understanding of the research problems, as both types of data influence the results (Creswell, 2006).

The interviews, held in a confidential space at each of the four schools, were conducted and recorded by the researcher. At the beginning of each interview the principal, AP and REC were asked four generic questions that resulted in their age, gender, years of teaching, and leadership experience being noted. Following this, each interviewee was asked six pre-planned, open-ended questions. As Marton writes, open-ended questions 'let the subjects choose the dimensions of the question they want to answer' (Marton, 1986, cited in Bowden & Walsh, 2000, p. 9). The open-ended questions used in this phenomenographic data collection (see Appendix 5) asked the interviewees to reflect on their lived experience of Catholic primary school leadership.

After administering these open-ended questions, diagnostic questions were posed to probe the different ways that leadership is understood within the Catholic primary school context. Such questions included: 'Can you tell me more about that?' and/or 'you used the term...course name... acronym... can you define it for me?' In answering these probing questions, the interviewees could describe their experiences of Catholic school leadership in greater detail.

The online questionnaire used to survey teachers about their experiences of leadership was developed using Survey Monkey, an online tool familiar to many SCS' staff. It began with generic, multiple-choice questions aimed at gathering participants' statistical information including age,

gender, years of teaching and leadership experience, and length of time at their current school. These were followed by a Likert scale and a Rank Order scale question. As with the interviews, the respondents were instructed to reflect on their experience of Catholic primary school leadership when making their choices. The survey questions requiring a scaled response had specific reference to the virtues and responsibilities of Catholic school leadership, based on the researcher's review of the relevant literature (see Chapter 2).

3.6 Methods of data analysis

The data analysis phase began as the interview and survey data was collected. The multiple points of data collection contributed to the statistical validation of research.

This study incorporated phenomenography as the primary strategy for analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative data. As there did not appear to be a single process for phenomenographic analysis outlined in the literature, the following five stage process was developed from the work of Bowden & Walsh (2000), Yates, Partridge & Bruce (2012), and Yin (2003):

1. Researcher familiarisation through transcription of recorded interviews and downloading of Survey Monkey responses;
2. Transcripts read, and emerging themes identified;
3. Transcripts reread, and themes grouped into categories of description;
4. Survey data examined for categories of description; and
5. Description of the phenomenon (Catholic primary school leadership) using the categories of description.

The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews (see Appendix 6), before reading and rereading the twelve transcripts in preparation for the phenomenographic analysis. The transcripts were then grouped according to the interviewees' ways of expressing their experiences of leadership

in past and present school contexts. From this initial sorting, the researcher reread the transcripts looking for the different intent in each transcript so that the categories could be refined. These refinements captured the explicit differences in the responses and were used to identify patterns to which categories of description were assigned. The categories were used to identify patterns of experiences of leadership attributes and practices highlighted in the review of leadership literature. They aimed to describe the ways in which the phenomenon is experienced by the group of leaders, rather than the individual, by focusing on the phenomenon, not the people in the study, as advised by Yates, Partridge, & Bruce (2012).

Following this was an interpretation of the analysed data to address each of the research questions. The qualitative survey data was analysed using the following categories of description developed from the interviews:

- Catholic faith
- Privilege
- Modelling leadership
- Modelling teaching and learning
- Building respect and relationships
- Prioritising and being organised
- Prioritising SCS agenda
- Student learning
- Professional learning
- Invited/advised to apply

This impacted on the generalisability of the results to a larger group of schools (Creswell 2006), improving the credibility of study for making recommendations to SCS.

3.7 Methods of reporting

The findings from this study have been reported in a narrative form, which is aimed at achieving two goals: 'the first being to explain and the second to convince' (Walter, 2013 p. 357). The narrative that follows brings to life the researcher's findings and provides an opportunity to persuade its readers. This study adds new light on what is required of twenty-first century Catholic school leaders, leadership identification practices, and further development opportunities for leaders to advance their knowledge and skills.

When reporting the findings from this study, the audience was broadly acknowledged as individuals and groups interested in educational leadership. Preliminary analysis of the results redefined the targeted audience as administrators, leaders, teachers, and community members with an interest in educational leadership of Sydney's Catholic schools. It is therefore anticipated that the descriptive narrative genre chosen for this report will make it both readable and informative. Case reports were not deemed necessary and hence the interview transcripts have been included in the appendix. The categories of description assigned to each case and then revised for the study as a whole are explained in detail in Chapter 4.

3.8 Issues and Considerations

Common to all social research are the issues of validity and generalisability. This case study is not exempt. Yin (2003) cautions against them being deterrents to using case study, pointing out that if the research is carried out with rigor and attention paid to unbiased views, they can be overcome. To this end, systematic procedures have been followed, with the researcher acknowledging as honestly as possible any bias in analysing and reporting all data and findings. Having been a former employee of SCS, in the roles of teacher, coordinator, and AP, the researcher has endeavored to conduct the research with the intention of letting the data itself reflect the participants' understandings of Catholic school leadership. The researcher has at all times acted professionally,

transcribing the recorded responses to her scripted interview questions word for word and including all survey data without bias.

The choice of a multiple-case design with embedded units of analysis has allowed replication in the data-collection phase of the study. This replication has given rise to varied responses across the four cases, where the Catholic school leadership context has differed. As a result, the generalisability of the findings across 112 SCS' primary schools is improved. Also, in determining the validity and reliability of this qualitative study, to support its generalisability, the researcher refers to Creswell and Miller (2000) when they describe thick rich description as one of a number of procedures for establishing the validity of interpretive research. They state that, 'rich description also enables readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts' (p. 129). Therefore, as much detail as possible is included in the narrative-style report developed to answer the research questions

When testing the validity of the research, the researcher has used the non-traditional test labels developed by Guba and Lincoln (1989) of credibility, transferability, and dependability with the hope that they will be recognisable and more easily understood by her intended audience. The case study context, Catholic school leadership, is a credible phenomenon; its cases, four Catholic primary schools, are common to SCS and therefore the results are transferable; and its embedded units of analysis, teacher surveys and leadership team interviews, have been executed with dependable rigor. Therefore, it should be viewed as both valid and generalisable.

The following considerations affect the outcome of the study. They include the number of participant schools compared to the total number invited to take part, the variation in length of the individual interviews conducted with school leadership team members, the high percentage of incomplete surveys, and the variations in time spent on answering the surveys by teachers in the participating schools. There were initially thirteen two- and three-stream primary schools in the Inner West region of SCS invited to take part in this study. Following a reminder email, there were

seven principals who made enquiries about their school's possible involvement with only four deciding to participate. The leadership team interviews, held in each of the four schools, provided an adequate amount of recorded data to analyse. There was, however, significant variation in the length of the interviews in a descending order from principal to AP to REC.

For the teachers' surveys, the response was inconsistent across the four schools, with twenty returned for School1, sixteen for School2, seven for School3 and five for School4. In Schools 1 and 4, all the returned surveys were completed. In each of the other two, the four multiple-choice questions were all answered by those who participated, however the two ranking questions were answered by only 50% of respondents. Further scrutiny of the survey report revealed variations in the time spent by the 48 respondents in completing the survey, ranging from 2 - 22 minutes with an average of 5 minutes.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has reported on the research methodology literature relevant to this research. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher has deemed it necessary to uncover participants' understandings of Catholic school leadership upon reflection of their experience of it. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm was found to be the most appropriate research framework for this study, together with the research approach known as phenomenography. Case study has been described in detail, as the methodology used for the sample selection, data collection, and analysis. A multiple-case design with embedded units of analysis has added to the generalisability of the study.

Transcripts of the recorded interviews and a summary of interview quotes by categories of description (see Appendices 6 and 7) are included. There has also been an acknowledgement and explanation of the issues and limitations pertaining to the research.

The following chapter will present the findings of the research, beginning with summaries of the twelve interview transcripts and survey data from the 50 online teacher surveys. Following this is a cross-case analysis and discussion of the data to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4 –Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter analyses the data to ascertain the knowledge base of teachers and leaders about Catholic school leadership, as a result of their experiences. The chapter begins with a summary of the leadership team interviews and survey responses from each school to provide a description of participants' experiences of Catholic school leadership and their understanding of how leaders are identified. This is followed by an analysis of the data from each of the cases regarding the categories of description that address each of the research questions.

To establish and maintain each school's anonymity they have been assigned the names; School1, School2, School3 and School4. All leadership team members are referred to by their SCS' title of Principal (P), Assistant Principal (AP) and Religious Education Co-coordinator (REC), together with the numbers 1- 4 assigned to each of the schools. The generic name 'teacher' has been used for all teachers who responded to the survey regardless of their full-time, part-time or specialist role.

4.2 Individual Case Summaries

To gain an understanding of the phenomena under investigation in this study, interviews and surveys were conducted in four Catholic primary schools in the IW Region of SCS to describe the attributes of current leaders and how they are identified and further developed. Herein lies a summary of the findings from each of the cases, presented in numerical order, School 1-4. Each summary begins with demographic information, which was gathered at the beginning of each interview and from questions on the teachers' survey. This is followed by a description of the individual leadership team interviews and the results of the teachers' survey. Each case summary

includes an analysis using the ten categories of description that emerged from the data (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Variation in the Ways the Categories of Description are Described in the Interview Transcripts by Cases 1-4

Leadership Interviewee	Categories of Description									
	Catholic Faith	Privilege	Modelling Leadership	Modelling Teaching & Learning	Building Respect and Relationships	Prioritising & being Organised	Prioritising SCS' Agenda	Student Learning	Professional Learning	Invited/Advised to Apply
P1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
AP1	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REC1	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
School1										
Totals	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
P2	X				X				X	X
AP2	X		X	X				X	X	
REC2	X			X	X			X	X	X
School2										
Totals	3	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	3	2
P3	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
AP3	X				X				X	X
REC3	X			X		X	X		X	X
School3										
Totals	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	3
P4	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
AP4	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
REC4	X	X		X		X		X	X	X
School4										
Totals	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	2

4.2.1 School1

School1 is a K-6 Catholic primary school with a student population of 314, which is comprised of 80% Language Other Than English (LOTE) and 3% Indigenous students. Its Index of Community Socio-

Educational Advantage (ICSEA), a scale which allows for fair and reasonable comparisons among schools with similar students (ACARA, 2015), of 1049 is 49 points above the average. It has a teaching staff of 29 teachers in addition to the principal, administration staff and teacher assistants (ACARA, 2015). The contemporary school motto does not include any specific reference to Catholic Faith. The school leadership team comprises three members: the principal (P1) is female with 49 years Catholic school experience, of which 37 years have involved school leadership; the Assistant Principal (AP1) is female with 20 years Catholic school experience with six years in leadership; and, the Religious Education Coordinator (REC1), is also female and has 13 years Catholic school experience with six years in leadership. Sixty-six percent (n=20) of the school's teachers responded to the survey. This group of respondents was made up of one male and 19 females, with an average Catholic school experience of 10 years.

Principal

The thirty-minute interview with P1 provided very detailed answers to the scripted questions used. When describing her experience of Catholic school principalship, she spoke of being passionate about her Catholic faith and the privilege of being part of the evangelising role of the Catholic Church. This was not expanded upon; however, she proceeded to speak at length about being a part of student learning, building trust and respect within the school community especially with staff, and developing an 'I can attitude'. Having high expectations of self and others and prioritising school needs all in light of SCS' agenda were referred to frequently. When asked about her leadership style she described herself as highly organised and collaborative. She added that her experience led to her current practice of establishing teams within the school and promoting collaboration. Having started her teaching career at a time when Catholic education in Sydney was led by religious congregations, P1 acknowledges that her step into leadership was due to her significant knowledge and effective skills in teaching Religious Education (RE) in the classroom.

Assistant Principal

AP1's leadership role within the school incorporates 50% teaching and/or modelling teaching strategies in the classroom. She believes that whilst being a 'balancing act', it improves her credibility with teachers, students and parents when promoting the core business of School1, which is teaching and learning. When defining Catholic school leadership, AP1 began with describing her Catholic faith in terms of parish involvement and social justice and then moved on to the 'moral imperative' of embedding a 'contemporary pedagogy to actually make a difference in the lives of the children in the school'. She highlighted professional learning for herself and the teachers as the key to success with this. Sharing in the learning to achieve change in the school aligns with her transformational leadership style. The partnership AP1 shares with her current principal began in a previous school where her leadership skills were identified and she was invited to apply for a leadership position. She is currently studying for a Masters in Religious Education as it is a requirement of all SCS' leaders.

REC

The final interview was with REC1, who has held her current leadership position for two years. Previously, she completed a four-year contract in another SCS' IW Region school as a subject coordinator. This leadership position existed in that school because of the principal's discretionary staffing allocation due to large enrolments. Like her colleagues, she entered the interview eager to be a part of this study. She highlighted faith formation of students and the Catholic identity of the school as being at the forefront of her leadership responsibilities, followed by working collaboratively with the principal and AP. REC1 indicated that whilst she had not been involved in any SCS' future leaders' preparation, she is aware that something does exist and that a part of her

leadership role is to identify possible candidates for PEARL. She described a 'leadership found me' situation when asked about the path she took to becoming an REC.

REC1 applied for her current position having had success at a lower level of leadership that existed in a previous school. Feeling confident and ready to change schools, she applied for the current REC position and accepted more responsibility when she was appointed. In the two years, she has been REC1, she has completed a Masters of Educational Leadership, sponsored by SCS. To conclude the interview, she described her leadership style in terms of the skills and attributes she believes were identified through her leadership experience. These include: good working relationships with other teachers; being highly organised; being a collaborative team player; and, a readiness to lead learning in the school. She conceded that 'you don't want to say look I am good at these things. I guess it takes someone to identify them in you'.

Teachers' survey results

Sixty-six percent (n=20) of the teachers at School1 returned completed surveys with four of the respondents acknowledging that they had considered applying for a leadership position and hence, added a comment. Their comments contained references to a reluctance to apply because of part time, non-classroom and early career teaching status.

In the survey data, it was evident that the results for Question 5 (see Appendix 4), regarding a degree of agreement with 11 statements about Catholic school leaders were largely skewed towards positive responses. The strongest agreement was for leaders promoting leadership with 95 percent of the respondents agreeing with the statement (50% indicating strong agreement and 45% agreement) and only one respondent disagreeing with the statement. Analysis of these results indicates that, there is a general consistency in the participants' understanding of leadership resulting from their experience of it. Two School1 teachers offered complementary comments about

a highly effective leadership team and being lucky to work with leaders who are motivating and passionate. Another demonstrated their understanding of what it means to be a good leader, summarised as visible and not just giving orders from behind a façade.

Regarding the findings of the rankings in Question 6 (see Appendix 4), there is greater variation in the responses. It should be noted here that response rates varied on item numbers. The n values will be provided here for clarity. Based on their experience of Catholic school leadership, 33% of the teachers (n = 15) assigned the lowest ranking to effective leadership relying on leaders who engage in teacher mentoring and class visits. Forty-six percent of the teachers (n = 15) assigned their highest ranking to effective leadership relying on the leaders creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming and collaborative school community. From their experience, leaders and teachers at School1 cite the Catholic faith, learning and building relationships as important aspects of Catholic school leadership.

Case 1 summary and analysis

There is a noted confluence of two categories of description in the School1 interview and survey data. These include Catholic Faith and Building Respect and Relationships. Contrasting this is a significant difference in the interview and survey data pertaining to Modelling Leadership, Modelling Teaching and Learning, and Student Learning. All three leaders highlighted these in their descriptions of leadership, whereas the teachers did not indicate a high level of agreement or assign a high ranking to the categories about student learning.

This evidence suggests that an agreed understanding of the importance of modelling by the leaders is not followed up in practice. A lack of time due to school administration, could be a reason for this. All three leaders highlight the need for prioritising and organising, however the emphasis is clearly not on an involvement on teaching and learning from the teachers' point of view. There is

support for the claim that the teaching ability and/or practice of teachers advised of or identified for leadership positions would not have been thoroughly assessed by their school-based referees. This is an area of concern for any School1 teacher identified for leadership using the current SCS' Leadership Framework (2010) that has Leadership for Learning adjacent to Religious Leadership as its Core Competencies.

4.2.2 School2

School2 is a K-6 Catholic primary school with a student population of 333, comprised of 36% LOTE and 1% indigenous students. Its ICSEA scale of 1108 is 108 points above the average. It has a teaching staff of 24 teachers in addition to the principal, administration staff and teacher assistants (ACARA, 2015). Its contemporary school motto does not contain any specific references to Catholic Faith. The principal (P2) is male with 26 years' Catholic school experience of which 21 years have involved school leadership. The Assistant Principal (AP2) is female with 23 years' Catholic school experience with 18 years in leadership and the Religious Education Coordinator (REC2) is also female and has 15 years' Catholic school experience with 5 years in leadership. Sixty-seven percent (n=16) of the school's teachers responded to the survey. This group of respondents was made up of four males and 12 females with an average Catholic school experience of nine years.

Principal

The principal at School2 began by welcoming me to the school and expressing his interest in this study. When asked to reflect on his experience of Catholic school leadership past and present and describe what being a principal in a Catholic school was like, he spoke of Religious Leadership and Leadership for Learning, as did AP2. He added that 'the principal is the leader but you rely on having good executive members with you and people lead areas for you as well'. 'People management' was

highlighted as the 'biggest challenge in the role'. P2 refined this comment to his interaction with teachers not parents with the question, 'How to promote a nurturing but challenging work environment where you are not scared to have a hard word with people?'. When describing the skills and strategies he has developed for this vital area, he attributes them to having been mentored in his early years of teaching by a principal, who encouraged him to think about leadership.

It was this Catholic school principal who advised him to do postgraduate study in Religious Education early in his teaching career. He has subsequently given this advice to numerous teachers, as he believes it is a pre-requisite for self-nomination when a teacher is considering a leadership position with SCS. P2 acknowledged that his leadership style has 'evolved' to his current 'distributive/parallel' style where his executive and teachers are all seen as leaders with him 'setting the tone'. He elaborated that 'I encourage all teachers to have a go' and, 'It's the rule about giving people their wings'. This is an example of the impact of P2's experience of Experiential Learning, from being given leadership opportunities as a young teacher, that he now offers his current teachers and leaders.

Assistant Principal

At School2, AP2 described Catholic school leadership as 'two-dimensional capacity building' of staff and elaborated by adding 'building capacity in staff to know about Jesus and to build capacity in staff to lead quality teaching and learning'. This way of answering questions was maintained throughout the interview, which led the researcher to the opinion that AP2 had considerable experience in talking about her SCS leadership position and her passion for it. Her career includes four previous leadership roles and she attributes her current success as a Catholic school leader to the diversity of experience she has had working in different Catholic dioceses and schools, with leaders demonstrating a diverse range of leadership styles. In her words: 'I have had good diversity and

having had the experience of the religious leader has really given me great knowledge about the community and religious education programs and the needs for really strategic thinking there’.

Building positive working relationships through modelling and leading by example in all aspects of school life was a recurrent theme that implied a combination of Servant and Transformational Leadership. AP2 spoke about the need for continuous professional development of self and others. She has completed postgraduate courses in both Religious Education and Leadership and encourages others to consider doing likewise even if they are not interested in a leadership position. Not having a class teaching responsibility enables her to work with all teachers in their classrooms to implement the capacity-building initiatives highlighted earlier in the interview.

REC

REC2 spoke passionately about her role and the lengths she goes to, to understand each teacher’s RE and liturgy-preparation needs. She summed this up by saying that Catholic school leadership from her experience is about ‘being involved in the evangelisation of our students and our parents, with Jesus Christ at our centre of everything we do and say at our school’. Having had a considerable break from teaching (1988-2007) to raise her children, REC2 describes being ‘tapped on the shoulder’ in 2011 to apply for a leadership position, as the second time in her career with SCS that this occurred. The first time was in her early teaching years when a religious leader identified her potential for future religious leadership, as she saw that, ‘I believed in the Catholic ethos and lived my life that way’. Now that she has a leadership position, she exercises a distributive style of leadership as described earlier by her current principal. She does not see herself ‘doing everything’. Instead, she builds relationships, identifies strengths and weaknesses and supports teachers. REC2 has not engaged in any study at postgraduate level. However, could describe in detail the professional learning for RECs offered by SCS that she has undertaken and subsequently coordinated for the teachers in her current school.

Teachers' survey results

The teachers' survey was accessed by 67% (n=16) of teachers at School2, however not all the respondents completed questions 5 and 6. Five of the teachers added comments about their consideration of applying for a leadership position. These included three from beginning teachers who expressed their need for more experience, and two who had held leadership positions previously.

Twelve teachers completed question 5 which involved expressing their degree of agreement with 11 statements about Catholic school leaders. The results indicated positive responses (75% – 92%) to all items. From their experience, 92% of teachers expressed their strongest agreement that Catholic school leaders provide instructional leadership (42% strongly agree and 50% agree). Their lowest degree of agreement was that Catholic school leaders promote religious leadership and leadership for learning with 17% disagreeing and strongly disagreeing. One respondent strongly disagreed with each of the 11 statements.

In ranking aspects of school leadership necessary for effective Catholic school leadership, most to least for question 6, the nine teacher respondents (42%) assigned the highest ranking to conveying the face of Christ, His gospel message and Catholic Christian values to the school community. This contrasts with the four respondents (50%) who assigned the lowest ranking to promoting Catholic education in the local community.

Case 2 summary and analysis

The category of description Catholic faith, found in the leadership team interviews for School2, is described in many of the teachers' responses when referencing their experience of Catholic school leadership. The teachers expressed this through the descriptors in the survey, theological values,

face of Christ, gospel messages and Catholic Christian values therefore recognising Catholic Faith as a prerequisite for Catholic school leadership at School2. This is also the case for the category Professional Learning at School 2 with references to its importance in all the interviews. The leadership team at School2 believes it is important for all teachers and leaders at their school to engage in professional learning and the teachers acknowledge that P2, AP2 and REC2 provide instructional and professional learning opportunities for all staff.

These responses change within School2, from both the leadership team's and the teachers' perspective in the categories of Modeling Teaching and Learning and Student Learning. P2 did not regard these two categories as important. The teachers' low survey ranking of the leadership engaging in teaching, mentoring and class visits, and their belief that their Catholic school leaders lead a learning community was evident. It is suggested that Leadership for Learning (SCS' Leadership Framework, 2010) at School2 is recognised as the domain of the Assistant Principal and REC, but not the principal who rather prioritises Building Respect and Relationships with staff.

4.2.3 School3

School3 is a K-6 Catholic primary school with a student population of 493, comprised of 75% LOTE and 1% Indigenous students. Its ICSEA scale of 1071 is 71 points above the average. It has a teaching staff of 31 teachers in addition to the principal, administration staff and teacher (ACARA, 2015). Its school motto has an explicit reference to Catholic faith through its use of a biblical quote. The principal (P3) is female with 33 years Catholic school experience of which 20 years have involved school leadership. The Assistant Principal (AP3) is male with 21 years Catholic school experience with 12 years in leadership and the Religious Education Coordinator (REC3), is female and has 15 years Catholic school experience with 1 year in leadership. Twenty-three percent (n=7) of the school's teachers responded to the survey. This group of respondents was made up of two males and five females with an average Catholic school experience of 12 years.

Principal

The first leadership interview at School3 was with the principal. When responding to the first question about Catholic school principalship she referenced the category of description Catholic Faith in saying, 'the word that really distinguishes that, is Catholic, because I think that has to be number one because it gives you your mission and gives you your principle under which to work'. P3 continued with a description of Servant Leadership as the most significant leadership style for Catholic school leaders. She defined this as:

A person of mission who really puts the humility of Christ first and understands what it means to be a servant leader... a person who brings other people to an understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

In describing her current experience as a Catholic school principal, she included the diverse nature of the job brought about by human interaction, the need for flexibility and making Leadership for Learning a priority. She added that:

You can't forget that that is why you are a leader because you came to make a difference to children and if you remove yourself from that excitement at core level, interacting with children, you lose focus of what you are here for.

P3 uses her previous classroom teaching experience, particularly in Mathematics, when working with her leadership team to develop professional learning modules and then collaboratively with her teachers during the implementation sessions. She believes that being able to work alongside her teachers, even if only in one curriculum area, is the most effective way to build respect and nurture relationships with her staff. She learned this from observing and working with leaders in a variety of Catholic schools whilst on her journey to leadership. Some, who she saw as

authoritative, modelled a style of leadership she has never aspired to. Herein is a further reference to the worthiness of experiential learning in preparing for leadership.

Having had 'quite a bit of teaching experience', she admits to having 'fallen' into leadership some 20 years earlier because, 'there was a need in the school and someone had to fill it', and 'other leaders said you can, go on have a try'. In concluding the interview, she added that Catholic school teaching and leading was a vocation, not a job. P3 acknowledged the privilege of working with other people in helping them recognise their gifts and to, 'bring that person to their fullest they can be'.

Assistant Principal

Next to be interviewed was the Assistant Principal who, like P3, began with strong references to his Catholic faith and its impact on his leadership experience. He described a situation where he sees the Catholic school at 'the crossroads of the Catholic Church and society' with the need for those in leadership to put their faith into action. He looks for this in teachers, especially those who are competent in the classroom and looking to nominate for a leadership position. In his experience of making the shift to a school leadership position, he revealed that he was 'tapped on the head' in his early years of teaching. This was the result of a principal acknowledging his 'lived faith'.

He went on to speak about the SCS' initiative for developing leaders that he attributes to him becoming an effective Catholic school leader exercising a 'relational' style of leadership. His understanding is that over the past five years, SCS has prioritised coaching as a necessary leadership skill. To this end they have sponsored the enrolment of several of their current leaders in an externally-provided coaching and Growth Mindset course. AP3 was pleased to be offered the course and having completed it he tries to build genuine relationships by being present to others and empower teachers to problem solve by using a 'push back to grow forward' strategy. He did not speak directly about teaching and learning. His focus throughout the interview was his Catholic faith

and the importance of him supporting P3 and maintaining a strong relationship with the Parish Priest.

REC

REC3 began with explaining she was in an acting position for the 2015 school year. She cited working collaboratively with P3, classroom teachers and the Parish Priest as being significant to her leadership role of 'developing the Catholic life of the school and making the school visibly Catholic'. She added that networking with other RECs was vital to her effectiveness when it comes to liturgy and RE in her own school. Meetings facilitated by SCS help with this and keep her informed of system priorities. When asked to consider her experience of Catholic school leadership and define it, REC3 acknowledged that she was not confident in doing so. Given time, she relaxed and began with what she didn't think it was: 'a boss with people following'. She then continued with:

I think leadership is combining many wonderful years of experience and knowledge and love of teaching and pedagogy and balancing that with administration and human relations, human resources and being a leader in the school community.

REC3 described her leadership strength as a 'facilitator and a bit of an organiser', who has always listened to and watched other leaders. She hopes to model good leadership and 'bring people with her'. Emerging here are aspects of Host and Transformational Leadership. Prior to her present acting REC role, she was nominated by a former principal for the one-year SCS' leadership course, Leaders of the Future. REC3 believes that this is how she began to learn about Catholic school leadership. Together with some years as a curriculum coordinator in a school, where all the teachers had extra responsibilities without a formal leadership title, she developed an interest and experience in leadership.

Having been invited by P3 to take up her current position, she learned that in applying to make it permanent in the future, she needs to have or be completing post-graduate study in theology or Religious Education. She is currently undertaking a Master of Religious Education degree, having been nominated for SCS' sponsorship now that she is an Acting REC. She noted that apart from the possibility of a leadership position, she sees the study being about her faith journey. At the end of the interview she recapped that 'it is about my faith journey as much as it is about leadership if not more and it will help me with my style of leadership'.

Teachers' survey results

Of the 31 teachers at School3 the 23% (n=7) who responded to the survey invitation were split four to three when asked if they had ever considered applying for a leadership position at this or another Catholic school. Of the four who had, one offered this comment:

I have had leadership roles in the past as coordinator and REC as well as acting Assisted Principal but would not want to be in those roles now as the nature of teaching has changed so much and has become more focused on administration.

When expressing the strength of their agreement with statements about their experience of Catholic school leaders, all five respondents who answered Question 5 indicated agreement (25% strong agreement and 75% agreement) with Catholic school leaders managing school operations and resources. This contrasted with their lowest level of agreement given to Catholic school leaders fostering effective leadership, demonstrating visionary leadership and leading a learning community where 20% disagreed. One teacher added this optional teacher's comment when responding to question 5:

'leadership in a Catholic school has become centered on professional learning and academia...Personal attributes have taken second place.'

Fifty-seven percent (n=4) of the respondents answered Question 6 about aspects of leadership necessary for effective Catholic school leadership. Their highest ranked aspects were to convey the face of Christ, His gospel message and Catholic Christian values to the school community (100%). This was followed by leadership needing to create and maintain a safe, welcoming, collaborative school community (67%) and prioritise learning opportunities that address individual student needs and learning styles (67%). Their lowest rankings went to building and maintaining strong school/parish connections (50%).

Case 3 summary and analysis

School3 had seven survey responses. The data reveals a correlation between the categories of description Catholic Faith and Professional Learning in the interview data, and the survey responses about Catholic Christian values, leaders conveying the face of Christ and providing professional learning opportunities for all staff. These findings along with P3's and AP3's reference to Building Respect and Relationships lend support for the claim that leadership at School3 is aware of and concerned with the SCS priorities of evangelisation, teacher-focused school improvement and community building in its schools.

Of significance at School3 is the strong support for school leaders demonstrating human virtues found in the Catholic Catechism (1994), and Barker's (2008), leadership virtues (see Question 5). Given that this study addresses the identification practices and processes for current and future Catholic school leaders, the researcher argues for further investigation and inclusion of these and/or similar virtues in its current Leadership Framework. Adherence by School3's leaders to SCS' priorities and their display of human and leadership virtues, provides evidence of strong, balanced Catholic school leadership at School3.

4.2.4 School4

School4 is a K-6 Catholic primary school with a student population of 392, comprised of 69% LOTE and 4% Indigenous students. Its ICSEA scale of 1030 is 30 points above the average. It has a teaching staff of 24 teachers in addition to the principal, administration staff and teacher assistants (ACARA, 2015). Its school motto contains an explicit reference to Christian faith in using Christ. The principal (P4) is female with 28 years Catholic school experience of which 19 years have involved school leadership. The Assistant Principal (AP4) is female with 23 years Catholic school experience with nine years in leadership and the Religious Education Coordinator (REC4) is also female and has eight years Catholic school experience with this being her first year in leadership, as an acting REC. Twenty-one percent (n=5) of the school's teachers responded to the survey. This group of respondents was made up of female teachers only, with an average Catholic school experience of 14years.

Principal

The leadership interviews at School4 began with the principal. She began her teaching career with the then NSW Department of Education, as a primary school teacher for 12 years. When she returned to teaching after a short child-rearing break she was employed as a teacher in the SCS' Southern Region, moving into leadership 19 years ago as an AP. Now in her tenth year as a primary school principal, P4 highlighted relationships as the core aspect of effective Catholic school leadership. She spoke of relationships with parents, students and staff and the importance of 'nurturing them and allowing them to grow'. Another outcome of nurturing relationships that P4 raised was allowing others to develop with you in your leadership role to assist with the management of school events. Early in the interview, she offered an example of this, when she described the influence the Parish Priest has on the school community. She believes that it is 'extremely important' to have a positive relationship with him as she works to make a difference.

P4 has a distributive style of leadership, whereby she works with her leadership team to plan the school agenda each year, ever mindful of SCS' Annual Plan and the effect it has on school improvement. From there, they organise the teachers into professional learning teams so that the work of improving students' learning outcomes is shared and more fully understood. This distribution allows her to use her time and knowledge of SCS' initiatives more effectively, engage in curriculum development, and maintain a high level of 'visibility' around the school. Her diverse school experience, support, and advice from SCS' advisers and continuing post-graduate study enabled her to develop the confidence to apply for the Catholic school leadership positions that have resulted in her current principalship.

Assistant Principal

The AP at School4 has been an REC in two previous schools. She currently teaches a senior primary class, three days a week and hence describes her experience of Catholic school leadership as 'doing a double job.' She spoke of commitment, organisation and delegation as key to both the teaching and administration roles. AP4 does not like 'confrontation' and therefore cites building respect and relationships with her colleagues as vital to her professional wellbeing and effectiveness, adding that, 'I like to be around at lunchtimes to talk to people, just trying to get some comradery happening.' Considering effectiveness and wellbeing, she suggested that SCS could give more teachers the opportunity to experience leadership, even though there may be 'monetary constraints' because:

A bigger executive is good as it is very healthy for a school. You get more conversation happening, you get more perspectives and it just eases the workload. The less stress on one person and things just work better.

As a new AP still developing a leadership style, she has not sought sponsorship for postgraduate study because of her family situation. She prefers to learn from her principal and SCS' advisor as her needs for further leadership development arise. With only a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education 'completed many years ago' she acknowledges her reluctance for further study will impact on her chances of principalship in the future.

REC

As acting REC at School 4 for 2015, REC4 spoke passionately about her commitment to her Catholic faith and her practice of it. Her leadership focus is to evangelise the faith and maintain the Catholic identity of the school. She does this by making it obvious to all who come to the school, that the Gospel message of Jesus is lived in word and deed. REC4 said that she 'would hope people walk out the door with a feeling that they have been treated with the love of Christ.' Her appointment came as the result of a secondment for the 2015 school year and she would hope to procure an ongoing permanent contract in School4, as the school improvement tasks she has set herself would take some time. The secondment came as the result of her taking part in PEARL the previous year, where she was able to improve her understanding of Catholic school leadership at the REC level and network with other aspiring religious leaders and SCS' personnel. Pastoral Care, seen in both Host and Servant Leadership, is significant in the leadership style that REC4 is developing. She makes time for people, concerns herself with the wellbeing of others and supports all teachers and students in their Catholic faith formation. In her words:

When we step into a leadership role in a Catholic school it stems from our relationship with Christ, our love of our faith and our recognising that God has given us the gifts to live life to the full so we want that for our staff, students and community, but we do it by leading and modelling that and encouraging it... a kind of top down effect.

Teachers' survey results

Twenty-one percent (n=5) of the teachers at School4 accessed the survey. All five female respondents answered five of the six questions in the survey. Four of the respondents had considered applying for a leadership position in the past, with one noting that she had been in a leadership position in three Catholic schools.

When responding to Question 5, they all agreed (20% strongly agree and 80% agree) that from their experience of Catholic school leaders they promote Religious Leadership and Leadership for Learning as their core purpose, lead a learning community, provide instructional leadership, develop and facilitate leadership opportunities, and respond to the larger societal context. Whilst 80% (n=4) of the respondents agreed that their school leaders demonstrated human and leadership virtues found in the literature, one disagreed.

Two optional comments were recorded. One indicated that in the respondent's experience across four schools she had witnessed all the traits, 'but not all were evident in any one leader.' The other made reference to SCS prioritising the areas described in the statements, however 'individual leaders do not always have an in-depth understanding of this framework.'

Case 4 summary and analysis

In summarising the School 4 data there is evidence of support for all ten categories of description in the interview transcripts. However, there is limited survey data as none of the respondents answered question 6, with no evidence to suggest why this is. Based on the data available strategic, Catholic leadership is apparent at School4 because its leadership initiatives are closely aligned with SCS' agenda.

In support of this, all three school leaders described the categories of description: Catholic Faith, Prioritising and Being Organised, Prioritising SCS' Agenda, and Professional Learning, as fundamental to their Catholic school leadership role. Whilst Student Learning was noted by P4 and AP4, only REC4 included Modelling Teaching and Learning as a necessary component of leadership. This could suggest a different understanding/interpretation of the leadership competency Leadership for Learning (SCS, 2010). P4 and AP4 describe a more remote interest in what is happening in classrooms whereas REC4 sees herself modelling teaching strategies in classrooms. The pattern is the same when analysing the survey data. All of the respondents agreed that Catholic school leaders lead a learning community and provide instructional leadership. A possible interpretation of this is that the former is the more remote and the latter the hands-on understanding of learning by the school leaders.

4.3 Cross Case Analysis

This section presents an analysis of the themes and trends that emerged from the individual cases, within the context of the categories of description (see Table 4.2). In this way, the cross-case analysis details the results across the cases with regard to each of the ten categories of description (4.3.1 – 4.3.10). Where relevant, quotes from interviewees (see Appendix 7) and educational leadership literature have been included to further explain and/or support the analysis.

4.3.1 Catholic faith

The three leaders in all four schools (n=12) spoke about Catholic faith when interviewed (See Table 4.2). Whilst expressed in a variety of ways, they all acknowledged it as being significant to their leadership role in a Catholic school. P1 spoke of being passionate about one's faith, AP3 expressed

the need to understand your faith and how one lives it, whereas maintaining the Catholic identity of the school was voiced by REC4. These are all positive responses and are consistent with the SCS's Leadership Framework (2010), which cites Religious Leadership as one of the two core competencies necessary for leadership of its schools. Similarly, the results of the analysis are in support of documents, such as that by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2014, which highlights the importance of Catholic faith in the role of a Catholic school leader. In support of this, the respondents to the teachers' survey also supported this category of description. In three of the four schools, the importance of Catholic faith being at the heart of Catholic school leadership was reinforced. From respondents' experience, they assigned their highest ranking to the necessity of Catholic school leadership conveying the face of Christ, his Gospel message and Catholic Christian values to the school community.

4.3.2 Privilege

Whilst two of the principals described their leadership role as a privilege, only one other leadership interviewee, the REC at School4, spoke about it. She saw her role being, 'a great privilege to evangelise our faith', whereas the principals described it in terms of a 'very privileged role' and 'vocational because you are called to do it'. These comments are in line with SCS' Mission Statement (www.syd catholicschools.nsw.edu.au) where it states its commitment to 'ensuring quality teaching and learning' with teachers 'embracing the privilege and the challenge of teaching in Catholic schools'. The questions in the teacher's survey did not provide statistical data about this category of description however the optional comment by a teacher from School3 could be construed as disagreeing with the human notion of Catholic school leadership as a 'privilege' or a 'vocation'. She wrote that: 'Leadership in a Catholic school has become centred on professional learning and academia... Personal attributes have taken second place!' Therefore, more research would need to be undertaken to further clarify this category of description.

4.3.3 Modelling leadership

Half of the interviewees (n=6) spoke about the responsibility to model leadership within their school community. The three leaders for School1 described this part of their role as important for developing a team (P1), transforming their school community (AP1) and fostering presence and collaborative relationships (REC1). The teachers from School4 disagreed that Catholic school leaders demonstrated visionary leadership. This aligns with the leaders' responses where only the principal included it as a characteristic of Catholic school leadership. McKergon (2009) references this category of description when explaining Host Leadership. He states that 'from active modelling of leadership by the host, learning opportunities exist for the guest/s that can give rise to their exercising host leadership at another time' (p. 19). The literature on ELT, suggests a congruence of modelling and experience, and hence supports this category of description. Yukl (2002) cites the importance of experience over training programs as the best way to further develop those chosen for leadership.

4.3.4 Modelling teaching and learning

More than half of the interviewees (n=8) included references to Modelling Teaching and Learning when answering the questions. This level of interest in Modelling Teaching and Learning is consistent with the SCS' *Leadership Framework* (2010), which cites Leadership for Learning as one of the two core competencies necessary for leadership of its schools. The four RECs noted its importance with comments related to developing aspects of the RE curriculum, such as Storytelling, a specific RE teaching strategy. Their modelling of the specific teaching and learning strategies is in line with contemporary SCS' leadership practices for English and Mathematics. Turner and Muller (2005) and Browning (2013) identify positive modelling as a strategy used by transformational leaders to inspire and motivate their constituents. The constituents in this study are the teachers in

the four schools who responded to the online survey. In Schools 1 and 2 the responses contrasted with this. From their experience of Catholic school leaders, these teachers assigned their lowest ranking to teacher mentoring and class visits, as a necessary aspect of effective Catholic school leadership. The low number of responses to this question in the survey by teachers in School 3 (n=1) and 4 (n=0) negate their survey data.

4.3.5 Building respect and relationships

Nine of the 12 interviewed leaders contributed to the data about this category of description. The four principals, three APs and two RECs described a variety of reasons and strategies for Building Respect and Relationships in their schools. These included being open, collaborative, authentic and nurturing while mentoring and influencing others towards the common good. AP4 summarised their collective intent in stating: 'I don't like to dictate. I like to allow people to take ownership of what they do.' This compares well with the literature about Transformational, Host and Servant Leadership, which are all forms of charismatic leadership that involve a relationship or interaction between the leader and the led (Dubrin & Dalglish, 2005, p. 63). Moubourquette (2013) goes further and includes fostering effective relationships as one of seven educational leadership competencies. It is in relation to this that the teachers were asked to rank the importance of creating and maintaining a safe, welcoming, collaborative school community as to its importance for effective school leadership. In Schools 1, 2 and 3 more than half of the respondents gave it their highest ranking.

4.3.6 Prioritising and being organised

This category of description was relevant to 66% (n=8) of the interviewees. Their responses varied in modality from the personal description 'I'm highly organised' offered by REC3, through to the informative 'I use my diary and I get things done because it is planned, and I can fit some

administrative things in between' offered by P4. In the discussion, all the APs alluded to being very busy because of the complex nature of their leadership role coupled with their class teaching responsibility. The questions in the teachers' survey did not reveal data to support or refute what the school leaders discussed about Prioritising and Being Organised. Therefore, more research would need to be undertaken to further clarify this category of description. In the literature about Transactional Leadership, Turner and Muller (2005) describe Prioritising and Being Organised in terms of leaders ensuring that constituents meet performance targets and acting when plans and deadlines are not adhered to. If a more corporate style is sought by SCS' executives because of our changing secular society, a more transactional style of school leadership may need to be considered.

4.3.7 Prioritising SCS' agenda

Prioritising SCS' Agenda was discussed by only 42% (n=5) of the leaders interviewed in this study. The principals, APs, and RECs who included this category of description, spoke about the importance of representing their school at network meetings, looking after school compliance issues, their school's Annual Improvement Plan and securing SCS' support for their school's individual needs. In the survey, the teachers strongly agreed or agreed (School1 90%, School2 92%, School3 100% & School 4 80%), that managing school operations and resources was something they expected of Catholic school leaders. As a system of schools, SCS administers the policies, practices, and procedures along with their timelines, for the smooth operation of its schools. Understanding the system's agenda is therefore of prime importance for all school leaders and teachers.

4.3.8 Student learning

The category of description, Student Learning is the second in the study that refers directly to the SCS' 2010 *Leadership Framework's* Core Competency, Leadership for Learning. Like Modelling Teaching and Learning, it was not evident in all twelve interview transcripts with only 75% (n=9) of

the leaders referring to it. In Schools 1 and 4, all three leaders referred to it with P1 describing this aspect of her leadership role as a reflection of her 'passion for learning' and therefore in advising a prospective leader she would say: 'you are a pedagogical leader, the leader of learning.' REC4 referred to her understanding of the two Core Competencies of Religious Leadership and Leadership for Learning when she spoke of her 'passion for making sure children receive quality Religious Education'. In using the word 'passion', REC4 referred to one of the 7 virtues of leadership described in the extant literature by Baker (2003). In question 5 of the teachers' survey the respondents were asked to describe their understanding and agreement with the statement: 'Catholic school leaders promote Religious Leadership and Leadership for Learning as their core purpose'. The results in percentages are as follows: School1 50% (n=10) strongly agree and 45% (n=9) agree; School2 58% (n=7) strongly agree and 17% (n=2) agree; School3 80% (n=4) agree; and School4 20% (n=1) strongly agree and 80% agree (n=4). These results compare positively with the 75% (n=9) of leadership interviewees referring to Student Learning when speaking about their Catholic school leadership experience/s. Two teachers in School2 and one in School3 disagreed that this was their experience.

4.3.9 Professional learning

As with the category of description Catholic Faith, 100% (n=12) of the leaders contributed information about Professional Learning when they were interviewed. The variation in their responses is a clear indication of their understanding that Catholic school leadership involves their own professional learning and that of their constituents. Across all three leadership roles there is experience of personal post-graduate study, along with developing and facilitating professional learning experiences for staff and parents in their respective schools. Their comments include being advised by SCS to enrol in a Master of Religious Education, Theology and/or Leadership, completing Masters degrees, receiving SCS' sponsorship for Coaching and Growth Mindset courses, and attending the SCS' PEARL professional learning network. AP1 described setting up a professional

learning community where the leaders and teachers in her school learn from one another. In these and the numerous other examples in the transcripts, there is support for the literature about the importance of formal and experiential learning (Yukl, 2002; Kemp, 2010; Robertson, 2013) to develop aspiring, and nurture experienced leaders, in their quest to be proficient Catholic school leaders.

Highly significant in the literature is the 2010 document *An Accreditation Framework for Catholic Schools in NSW*. Prepared by the Conference of Diocesan Directors of Education (NSW and ACT) it sets out five categories of accreditation for support staff through to senior leadership which includes principals, APs and RECs. It proposes an obligation to maintain ongoing accreditation (p.3) and hence the need for ongoing professional learning at all levels. The responses to teachers' survey question 5 gave strong support for the leaders in the four schools leading a learning community. The results in percentages are as follows: School1 63% (n=12) strongly agree and 37% (n=7) agree; School2 53% (n=7) strongly agree and 33% (n=4) agree; School3 20% (n=1) strongly agree and 40% (n=2) agree; and School4 20% (n=1) strongly agree and 80% (n=4) agree. One teacher in both School 2 and 3 disagreed that this was their experience. The teachers' responses to Question 6 of the survey support the positive trend. When ranking the importance of leaders providing professional learning experiences for all staff that address individual student needs as an indication of effective leadership, the teachers from Schools 1-3 (n =23), did so with rankings from 1- 6 with 1 being the highest. There were no responses by School 4 teachers.

4.3.10 Invited/advised to apply

Responses from 83% (n=10) of the interviewed school leaders provided data consistent with the category of description Invited/Advised to Apply, to describe their promotion from teacher to leader of a Catholic school. Three principals, three APs and all four RECs reported having been identified as a future Catholic school leader by principals or other SCS' staff. In the case of P1, she was invited to

take over a school because of her ability to ‘troubleshoot it and fix it’. She gave her current AP an opportunity to work with her, following their working together in a previous school. P3 described other leaders encouraging her into leadership, whereas her AP gave some insight into the formal application she completed after being ‘tapped on the head’. In two instances, the RECs described being ‘on loan’, with one having been seconded for a year (School4) and the other (School3) being in an acting role because: ‘this job had been re-advertised with no suitable candidates the first time’.

Question 4 of the teachers’ survey sought to examine if the teachers had considered a Catholic school leadership role. In School1 20% (n=4), School2 69% (n=11), School3 57% (n=4) and School4 80% (n=4) had considered applying in their current or other Catholic school. The optional comments include those by beginning teachers who see the need for more experience and some teachers who have held a leadership position in the past. Of note is this comment by a teacher in School1:

I would love to apply for a leadership position now or in the future but given the nature of my current role (part time, non-classroom) the likelihood of any kind of leadership position within the Catholic system is extremely slim.

This gives rise to the questions: Could a SCS’ primary school leader be a teacher in a part-time specialist teaching role? or Could SCS’ primary school leader come from the pool of non-teaching Catholics? A return to the literature regarding contemporary Catholic school education and its leadership, together with further research is needed to answer these complex questions.

Table 4.2 Summary of Leadership Interviewee Responses Reflecting the Categories of Description

Leadership Interviewee	Categories of Description										
	Catholic Faith	Privilege	Modelling Leadership	Modelling Teaching & Learning	Building Respect and Relationships	Prioritising & being Organised	Prioritising SCS’ Agenda	Student Learning	Professional Learning	Invited/Advised to Apply	
P1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

AP1	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
REC1	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
School1										
Totals	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3
P2	X					X			X	X
AP2	X		X	X				X	X	
REC2	X			X	X			X	X	X
School2										
Totals	3	0	1	2	2	0	0	2	3	2
P3	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
AP3	X				X				X	X
REC3	X			X		X	X		X	X
School3										
Totals	3	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	3
P4	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
AP4	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
REC4	X	X		X		X		X	X	X
School4										
Totals	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	2

4.4 Discussion

As a system of Catholic schools, SCS has a vision to deliver a holistic education founded on the person of Jesus Christ, which supports the evangelising mission of the Church in contemporary society (SCS, n.d). Consequently, there is a need for its leaders and teachers to understand, value, and cherish their Catholic faith and to share it in their school communities. SCS's mission is that students receive quality teaching and learning that enables them to celebrate their Catholic faith, strive for excellence, and make a difference in their world (SCS, n.d). To fulfil this vision and mission, it is imperative that future SCS' leaders have attributes that are perceptibly Catholic and an understanding and love of learning. In this way, leaders such as the one described in Chapter 1, are born with the necessary leadership attributes and virtues associated with the gift of Catholic faith and become/are made into educational leaders through a nurturing of their leadership attributes and their love of learning, for self and others.

To better understand the leadership attributes and identification /development practices of current SCS' leaders, this study has sought to answer two questions: 1 What leadership attributes do current Catholic primary school principals and other leaders possess? And 2 how are current leaders identified and developed for Sydney's Catholic primary schools? In this section, the case and cross-case summaries and analysis will be discussed to answer these questions.

In relation to the leadership attributes, this study has found that current Catholic primary school leaders have the attributes of faithfulness, collaboration, commitment and professionalism (see Table 4.3). Beginning as teachers, the leaders all have an undeniable interest in teaching and learning, which permeates from the classroom to post-graduate study, in most instances. There is also evidence of all leaders coming from a pool of Catholic teachers with the capacity to instruct others in the Catholic faith. Current leaders have significant teaching experience in Catholic schools.

Table 4.3 Summary of Leadership Attributes Evidenced in the Examples Given in the Categories of Description

Leadership Attributes	Categories of Description
Faithfulness	Catholic Faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social justice • Parish involvement • Conveying face of Christ • Nurturing • Catholic Christian values Student Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective RE teaching skills
Collaboration	Building Respect & Relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing teams • Sharing knowledge • Trust and respect • Nurturing • Challenging • Welcoming Priortising & Being Organized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations • Being visible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community interaction
	Modelling Teaching & Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced teacher • Mentoring • Identifying needs
Commitment	Privilege
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated • Passionate • Lead by example • Involved
	Professional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-graduate study • Coaching courses • PEARL
	Student Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced teacher • Contemporary pedagogy • Diverse experience • Lead learning
Professionalism	Prioritising & Being Organized
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations • Being visible • Managing
	Prioritising SCS Agenda
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary pedagogy • Maintaining safety • Building capacity • PEARL • Post graduate study
	Professional Learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-graduate study • Coaching courses • PEARL

In attesting to their faithfulness, the leaders in this study describe; demonstrating Catholic values, being the face of Christ in their school communities, and endeavouring to make their schools visibly Catholic as fundamental to their role. Whilst the data supporting evidence of their Catholicity was apparent, little was offered by way of detail to suggest an in-depth understanding of what it

means to be a Catholic school leader. Therefore, it is suggested that the leaders' and teachers' understandings of Religious Leadership, lies in acknowledging their Baptism, pre-service teacher training in Religious Education, liturgy preparation, and pastoral care of school community members.

Another attribute of Catholic school leaders that emerged from the study is collaboration. Collaborative skills were expressed as prioritising, organising, collaborating, team building, managing budgets, and resources. It was also found that collaborative skills are linked with leadership visibility, capacity building, respect and relationship building, and supporting teaching and learning. Some of these descriptors are more akin to management as opposed to leadership. This is evidenced in numerous references to the day-to-day administration of the school whereas there is limited data about strategic, big-picture ideas and/or the leaders articulating their plans to implement their vision. Here again the data lacks evidence of the leaders' understanding of the complex nature of educational leadership. It is suggested that management of day-to-day activities is the leaders' priority in the schools selected for this study

When examining the demographic data, the emergence of the attribute of commitment becomes evident. The cumulative years of service in Catholic education (n=319), is significant evidence of a 'committed' group of SCS' leaders and teachers. The question arises, but is not addressed in the current study, as to the extent to which the commitment is authentic, by which it is meant that the individual is committed to the mission, or shallow, in that the commitment is to the job and not the vision of Catholic education. Some align their commitment to a passion and/or a privilege with others highlighting it in more practical terms. This group is committed to student learning and their own professional learning. Their experience and hence understanding of Catholic school leadership demonstrates the core competency of Leadership for Learning found in the SCS' *Leadership Framework* (2010). Teachers who responded to the survey acknowledge a diversity of teaching experience by their school leaders and a varying level of commitment to facilitating professional learning, knowledge of contemporary pedagogy, and, building teacher capacity.

However, the survey also reveals that this is not supported by classroom visits and/or modelled by their leadership team. The question arises as to the reliability, consistency, and sustainability of changes within and across the school if school leaders are not providing professional support in the classrooms.

Three categories of description support the notion that current Catholic primary school leaders are professional. These include prioritising, being organised, focusing on the SCS' agenda, and professional learning. The leaders gave a variety of examples in support of this, ranging from being visible in their school communities to enrolling in and/or completing post-graduate degrees in RE, Theology or Leadership, which is mandated for all SCS' leaders. Increasing one's visibility requires an understanding of professional dialogue, conflict resolution, positive mentoring and strategies to promote Catholic values and education in an increasingly secular society (McCrindle, 2013). Completing a post-graduate degree while working full-time illustrates a leader's commitment to professional growth through learning. It also can improve the leader's effectiveness at the school level and may build capacity within the learning organisation. SCS recognises these benefits and sponsors identified leaders in pursuit of improved professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

A close look at the interview data for Professional Learning, a requirement of all SCS' leaders and leaders being invited/advised to apply, reveals high levels of experience and understanding for both categories of description. SCS' leaders exhibit a high level of professionalism in recognising and accepting the need for post-graduate and other leadership-related courses, such as PEARL and coaching and mentoring. Sponsoring, by way of payment/funding of fees for these courses, is limited to identified leaders and is therefore not an option for teachers, such as the one from School1 who commented:

I would love to apply for a leadership position now or in the future, but given the nature of my role (part-time, non-classroom), the likelihood of any kind of leadership position within the Catholic system is extremely slim.

Most of the leaders spoke about being invited to apply for a leadership position during the interview. Whether that invitation was early in their career, or more recently in relation to a secondment, it was evident that past and current principals accept that identifying leaders is a significant responsibility of their role. This gives rise to a further question about the skill of current principals to identify and advise future Catholic primary school leaders.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the main findings that arose from the data analysis highlight the importance of Catholic Faith and Professional Learning as the best understood aspects of contemporary Catholic school leadership. All the leaders (n=12) spoke of their experience and hence understanding of leadership with reference to these two categories of description. They align with a core and supporting leadership competency found in the current SCS' Leadership Framework (2010), which is used to identify and review current Catholic school leaders. Therefore, for a teacher aspiring to a leadership role in a Catholic school, their Catholic Faith and Professional Learning in the years prior to pursuing leadership are paramount to the success of their application. The current practices and processes of self-nomination, Principal/Regional Consultant referral and review, need to render evidence of Catholic faith formation beyond high school level and postgraduate study in education and/or leadership.

Subsequent to this is the leaders' and teachers' understanding of Catholic school leadership explained in terms of the tasks completed or observed in the daily life of the school. Such information lends support for the claim that the schools in this study are well managed and that the respondents' understanding of the difference between management and leadership is unclear. A closer look at the teachers' survey data reveals limited experience of the four supporting leadership processes of Human Resources Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Organisational Leadership and Personal Dimensions of Leadership found in the Catholic School Leadership Framework (2010).

In the next chapter, Conclusions and Recommendations, the author will consider the implications for policy development, the significance and originality of the study and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with a summary statement by the author.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters cover the background, literature review, research questions, methodology, analysis and discussion of the findings. The researcher interviewed school leadership team members and surveyed teachers to explore their understanding of Catholic school leadership and their experiences of it. The implications, significance, recommendations and areas for further research that have emerged from this research are outlined in this chapter. The thesis concludes with a summary of the main findings that answer the research questions that guided the study:

1. What leadership attributes do current Catholic primary school principals and other leaders possess?
2. How are current leaders identified and further developed for Sydney's Catholic primary schools?

5.2 Implications of the study

The current leadership identification process of SCS relies heavily on teachers' self-nomination supported by references from Parish Priests, principals and SCS' consultants and/or curriculum advisers. This process is only open to full-time class teachers who, with a reference from their Parish Priest, are deemed to be practicing Catholics. The findings of this study have led to questions about current processes that limit the possible candidature for leadership and results in a limitation of the candidature for leadership positions. The Catholic school leaders and teachers in this study, when asked to reflect on their experience of Catholic school leadership, did not provide evidence of a deep understanding of the current SCS' *Leadership Framework* (2010), *Theological & Human Virtues* (1994), *Virtues of Leadership* (2003) and/or *Educational Leadership Competencies* (2013). This

finding is important and suggests that new ways of choosing and developing future Catholic school leaders should be explored.

Current SCS' teachers may well be proficient in the classroom and adept at articulating the Stage requirements of the curriculum, whilst ill-informed and/or unprepared to consider and/or self-nominate for a leadership position. A teacher's lack of leadership knowledge and understanding could ultimately impede their application for a leadership position, that they may well excel in. An inaccurate idea of what it means to hold a Catholic school leadership position could result in weakening, rather than strengthening, the candidature for advertised positions. In schools 3 and 4 the RECs described being in an acting position and their need to reapply for permanency in the leadership role later in the school year. The reason for this is SCS' timeframe for appointing permanent school leaders. If school specific applicants are not found by the end of the school-year, acting leadership positions are created. In addition, teacher/leader secondment from another school is sometimes required and this creates instability in both schools for the following school year. As a well-established educational organisation, SCS has a responsibility to provide each of its schools with stable, high- quality leadership. This requires a leadership framework and appointment practices that raise the low level of interest in school leadership found in this study, which could improve the candidature for future leadership positions.

Since the introduction of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2014), current teachers are increasingly more aware of the importance of and skilled in professional reflection and mentoring. It is feasible to suggest that SCS would benefit from opening a discussion about future leadership of its schools, in conjunction with the teacher accreditation process, specifically with those teachers working at the higher levels of Highly Accomplished and Lead. The path to leadership described in the interview transcripts, highlighted encouragement from school principals as the initial identification leading to their self-nomination and eventual appointment. None of the leaders in the study articulated a deep

knowledge or understanding of the current SCS' *Leadership Framework* (2010). Developing and distributing leadership information to all teachers would clarify and improve their understanding of Catholic school leadership as a possible career path in an increasingly secular 21st Century.

SCS' current Strategic Improvement Plan 2016-2018, which includes a Strategic Priority about building capacity within the organisation, is relevant to this implication of the study. Strategic Priority 4 calls for the development of future Catholic school leaders and a strengthening of current leadership in its schools (2015, p. 22). As its indicators of progress, it cites school and system leaders as having a role in the preparation and development of future school leaders; the development of aspiring and existing leaders being informed by performance growth and workplace development; and, an emphasis on the development of leaders who are faith-filled, contemporary and innovative. This suggests a succession plan with strategies much like those described by Fr David Ransom, in writing for the National Catholic Education Commission in 2005. His plan highlighted the need for future identification, education and formation strategies to ensure religious leadership of Catholic schools is administratively sound and grounded in a spiritually mature faith (p. 7).

This description along with the intent found in the rationale of the current SCS' *Accreditation Policy to Work, Teach and lead in Systemic Catholic Schools* (2015) augers well for SCS initiating a leadership discussion with all teachers, as suggested earlier in this section. The policy states that it is the responsibility of all who work, teach and lead in Catholic schools, 'to nurture a partnership in faith, hope and love among students, parents, staff and priests and to embrace evangelisation as a responsibility of the entire school community' (p. 1). The low ranking of these three Theological Virtues in the teachers' survey indicate a need for continuing faith formation initiatives for all SCS' teachers. This is in keeping with the mandated continuing professional development to assist all teachers in meeting the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2014).

5.3 Significance of the Study

The significance or importance of this study lies in the insight it reveals about SCS' leaders and teachers understanding and experience of the Catholic School Leadership Framework (2010) and the Leadership Continuum (2013). These documents for the development and practice of leadership in Catholic primary schools have their origin in the significant work done throughout the 1980s and 90s by the then Director of Schools, Br Kelvin Canavan. The Leadership Framework, which consists of two core purposes and four supporting process, is used for leadership appointments, contract renewals and reappointment processes. However, the data analysis herein highlights a stark lack of reference to these and/or other SCS's documents and research other than the occasional reference to school and system's Strategic Plans and Annual Reports.

This study acts as a catalyst for further discussion and research into the nature of leadership in Catholic primary schools, at this time of increased secularisation in Australia. It evokes the traits, virtues, core values and frameworks of Catholic school leadership. More specifically it focuses on the Catholic primary school Principal, AP and REC and examines their experience and understanding of Catholic school leadership. The teachers' survey data facilitates triangulation of the data collection phase of the study, adding richness and complexity to the data analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Its results contribute to the literature examining the leadership and Catholic identity of contemporary Catholic schools, where there is no one definition of educational leadership. Each school's context is unique and calls for the development of a unique leadership team to model and take forward Christ's message of faith, hope and love, whilst facilitating effective teaching and learning that caters for the needs of its students.

5.4 Recommendations

Leaders and teachers identify Catholic faith, student learning and professional learning as significant for authentic Catholic school leadership. Most of the leaders' interview data refers to a principal's

invitation as the catalyst for their considering a leadership position. This was then followed to their self-nomination, interview, appointment, and then learning about Catholic school leadership from their daily experience in the role. Such data indicates a need for more robust processes that first identify candidates for Catholic school leadership and then provide them with appropriate training programs and experiences that nurture concurrently, their Catholic faith and leadership development. To facilitate the required changes there is a need to review current school leadership identification frameworks and practices, along with the further development opportunities available to current and future school leaders. The recommendations that have emerged from this study are aimed at supporting the sustainability of a recognisably Catholic culture, curriculum and identity across SCS primary schools by improving school leadership. Therefore, in using this lens of sustainability, the recommendations as a result of the study are:

- SCS consider taking forward a review of its current Leadership Framework (2010) including dissemination practices to include all teachers.
- SCS consider new identification processes including a course of action that aligns with that of the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (2014).
- SCS consider developing and facilitating a professional learning package, that stimulates a contemporary, systemic approach to the identification, review and promotion of all leaders, for those in school and regional office leadership positions charged with appointing future primary school leaders.

5.5 Proposed future research

The data from the four case studies revealed that SCS, as a systemic educational institution, does not have an identifiably Catholic banner and/or motto beyond the words Catholic Primary School in the school name. In an increasingly secular society, it would seem important that the integrity and

promotion of Catholic education would be better served if all SCS' schools were branded more effectively, and its leaders and teachers adept in articulating and practicing, what it means to be a 21st century Catholic. Considering this, three areas for attention as further research follow:

- The proposal to replicate the study across a larger number of SCS' primary schools.
- The proposal of a study to investigate the Catholic identity of SCS' schools, given an increasingly secular society, looking specifically at how they are visibly Catholic.
- The proposal of a study to assess SCS' teachers' level of Catholic faith development since the introduction of the *Jesus Christ the Heart of the Matter* (2016), a 'head, heart, hands' faith formation framework for staff in SCS.

5.6 Summary

This study was designed to determine the leadership attributes of current SCS' principals and leaders and how they were identified and further developed. It examined today's leaders' and teachers' understandings of leadership through their experience of it and has made recommendations for reviewing current practices for the identification and further development of future leaders, in establishing *Who Will Lead?*

The data collected through interviews with 16 current Catholic primary school leaders and surveys completed by teachers in each of the four schools, provided the researcher with sufficient evidence to conclude the following. Current principals and leaders are Catholics with a tertiary qualification in education who understand that: Catholic school leadership is about sharing their Catholic faith; providing sound teaching that meets the learning of all students; and, developing and engaging in professional learning as stipulated by SCS

The purpose of this study was to clarify teachers' and leaders' understanding of leadership in the context of their experience of leadership in Catholic primary schools. It has critically assessed

contemporary definitions and practices in educational leadership to determine their effectiveness for developing identification guidelines, leadership formation structures and programs for use by SCS. The results of the data analysis have resulted in recommendations to promote the sustainability of Catholic school leadership. It is vital that SCS review its ongoing leadership needs, look more holistically at its teaching staff to improve leadership candidature, and ensure best practice for the identification and further development of their current and future Catholic leaders.

Documenting and analysing what is currently occurring in Catholic school leadership has provided contemporary evidence to test the theories of leadership examined in the literature review. This has added to an informed understanding of the current frameworks, policies and practices used by SCS for the identification and further development of Principals, APs and RECs in its primary schools

In conclusion and returning to the Principal who aroused my interest in undertaking this research project, I understand that authentic Catholic school leaders are born in the image and likeness of God; gifted with Christian faith through Baptism to make Christ's message of hope and love truly alive in their school communities. Identifying, appointing and nurturing these leaders requires personnel, policies and processes inspired by the word of God and informed by attention to contemporary educational research. The words of Matthew 22:14 have remained poignant throughout this research, 'for many are called but few are chosen'. To sustain Catholic schools as an authentically Catholic education option open to all Australian families, it is important that from the many who are called to teach in a Catholic school that the few who are chosen to lead those schools are identified with integrity and further developed with well researched programs and experiences.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant information sheet and consent form (blank sample)



PROJECT TITLE: WHO WILL LEAD... recommendations for the identification and further development of authentic leaders in Sydney's Catholic schools.

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR: Dr Sean Kearney

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Mrs Maria Maher

STUDENT'S DEGREE: Master of Philosophy

1st July 2015

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This research project seeks to ascertain the nature and style of leadership of individual leaders. The purpose of this study is to clarify teachers' understanding of leadership in the context of their experience of leadership in Catholic primary schools. Its recommendations will support the sustainability of a Catholic identity and culture in all of Sydney's Catholic schools.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Mrs Maria Maher and will form the basis for the degree of Master of Philosophy at The University of Notre Dame Australia, under the supervision of Dr Sean Kearney. It has been approved by CEO Sydney and your school's Principal.

What will I be asked to do?

Teachers will be asked to complete an online survey (link below) using SurveyMonkey. The focus will be on their past and current experience of leadership while working in a Catholic school. The survey will need to be completed by xxx (date). The survey will consist of six questions including participant information (age, gender, years of teaching experience etc.) and statements to be answered using a Likert style scale (agree, disagree, etc.). The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

There are no foreseeable risks with participating in this project.

What are the benefits of the research project?

Documenting and analysing what is currently occurring in Catholic school leadership will provide contemporary evidence to test the theories of leadership examined in the literature and provide: An informed understanding of the current frameworks, policies and practices for the identification and further development of authentic educational leaders in Sydney's catholic schools; and

Recommendations that will improve ways of identifying and further developing aspiring, future leaders for their leadership role in Sydney's Catholic schools.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not under any obligation to participate. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences; however, you cannot withdraw after you submit your survey, as surveys are non-identifiable and results will be aggregated.

Will anyone else know the results of the project?

Information gathered about you will be held in strict confidence. This confidence will only be broken in instances of legal requirements such as court subpoenas, freedom of information requests, or mandated reporting by some professionals. The data for this project will remain confidential at all times. It will be stored in the Sydney School of Education Offices, Broadway, NSW. Participants will not be identified in the data as only aggregated data will be published. Once the study is completed, the data collected from you will be de-identified and stored securely in the School of Education at The University of Notre Dame Australia for seven years. The data may be used in future research but you will not be able to be identified. The results of this study will be disseminated both to CEO Sydney and to the research community. When the report is finalised, its findings and recommendations will be shared with the Executive Director of Schools, CEO Sydney with possible publication in education journals.

Will I be able to find out the results of the project?

Following the thesis submission, a summary of the results of the project will be sent to the Principal of each participating school for dissemination to those staff members who participated.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

For further information and/or clarification about this project please contact Maria Maher at 20096451@my.nd.edu.au.

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Notre Dame Australia (approval number #####). If you wish to make a complaint regarding the manner in which this 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, research@nd.edu.au Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

I want to participate! How do I sign up?

To be a participant in this project please click on this link XXXXXXXX and complete the survey. By completing this anonymous survey, you are consenting to be a participant in this research project.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Maria Maher

Dr Sean Kearney

Appendix 2: Email to the school principal



1st July 2015

Dear (Principal's name to be inserted)

I am currently completing a Masters in Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney, Australia. I am undertaking a research project that is studying the future leadership of Sydney's Catholic schools.

One part of this study requires collecting data from teachers about their understanding of Catholic school leadership. I will be using an online survey to collect this data. To help facilitate the collection of the survey data, I am asking you to distribute by email the letter to teachers, containing the participant information sheet. The email also has the link to the anonymous online survey. I have included these in this letter for your perusal. The study has obtained ethics clearance from the University of Notre Dame and the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.

I appreciate your assistance and I am happy to be contacted should you have any questions regarding this request or the study.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Maria Maher

Appendix 3: Letter of ethics approval



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A

16 June 2015

Dr Sean Kearney & Ms Maria Maher
School of Education
The University of Notre Dame Australia
PO Box 944
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ABN: 69 330 643 210
CRICOS PROVIDER CODE: 01032F

Dear Sean and Maria,

Reference Number: 015072S

Project Title: "Who will Lead? Recommendations for the identification and further development of authentic leaders in Sydney's Catholic schools."

Your response to the conditions imposed by a sub-committee of the university's Human Research Ethics Committee, has been reviewed and assessed as meeting all the requirements as outlined in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2014). I am pleased to advise that ethical clearance has been granted for this proposed study.

All research projects are approved subject to standard conditions of approval. Please read the attached document for details of these conditions.

On behalf of the Human Research Ethics Committee, I wish you well with your study.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natalie Giles'.

Dr Natalie Giles
Research Ethics Officer
Research Office

cc: Prof Marguerite Maher, Dean, School of Education Sydney;
A/Prof Boris Handal, SRC Chair, School of Education Sydney.

Appendix 4: Survey Monkey questions

Teachers' Survey Questions: To proceed with the survey the teacher will need to read the plain English Statement on the previous page and press enter to give their consent.

QUESTION 1: Please tick the correct box

Male

Female

QUESTION 2: Please tick the correct box

Years of Catholic school teaching experience: 1-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

QUESTION 3: Please tick the correct box

Years of teaching at current Catholic school: 1-5 years

6-10 years

11-20 years

More than 20 years

Comment if you have any additional information.

QUESTION 4: Please tick the correct box

Have you ever considered applying for a leadership position in this or another Catholic school?

Yes

No

Comment if you have any additional information.

QUESTION 5: Please place a tick in the box that most appropriately describes your understanding of these statements. Make your selection, based on your own experience of Catholic school leadership (i.e. Principal, Assistant Principal (AP), and Religious Education Coordinator (REC))

Catholic school leaders: Strongly Agree Agree Not Sure Disagree Strongly Disagree

- personify the Theological Virtues of Faith Hope and Charity
- demonstrate the Human Virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance
- promote Religious Leadership and Leadership for Learning as their core purpose
- demonstrate humility, courage, integrity, compassion, humour, passion and wisdom
- foster effective relationships
- demonstrate visionary leadership
- lead a learning community
- provide instructional leadership
- develop and facilitate leadership opportunities
- manage school operations and resources

- understand and respond to the larger societal context

Comment if you have any additional information.

QUESTION 6: Please rank these aspects of school leadership 1-8 from most (1) to least (8) necessary for effective Catholic school leadership, as a reflection on your experience of Catholic school leadership (ie Principal, Assistant Principal (AP), and Religious Education Coordinator (REC)).

To engage in teacher mentoring and class visits

To take responsibility for student management and wellbeing

To create and maintain a safe, welcoming, collaborative school community

To build and maintain strong school/parish connections

To convey the face of Christ, His gospel message and Catholic Christian values to the school community

To provide professional learning opportunities for all staff that address individual student needs

To prioritise contemporary learning opportunities that address individual student needs and learning styles

To promote Catholic Education in the local community

Comment if you have any additional information.

Appendix 5: Interview schedule

Interview Questions: (not in any order at this stage) I will start each interview by gathering the demographic data, incl. Position, gender, years of teaching experience in a Catholic school (primary/secondary), years of leadership experience of a Catholic school (primary/secondary).

1. Starting with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal (AP or REC) before and they asked you to tell them what Catholic primary school leadership involves, what would you say?

To Find Out how the interviewees will respond to me as the researcher and have them enter into a conversation about themselves. Looking for variations in the responses.

2. If someone asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic primary school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

To Find Out whether or not the interviewees are happy/confident, understand their role in leadership succession; understand current self-nomination and referral procedures for the identification of future leaders. Looking for variations in the responses.

3. What does your day to day job entail as a Principal, (AP or REC) in a Catholic primary school? Speak from your experience of being one and say what you actually do rather than what you think you should do.

To Find Out what the interviewees understand about the current CEO Sydney Leadership framework and how it is demonstrated in their position. Looking for variations in the responses.

4. From your experience as a Catholic primary school Principal (AP or REC) how would you define leadership in the context of your role?

To Find Out what the interviewees understand about leadership and/or believe it to be about. Looking for variations in the responses.

5. From your experience as a Catholic primary school Principal (AP or REC) what style of leadership do you think is most effective?

To Find Out whether or not any of the 4 styles explored in my Literature Review are included in the interviewee's experience of leadership.

6. Tell me about the path you took to become a Catholic primary school Principal (AP or REC).

To Find Out if self-nomination, peer/CEO Executive recommendation, mentoring, experiential learning and/or any other referrals or influences were involved. Looking for variations in the responses

Prompts:

After initial responses

- Could you explain that further?
- What do you mean by that?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- Why do you think that?
- Why do you do it that way?

To seek more depth

- You have talked about X, but what does X mean to you?
- You have talked about X and Y, how do you think these two things are related to each other?
- Describe that to me from start to end...
- Tell me how you felt about that....

To clarify

- What do you mean?
- I'm not clear about....
- Your leadership role is not my own and so there are some things here I am not clear about. You used the term.... Or course name.... Or acronym....., can you define it for me?

Appendix 6: Interview transcripts

School 1

P1

Thank you ... for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

I would tell them that it is a very privileged role, a very complex role and it involves first of all being passionate about your faith and understanding the evangelising role of the Church and having a great knowledge and belief in the Catholic Church. You need to be a passionate educator and have a great love of learning yourself; you need to be a leader of learning. You need to demonstrate that, you need to model it by being very close to it. You need to be an avid reader, a person who dialogues well with teachers. You need to be a collaborative worker. You need to be a team player. So you need to have a great love of learning and in having a great love of learning you need to have a great respect for the people in that learning. You need to be open to learning and very open to people's views and if you are the Principal of any school the students are at the centre of that learning. For learning you need to model that for students they need to see you as a learner as a teacher. As principal you are still teacher, but teacher in a different role. You lead that learning through the classroom, not directly in the classroom but you lead it through being part of all the learning, part of all the staff meetings you need to be part of all the in-services so that teachers see you as leader. You also need to be an innovator. Staff looks to you for vision. Creative, innovative diverse thinkers. They need to see you as quite intelligent as well. That's in the whole passion of learning. I think as Principal too you need to balance, you need to put humanity first, you need to put your staff first um and you need to put people first. Um you need to be that professional learning community giving respect and trust they will come with you 100% when you treat each person as an individual, understand them as much as you can in terms of what they want to share with you and respect because your teachers, your staff are your greatest resource. So I think you have to basically respect humanity first. You have to be realistic in your expectations of them. They need to be high. You need to give examples by having high expectations for yourself. By high expectations for yourself you can have high expectations for your teachers. You have to walk the talk with them. Not just tell them what to do but be a part of that. In that whole area of PR it is important to be a peoples' person, you need to be open in your communication. Open and honest with them and they will be open and honest with you. So I think there's a need to be open and transparent and I think that once you are transparent as Principal um that whole collaboration that whole building up of a professional learning community will take place. I also think you need to be a great organiser as Principal. I think you need to be strategic in your organisation because it is a complex role. So you are a Catholic leader first and foremost, set within the Catholic values, you are the pedagogical leader the leader of learning, you are the strategic management of that school. So under that Strategic leadership comes your compliance, your organisational part. I think you need to be clever in that strategic way you work because a lot of things come down on schools particularly from the political arena, from your systemic leaders, and I think you need to be clever in integrating those processes and policies that come down and cleverly integrate them into policies in the school so it does not look like you are overburdening your teachers and you do, whatever you do you do in a very positive way, so that you do not seem to be burdened because if you are burdened then you start burdening your teachers. If you introduce things as exciting and positive they will get that flow and think this is the thing to do. So I think to have a very positive attitude in what you do, don't walk around

say you have all this to do but integrate it and, and, and then set your priorities and do what you need to do and if you are highly organised and balance it out then I think you really learn to cope with that. I also think you need to um, um PAUSE

What about the energy levels required?

You need a lot of energy but you need to look after yourself. You need to ensure you have a life, a balance. I tend to do that so I have my hobbies, I have a great love of music. I dance on the weekend and I give time to my family, family is very important to me. So I ensure. Another thing I have done over the years is to separate Principal from who I am. Because we have that parent thing I think parent engagement is very important and you have to isolate.... Any of the conflict situations you come up with that is another part of the role so you have to be a good manager of conflict and resolution, and realise that um, and seek help when you need help, seek advice. I never work alone as Principal, it is very rare that I have worked alone. I think now in terms of have a wonderful leadership team if you are very transparent with your leadership team and you develop them you've got a team around you and you don't need to feel alone anymore in leadership. You have wonderful support from the CEO and if I need advice I seek advice and if someone is better on staff than me I seek their help. You are the manager and you have to manage all this and you need the balance of your team to help you get through that job. I don't think you have to have it all together and as Principal know everything it is using your human resources very cleverly to make your job much easier. So always work as a team... develop your leadership team as much as you possibly can because they're your strength. Gather your strength around you. That is why I have always worked with a very strong executive team and developed them so that then they can step into Principal positions very easily because I share everything with them. You have to be a financial manager as well because you have to look after all those other mundane things like the maintenance, the compliance but it is part of what we do as Principal, so I don't get burdened down with WHS it is just a job you do, it's like one of the tasks you do in order to have a safe environment, looking after the wellbeing of the teachers and the students and the parents. It is important as a Principal to be a good communicator, passionate about what you do be passionate and you need to be positive about what you do be positive it is really important that you are positive about what you do. Show that you love being a Principal. That's what I do I love being Principal.

If I was that friend you certainly have given me a lot to reflect on about the role of Principal.

You also have to be organised. I have diary for my appointments and I write down my tasks every day and make sure I prioritise. I think it is very important to prioritise I prioritise my tasks and if I don't get that task finished and it doesn't have to be done that day I just carry it on to the next day, but I try to complete tasks um on a day to day basis. I answer every email, but I don't ... another thing I think is very important is to try and divorce your work that was the other thing I was going to say... as principal we have certain roles and responsibilities but I think we get to a time when they just... if you separate the role of Principal from who you are as a person so that you don't get burdened down with conflicts in the areas because that is who we are as a Principal. One of the responsibilities is to take on some of those conflict situations, sometimes with a parent. I always look at it and think they are not attacking me as PW that is my role as Principal and I can walk out of here and not be burdened. If I have done my best, sought the right advice and all the processes are in operation I don't feel any less a person when I walk out of here because that is what I do as Principal. They come in here attacking the Principal, that's my job but they are not attacking me. I have cleverly been able to learn to do that over the years so I never feel negative about the job ever and I never have because I can actually do that mm, mm.

If someone asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

The advice I would give them is to sit and reflect before you go in and think about where you have and what you have done. I would be looking at. I would talk to them about talking to people I really respected and get some advice from a colleague, I certainly would research the school I was applying for to see if that particular school fits with my particular talents, look where the school is at in its journey. I would probably seek some advice from CEO. If it was for Principal I think I would have done some prior study in leadership to understand what leadership was all about. So you are so that you go in prepared. Um and yes I think that most people who are going into this position have already had a leadership position anyway. They could talk and I have spoken to a lot of aspiring APs to say what, what advice I would give them. I would think that the interview process sets some people back. Talk to someone about how I would present myself in an interview situation and how to be strategic in answering those questions, make sure you are prepared for your interview, because if people have decided they are going to be Principal they know they can do it because they have seen the role, but I think very often they fall down in the interview process because they sell themselves short. Be well prepared for your interview and think about all the key competencies, like your understanding of your Catholic faith, evangelisation of the Church, um understanding your own personal growth in particular relationships. I think particularly in relationships because Principalship is about building relationships. Understand what it means to be a key leader of learning, understand yourself in regard to your organisation skills, strategic management processes because it is your skill in organising and understanding all that is going to make you a successful principal. Be very good at understanding that when you go for an interview you need to be well prepared, go in with the attitude that I can do this if you are not sure don't go. Go in with the attitude that I really believe I can do this job and that is why I have applied for it. So be passionate, be passionate about what you are doing and sell yourself.

Thank you. What does your day to day job entail?

My day to day job entails being here early. Every morning I like to meet and greet my teachers. Every morning I like to say hi, good morning to the teachers, then I go out on to the playground and see the children. Then I have um two sides on my diary, on one side I have all my appointments listed um I have those listed and then I have the tasks listed, I have all the meetings listed for the day. Those tasks involve being involved in the classrooms doing tasks that involve being a leader of learning during the day. Today I presented our pedagogical framework to the teachers so before school started I spent an hour with the teachers. So my day involves many things interacting with... I am involved with playground duty I do playground duty so I can get out to meet the parents, meet the children. Being in class today with Year 4 seeing what is happening with their Literacy and a particular grant. Some of the tasks I am involved in today are getting quotes for a R&M grant, I am on a review panel over the road for a contract renewal it involves a variety of things. I guess if you looked at it, if you summarised the day it involves meeting your staff, meeting your students. Being involved with administrative tasks, being involved with their learning and it involves making contact with students in the playground.

Trying to get a balance...

Trying to get a balance with all aspects into each day. Some days it is not like that like when you are having a total day when you are interviewing all day like Kindy interviews and other interviews that we are doing so the day is a very mixed day. I plan my days as things come up on the calendar. Now I am thinking of looking at things like staffing and strategically drawing up plans for classrooms. It is strategic

in fitting all those things around how many appointments you have in a day and how much you can fit in.

Some of the things are purely independent tasks that you can do....

Yes purely independent tasks I tend to come in at 7 in the morning and get those underway to leave time for collaborative tasks. I was working on one of those earlier for a student with high needs so I have been sitting collaboratively with the AP working on that. Sometimes I am working collaboratively with the whole staff addressing all of the key competencies that you require. I guess in a day you are working with staff, students, secretarial staff and maybe individual tasks that you are responsible for.

Thank you. From your experience of being a Catholic school principal what style of leadership do you think is most effective?

Collaborative....a collaborative leadership style, not even a...yes it is a collaborative leadership style. Working with your team, in particular working with you leadership team, and also collaborating with your whole staff. Collaborating with your parent groups and collaborating with your students and student leaders. Yes it is a collaborative leaning style. I do not have a hierarchical style at all. I consider every member on this staff, contributes. From the cleaner to the canteen lady to the P&F, it's quite circular, together we make up the school. I do not like a linear.... I know I am basically responsible, I guide and facilitate. I see myself in the centre of the circle and then I facilitate out and around so that it is all feeding in to make up this beautiful community so that it would be collaborative.

You have spoken a few times about a team approach and having teams. What do you believe constitutes a team?

What do I believe a team is? I believe a team is people who work together, who listen to each other, um who plan together, who share ideas, um can give and take and then can come up with a decision that is collaborative. I believe a team is a group of people working collaboratively together, respecting ideas, challenging one another not everyone necessarily having the same idea but in the end you have to come up with a shared vision that is done through lots of dialogue and um I very often use the word team, I use it all the time. I use the word team for my leadership team I work with and then we set up teams for all our professional development, curriculum teams our behaviour team our diverse learning team. The word team.... If I am addressing staff I say hi team. I call my total staff team because together we are all a team. Sometimes we work on more specific teams but we are a team. A professional learning community of staff. That is what I believe a team is and how it works. We are all different and that collaboration is so important today and even if people have different ideas you can still work collaboratively and remember we are people with differences and it is just a matter of respecting. Sometimes I might have an idea and place it out there and for some it is just too far too far for people so I have to back-back a bit but that is OK, so we back-back a bit so it suits all. That is what I believe a true team is to come with an idea and it may be the starting of something and it grows and develops so that in the end everybody can say they can see that working and we come up with the best idea that will suit everyone here.

From the days of Mary MacKillop she had here team of sisters...

Exactly she did. It is not a hierarchical model at all with you doing it because I say, that sort of thing I don't think we operate like that anymore. It doesn't work.

Thank you. Can you tell me about the path you took to becoming a Catholic primary school Principal?

My first appointment was when I was 31 I was working at the CEO in Broadway with Mon. Slowey. I spent 2 years there before the diocese was broken up into 3 dioceses. I was an RE consultant and we travelled from Springwood to Maroubra. Loved the job. I always loved working in those positions but I always loved the school community. I love teacher education and I have done it a few times but I always thought you can do it for a few years and go back to school to keep yourself grounded. I was working in Broadway for 2 years and I wanted to go back to the classroom to improve my classroom skills so I got myself a position back teaching year 3 and I got myself that position after the wonderful 2 years in Broadway and then I got a call from Mons Slowey if I would come in and have a talk with him and there was a school in great need of a Principal. There was friction in the school between the religious and the priest and the religions were withdrawing from the school as it was being taken over by a lay Principal, and I was invited to take over that school. So I did. I thought I could take up this challenge and I absolutely loved it and I made a great big difference to this school in two years. I fell pregnant in that time and I gave birth to a Downs Syndrome son. At that time all the parents wanted to do my parent job for me so I could be there but I thought that my place was at home as it was my responsibility to give him the best start in life and being Principal... I always thought the you had to give 100%. Being Principal I had to give 100% and I did not think I could do that, carry on being Principal and give my son all the early intervention he needed. So I resigned from Principalship. Much to my dismay I resigned but that was OK. I resigned and after 6 months I went back as an advisor, an RE advisor 2 days a week. I was able to do the early intervention for my son and then had 2 more children and I remained a part-time advisor for a few years and then I moved back into... when the Sydney regions broke up I moved back as a fulltime RE advisor at Regents Park. I admired the work in the office being done by Anne..... and when she move to the Parramatta office at Blacktown I applied for a RE advisors job with her and moved out there. I stayed there about 5 years and did a lot of wonderful creative work and wrote the program Sharing Our Story and did a lot of Professional Development in RE with teachers. The creative side of RE using both the right and left lobe in presentation. I then decided it was time to go back to classroom again so I discussed this with Ann because I believed I needed to pick up my skills in Maths, English, Science and the rest of the curriculum. I had been concentrating on one area for a while and schools change. I then went back to a job as an REC at a big school and I was there for only 12 months. After 6 weeks I was asked to be AP at another school but said I wanted to be grounded and with a difficult Year 6 class I decided to stay and develop my skills if I was going to lead a school again I needed to understand that children had changed in that period of time and they had changes dramatically. I needed to understand children and their needs. I needed to be in the classroom like other teachers day in and day out with a very difficulty class with behaviour and learning needs, a very large class. During that time a position came up at another school and I thought I am going to go for Principal again. I just loved being Principal. I went for one school but then I had a call from HR saying had I seen another school advertised. I said No I hadn't. They said would I consider coming in and talking about taking on this school, someone to troubleshoot it and fix it. I said OK and once again it was a school that had a lot of relationship problems in it particularly with the parents, Principal and staff all very disjointed. I said I would take it with support from CEO and see how I went for 6 months and if I had the right mix with that school and I have what it takes to turn it around I will take it. I stayed there 8 years. Built a whole new school and changed the staff. I applied for another school and got it and stayed 14 years and I was going to retire from that school and I was asked to come here. This will be my final school. In some ways of the s4 schools I have been Principal in I have been invited to take P position in them.

You have not been through the self-nomination process...

That is correct I did go through the process of applying for 1 but was invited to take another. The school prior to this one I filled out the paperwork but for this one no. Not always applying but by CEO people seeing what I had done and appointing me.

CEO identifying your skills matching them up where needed. In summary can you define leadership for me in the context of your role?

I have to think about this because it is a key role. Leadership is modelling, facilitating, inspiring and energising those around you.

Thank you for sharing your wisdom which I know will be very useful for my research.

AP 1

We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what Catholic school leadership involved, what would you tell them?

If someone had never been a P AP or REC before I would tell them that it is extremely...its very demanding, it is extremely rewarding, it is, your role is extremely diverse. You have got to be very credible and strong as an educator but you also have to have the leadership qualities. So it is a real balancing role. On referring to this AP role in particular, balancing between the teaching and learning, the administration and the Pastoral Care that comes along.

How many hours do you spend in your out of class AP role?

Within school hours I am .4 teaching, .1 Indigenous support so .5 is AP role.

If someone asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them? Because in the main that is the process people go through.

Mm. Number 1 be very familiar with the system documents, the Leadership framework and the strategic direction. I would say really know the system you are working in and really know where it is going, um but also know the AITSIL leadership standards. Qualities for these standards. Do your research well and truly, and you need a high level of commitment and resilience but know your facts, know what you are getting into. Look after yourself.

Thank you. What does your day to day job as an AP entail?

Um I'm doing the first two hours of everyday in learning support. This is my first year in Learning Support but I am also involved in a program with a grant in Year 4 where we have identified 15 students out of 50 who are working below benchmark. Who have stanines of 1,2 & 3 their RR are 20 or below. Its... their writing is very poor so we are trying a program using the 7 Steps of Writing and intensive reading. That is the first 2 hours of my day and I must admit I love those two hours. The rest of the day just seems to get absorbed in meetings around the eLearning around the school, meeting with the um I kind of keep an eye on the EALD teachers, I work with them making sure they are keeping their data in. There is quite a lot around data.

Can you please explain EALD?

ESL. So I work quite closely with them and I work with the eLearning co-ordinator. I work with Catherine Mc who is the advisor or Leader of Learning with regard to the data analysis in Literacy in the school. A lot of meetings and a lot of... quite a lot of time case managing particular students. That is something I am more conscience of this year and being really sure about. Ensuring that case management is done very thoroughly. Um New Scheme Teachers lesson observations and today at recess putting rubbish bins out for children. So you know the usual AP stuff.

Thank you. From your experience of a Catholic school AP how would you define leadership?

Well as a um.....I think to be a leader in a Catholic school you have to be very committed to your faith and um your involvement in your Parish and your commitment to um..... Its no longer you go to Mass on Sunday and that is part of your life...now its part of your role. And we've got to be....its not being visible its being involved in the Parish. I am involved in Social Justice in my Parish and it has connections to this parish so.... Number 1 in the Catholic school you have to be there, you have to live it you have to act it...its got to mean something to you otherwise I say go to another system. Um but the original question is Maria?

Defining Leadership in a Catholic school

The role of leadership in a Catholic school is transforming catholic schools. Taking schools into that contemporary pedagogy, working with people to take them with you to working towards that contemporary pedagogy and making schools a place where children want to be and you are doing the best thing, the moral imperative actually making a difference in the lives of these children and as a leader I see the role as being important in setting the scene for that school. If the scene is set then other things fall into place I see it as an important role. I see it as a service and I see it as you are serving the community, you are serving the um... it is a service role.

That leads into my next question. As a Catholic school AP what style of leadership do you think is most effective?

Definitely, definitely a consultative a service working with people. Ah... it is on the tip of my tongue ah....I can see the diagram.

Tell me a little bit more about working with people.

Mm just that whole um transforming a school community so um.... Getting people on side being but doing it through being modelling being an active learner modelling being an ongoing learner end setting up an professional learning community where we are learning off each other and we are all... leadership is actually... I don't like distributive leadership um more shared leadership but at the same time people well and truly know their roles within that leadership that shared leadership. Does that make sense?

Yes that does. It is a combination of styles you have brought together from your years of experience as a leader and other parts of your life.

Yes

Can you tell me about Learning Communities? How are schools Learning Communities and what effect does leadership have on that?

Number 1 you have to. As a learning community you have a purpose behind your learning together. For example the year 4 project is an inquiry model. Very much based on Helen Timperley's levels, cycle of inquiry. You go into it with a purpose so it is authentic and um a lot of respect um there is trust there is a high level of trust. The opportunity to learn off each other like instructional rounds. It is a kind of harsh title and brings up a lot of harsh connotations for a lot of people but it is a positive thing and when it was done here it was a positive thing. Lots of trust, lots of openness, lots of sharing and lots of learning. The authentic leader is in the thick of it.

Can you tell me the path you took to becoming a leader in a Catholic school?

I left teaching never to return um after a few years and went in to work in Human Resources. Then I went back into it part-time and fell into it. Worked with current P part-time and full-time in another school, did my Masters I did some study in HR did my Masters in curriculum and pedagogy. I haven't done a Masters in Leadership. I have enrolled done a few subjects in a Masters of RE and my next subject is in Leadership as I feel I have the ideas in my head but I find it difficult to articulate them as you would have noticed but I really love being involved, I love being involved in the planning part of the school and P gave me an opportunity and I just went with it so and the more I did the more I loved it.

Thank you I appreciate you assisting me with my research.

REC 1

Now we will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal in a Catholic school and they asked you to tell them what Catholic school principalship involved, what would you say to them.

That is OK because I have to tell a few people because they do not understand. What I generally say is that my area of leadership is based around the faith formation of students, the Catholic culture and religious celebrations around the school. That is my primary leadership role in the school and second to that I am on the school leadership team so in that role I have to work collaboratively with the P and AP so that is how I generally explain it to people.

And if this same person heard that and thought OK I am at level of my career now and I think I would like to self-nominate for a Principal's position that I see advertised what advice would you give them?

I would tell them to sit down and have a talk with someone in CEO, firstly about accreditation because that seems to be quite a big issue I stumbled upon recently. That would be my first advice.

Tell me more about what you mean by accreditation.

I mean a Master's degree and the expectation of further study. That is the first thing that they really need to be aware of and that they are choosing the right area of study for CEO. That would be the first conversation; the second conversation would be a conversation with feedback about them having the characteristics of leadership. With a P or mentor or someone who knows them and if not go to something like PEARL, the upcoming Leadership course and formation information. Not only that but getting information about the skills they have within the role, the leadership skills and personal skills, emotional intelligence skills they need to bring to the role as well.

I know a little about PEARL from the CEO website, could you tell me a little more about that?

Sure. I haven't done it myself but they ask some leaders in the school to identify potential leaders to move strategically into future leadership. It is usually about reflecting on leadership and their leadership potential. I think they are looking at how they would move into leadership formerly as well. That is what I know from what I have been told about it from people who have been to it.

This has become a part of your role, to identify in the staff people would benefit from PEARL?

Yes, yes from my advisors they are indicating to us, advertising that further study is one area or looking for people who could attend PEARL, or a retreat or attend information about future leadership, positions that might come up.

Can you describe for me your day to day job as a REC in a Catholic school? I want you to speak from your experience of being one and say what you actually do rather than what you think you should do.

My first role is co-ordinating with staff and students for all Liturgical celebrations across the school. I say co-ordinating because it is not my job to make sure I personally run every single one, um it is my job to work with staff who are leading that Liturgical Celebration. To work with those staff and I will co-ordinate the technology side. I usually have the music and slides and that part of the organisation and they work with the students. That is my first role. Secondly meeting with the Parish Priest

ensuring that we have, he is coming in being part of the community, having the Liturgical aspects and RE curriculum aspects covered and having him coming in to speak with the students each term, linked into the RE curriculum. From there it is working with teachers and leading in the curriculum area of RE. Specifically with higher order thinking tasks this year using thinking hats, DeBonos Hats the teachers have been taking that on. I also work with the students in Mini Vinnies looking at social justice issues around the school. These are the areas I find mainly in the RE section. Apart from them I also have other roles in the school. I am also a member of the SWPB team School Wide Positive Behaviours, a driving force with that and also on the Mathematics Team and the HSIE/Geography Team the new syllabus to come out. So I guess the RE aspects come first and then the other areas of leadership come after that. So even though I am REC there are other areas of leadership that are a part of my job as well.

In that explanation I get the sense of it being 50/50. Is it really like that and what is your actual teaching role?

My teaching role is that of Kindergarten teacher 4 days a week and I try to make that come first as much as I can. But I am lucky that I teach co-operatively with my grade partner. I have a lot of support so that if I have to move out of class to deal with an aspect of leadership I can do that quite easily. Yes Kindergarten and I guess the RE is 60/70%. It might sound like 50/50 but more like 60/70% RE with 30/40% other aspects.

Thank you for that explanation. Therefore as an REC how would you define leadership in the context of your role in a Catholic school?

I guess I see myself as an integral part of the Leadership Team and my leadership out there in the community and for the students to identify is in RE but I think it is more than that, it is about establishing yourself as a leader in the school and there are a lot of ways to do that like presence, relationships, collaborative partnerships which I have tried to foster as well, but I think it is many more things not just RE. That is the title but it is all the other attributes that you have that identify you as a leader.

Thank you. I would like you to now think about your leadership style and describe it for me.

Um I like I think (although P hates this word) I always try to be authentic and base myself in good relationships with others. I try to always have positive, respectful, collaborative relationships in all aspects of the school because I heard something once that M K said when he spoke to the RECs last year. "Relationships with your colleagues is like an emotional bank account, like if you have positive, respectful, collaborative relationships, when a tough crucial decision has to be made and a leader you have to stand up and say it or perhaps no we are not going to do that and give a reason, your bank account is going to drop but if you already have that positivity and respect it will never go below 0. So I guess I have always kept relationship as a really, really important part of leadership because that is how we relate to others. In saying that um you can't give people what they want to hear all of the time, you certainly can't give them what they want all the time but certainly the basis I work from.

On a day to day basis how do you go about building those relationships as an REC?

Sure, um I think it is just getting to know people. This only my second year here. Last year it was just about saying hi, talking to people, listening to conversations so that if someone said "my niece had a baby" I would ask them the next week "how is your niece and new baby?" Picking up on those personal aspects of people than when I come to work with people I am very collaborative. I will sit

down with people and work through something together. Through those aspects I guess they got to know me and see what I was like as a person and that was how I built the relationships, from the ground up is how I like to think of it.

Tell me about the path you took to become a leader, a REC.

I always say the leadership found me, I didn't find leadership in the fact that um in 2010 I was approached by my P at my previous school to apply for a .2 co-ordinators job. I wasn't going to apply for it myself; I didn't think I would be right for it. I didn't see myself in that way but she asked me to apply for it so I did. I got that role and was in that role for 4 years. Having been there in that role for 4 years I thought I was ready for an REC role and applied for a few positions in the IW and got this one. At the same time the CEO at the end of 2010 sponsored me to do my Masters in Ed Leadership at ACU. I finished a couple of months ago and graduate this month.

Congratulations

Thank you. That is how I found myself in leadership, it found me. I was hesitant to apply for REC jobs I have to say that people give it a bad rap. They presume that you have to be up there and saying that God is great all the time or being really crafty and setting up beautiful prayer spaces and so I was really hesitant and thought that was just not me, But after a couple of years of thinking about it I had a lovely grade partner who had been a REC and she convinced me to have a go and that after a few months convinced me that I had the skills, I just had to be me in the role I didn't have to be someone else and so I took the risk.

On a 5 finger count, what would you say those skills are?

She said I had a good working relationship with people, I'm highly organised, I lead learning really well, A great rapport with staff at all levels and can be collaborative and a team player. I know I have those skills but I guess it is reverse tall topky syndrome. You don't want to say look, I am good at these things. I guess it takes someone sometimes to identify them in you.

Here are 2 of the questions from the Teacher's survey that I would like you to take some time to read through and answer.

Sure.

Thank you

School 2

P 2

We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

I would say it is a multifaceted job. What our leadership is that is different to state school leadership is Religious Leadership. You have to be able to speak to that in an authoritative way and if you are not prepared for that well then you should consider something different because that is a massive challenge for us with some people who in some cases are not so churched or confident in talking about their faith. It is really important. Then the leadership for learning, is a massive part of the job, the Principal is the leader but um... you rely on having good executive members with you and people lead areas for you as well. Arguably the biggest challenge in the role is around people management. Um from my perspective it is not parents, I know for other Principals parents are but parents are not the biggest issue for me. I think the biggest issue is around management of your staff. How to promote a nurturing but challenging work environment and one where you are not scared to have a hard word with people. But hopefully you can avoid that a lot by good employment um and then by the culture that you set up in your school.

If I was the friend and I threw my hands up and said I couldn't possible do all of that, where would I go for help?

Are they thinking about doing the job or are they in the job?

They are still thinking about it?

I would say that that is only my reality and they should talk to other people and see what their reality is. Talk to their colleagues and AP, REC because they have gone into it for different reasons to me. There are far more people they can talk to get their perspective on it otherwise they are only gettings point of view. Apart from that there is always your school Consultant you can talk to. Perhaps if that is a person.... It helps if you have a bit of a relationship with them so that you can have that chat. That is what I would recommend.

Can you tell me the path you took to becoming a Catholic primary school P?

I had great advice from my first P, who back in 1993 in my 4th year of teaching, with another young guy there were talking about leadership. We started with extra study, the M of Ed Admin it was then. She called us in and said I'm going to give you some advice here, if you are going to Masters, do it in RE because we need people who are strong in RE. It was the best advice she could have given me. I still give that advice to people now because that is the difference in our schools. So I did that and at the same time when I started that I changed schools. When I had been in my second year in that school, the REC went on... no the P went on maternity leave and everyone stepped up and I had the opportunity to be Acting REC. That was in my second year of my Masters. When I was finished it then people were coming back so there was no job so I applied for another REC job at another school. From there I did 3 years then 2 years REC at a bigger school. I had good encouragement from my P, at that school who identified my skills and encouraged me to apply for AP jobs which I got and was there for 5 years and was only 35/36 when I left there and realised I had to go somewhere else as an AP again and did three years at that school as AP before getting P job at smaller school than this one

and then this one. I have been lucky in leadership because I have been in a variety of schools with different positions. I have seen how different people have handled different situations and I think that is invaluable to anyone applying for a leadership job. You need practical experience. You need to see different leaders. I see the people who have succeeded and they are often people who have worked in a variety of positions and um I think sometimes when people struggle it is because they have been promoted very quickly and they have not had leadership experience with different leaders. I just can't stress that enough.

Could you briefly describe the stand-out of these leaders in your experience?

Yes, it was E.g., the P I worked with for 2 years as an REC. She was an incredibly calm lady but very firm. You knew that E was the P. My first meeting with the Exec in that school. A very big school of over 600 students. She welcomed us all onto the leadership team and said that when we met she wanted to hear from all of us but she did explain that you had to understand that the final decisions were mine. Sometimes I may make a decision that you will not like but you respect it and when we leave here you do that. So that was her leadership she would listen, listen, listen and then make a decision. I learnt a lot from that about listening to people because sometimes you can make a great decision but the exec may not like it. The P often knows stuff that the other people don't know. E was on top of curriculum so she read a lot. She would talk with her staff so they would be invited in to talk to her about how they were going. She was very perceptive, she would be in the staffroom she wouldn't stay in her office all the time right. She would be in there when her staff was around, walk around the school so people would see her. She would come and observe lessons and ...so she knew her people um she was excellent with parents, I remember a very difficult parent one day and how calmly she spoke eg "Now Mr I am speaking to you calmly and if you can't calm down I will have to stop the meeting." He didn't so she stopped the meeting telling him to come back next week. It was just so calm. That was her manner and how she dealt with things. She was very encouraging so if you looked around that Region you would see a web of people who had been that P's AP or REC because she was a developer of people and I think that is a massive P's job. You have to develop people and encourage them to move on. It would be easy to keep my AP here. She is an outstanding AP and I would like to have her here the whole time I am here but that is not right for me or our system of schools because we need people like her to move into P jobs.

Would you agree that the system needs people to assist with that identification process?

Exactly, correct, definitely. I have worked with a lot of great leaders but that was her.

If someone was going to self-nominate for a Leadership position from your school or another school, what advice would you give them?

The answer to that depends on the person OK. If it is someone who is interested in applying for a co-ordinator OK I would be talking with them initially about what is it that you want? Why do you think this is the right job for you? Ok and I would ask them so what skills do you bring to that because they need to identify it in themselves and then I would probably talk through with them, well here is the job description of a co-ordinator, this is what I see as your areas to develop. I have done this with people in the past, this is what needs to happen. It's not necessarily advice, it is more a process I work through with them, I need to know what they are thinking.

Would it be right to say that you are helping that person identify the skills that they have and then if they were wanting to self-nominate in another school they would need to try and match those skills with the school or match those skills with the P or what would be your next step?

Yes, yeah I think it is important that when they do talk to me about it when they are applying for jobs, then what school are you applying for? I have actually had this conversation with a girl and said to her well what do you know about that school, that P or that PP there, so why are you applying for that, so that I have information and not just scatter gun. Do I have the right fit for that school? That is really important and even Ps and Aps. It would be really difficult for me to get a new AP who needed me to tell them all the time what to do. LAUGH I don't do that OK. But some Ps do so they suit a different person. It is not the kind of leadership LAUGH that I want so but some Ps prefer to work that way so it is important that we try to find what suits people. They have to do their own homework and find out about schools.

CEO is a system of schools. What is there to assist the person who is wanting to self-nominate?

In the past they have had identification courses I do not know the exact name but just a few years ago people could nominate to go along to that course, I haven't seen that offered for this year yet um but that is a good process because people can at least go along to that um and then there is the consultant, or if you are an REC you can speak to your RE advisor. If my REC was wanting to go to another school I would be say to her to speak to the RE Advisor is that school have the right situation for you to apply for? The skills that she brings does that school need that or maybe that school in strong in that area and weak in another. I would rather see her go to school that is weak in areas and she can build that school in the area she is strong in and help the school.

What is your style of leadership and that which you believe is the most effective?

My style in my school some would agree it is effective and some would say it is not and I guess that is the same for every P. LAUGH. My style has evolved. My preferred style is a real distributive leadership style. Distributive, parallel whatever. I come from a model particularly with my leadership team of open conversation where they are all leaders so we all have to lead. So they can come to me with ideas and then we can say yeah what a great idea, rather than the model where I have all the ideas and here is what you are going to do. OK. So I see that as a massive part of parallel leadership. So that is also with our staff, I encourage teachers to have a go and if you have an idea... By the time they speak to the P they have already been thinking about it for weeks rather than coming to me on a whim. They have thought about it they are not coming on a whim so I am usually the first to say cool... have a go and if they fall it is OK... as long as they talk about it. It is not something they have done on their own without talking about it I want them to talk it through with me and then giving them a go. It the rule about giving people their wings, OK.

I am also particularly fortunate with my leadership team at the moment where we are all leaders. As a leader I am the big picture thinker. OK. Here's where we want to get to. OK. How can we get there? OK. And then my leadership team are doing that. They're coming up with all the plans about how we can do that so that is very fortunate. As a leader to me that is an ideal world when you can do that with your leadership team. I'm actually encouraging one of the team to change at the moment even though this situation is ideal. Even my AP I'm encouraging yeah, next year time to go. She has had a significant life issue this year but it is not our job to hold them. That is not our job. One of my new teachers she is excellent I have already had this discussion with her, in her third year I made her permanent this year and I have already had the discussion with her that in one more year or a maximum two you need to be out and about. I would love to keep you here but that is not good for

your career. She is a potential leader. She has confidence in her P recognising that in her, she is not seeing it as I want her to go.

That would be a very different conversation. What does your day to day job entail?

Working with staff is a big part of it. My day to day job is..... a typical day is I will arrive here generally around 7:45am that's my chance to check through some emails OK um have discussions with staff. On three mornings a week I have meetings um no two mornings. Monday I have morning duty, Tuesday Special Meeting, Wednesday Staff briefing Thursday invariable a meeting that did not happen earlier in the week. That is my typical morning. Always at morning assembly where on Monday I lead a prayer reflection on the Gospel, then I will always hang around outside so parents can talk to me. I think that is very valuable....to be extremely present to parents. Then my days vary. I don't get into classes enough. Sometimes that is because of administruvia. We did this year a very significant PD plan where all teachers had to go on PD involving Instructional Rounds so every fortnight I was a part of that so seeing children in that way. Fortunately this year the AP is very strong around the behaviour of students but sometimes I have to get involved in that, we do have some challenging students at the moment so I certainly get involved in that and I'll often be doing something around Strategic Planning for our school, whether that be SRI, planning for the future, Compliance is mine. The AP is in the Literacy role, she is not on class, she is in every class during the week, plus what she does with PD she does not have time to do Compliance stuff. Then um...what else do I do? Invariably....I make sure that at lunch and morning tea I get to the staffroom unless I have like today a situation with a student but in the main I get there. I think that is really important because it means I am present to my staff, it also helps to calm things down I think if they know the P is around and I am engaging with them. I love to chat with my staff that's me. Um and then of course in the afternoon I will be out there every afternoon you know talking with parents, talking with students right at that sort of time. So the days just go Maria. They do just go.

From your experience in a variety of leadership roles and more specifically now as P how would you define leadership of a Catholic school?

Define it PAUSE..... Catholic school leadership particularly in the P role is about influence and how I can influence people; students, parents and teachers to get the best outcome for students. I would say that is the definition. Influence because the P has enormous influence and that influence comes through their interaction with students and their expectations around that. I am seen as a very authoritative figure in the school. That is important, I set the tone. Similarly with staff I influence them by setting what is expected. I influence to budget, the resources for students and PD of staff. Then I influence parents by being available to them, communicating with them a lot so that they're confident that their child is safe.

Can you tell me a little more about how you communicate with parents?

Oh. That starts at enrolment interview time OK, unless I am away I do every enrolment interview OK. They know me from then. I always have the AP or REC with me so they meet with the child while I meet with the parents so I have a relationship with them from day 1. They feel the value because the P spent time to meet with me. Ok so that is what I do. The school newsletter right that goes every fortnight and I write the great majority of that. There is always a reflection and I lead that and other stuff. Then we have a school ap that we use to put out all urgent info to parents eg yesterday there was a problem with the bus from the pool so the parents knew the children would be an hour late so I put out 5 different alerts on that ap co parents were calm. They knew their child was safe. And I am

very present, I do talk to parents. Also I think I am valued by the parents here because they see me as a person of action. I see needs and something happens and partly because I listen to them and I try to say yes Maria. I think Ps get themselves in trouble and certainly teachers do when parents are the enemy. The minute you think to parents are the enemy then good luck getting out of it because they will eat you alive. Then you can say yes to parents if you give them what they want if it's not hurting the school and a major inconvenience to teacher then why not, then when you say they don't say he always says no they accept it. You have to stick to your values but if it's not going against that then how can we do it? I think it has certainly helped our place run very smoothly because I don't get many parent complaints here Maria. Why is that? Because I know my teachers and I can defend them.

Thank you

AP 2

We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what Catholic school leadership involved, what would you tell them?

In a Catholic school it is two dimensions so its building capacity in staff to know about Jesus and also to build capacity in staff to lead quality teaching and learning in a nutshell.

Can you tell me a little more about knowing Jesus?

Basically it is a really strong RE curriculum, imbedding good strategic practices in the school, consistent K-6 for scripture, sharing doctrine and celebrating prayer. So really I guess the job of a leader is to make sure K-6 really clear practices and policies in place and support so that those things are strong in the school and not just ad hoc so that would be the job of the religious leader. Yeah.

Can you please tell me about the path you took to becoming a Catholic school AP?

Yes I did the traditional thing where you go through every single role. I did the co-ordinator role for a few years and then the REC role for 5 or 6 years and then TE role which is like teacher advisor in the school for 4 years and then the AP role. So it is like going through all the leadership, all the possibilities of leadership in the school I have gone through that path. I have had good diversity and having had the experience of the religious leader has really given me great knowledge about the community and RE programs and the needs for really strategic thinking there. And I guess the role of co-ordinator and the diversity that takes on gives you good background experiences and the TE gave me lots of foundation in leading teaching and learning. I think all the experience in the different roles make up the richness of the AP role so I can draw on the experiences. I feel the experiences have helped me to put my feet in teachers' shoes and knowing what might work and what not.

Along that path what has the ratio of teaching to leadership been?

How much time in class is really a good question. I have literally been in the TE and AP roles out of having a class but I have been in a class modelling and like a mentor role so I have been like a mentor teacher or model for the past 6-7 years. A demonstrator of lessons. An interesting question because I haven't had my own class but I would spend at the moment 3 maybe half of the week teaching.

To end this line of questioning can you tell me the number of schools across this journey?

I have been in the Parramatta Diocese, I went for a little stint overseas, about 7 schools and overseas, yeah.

If someone asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

Is that like choosing a school or starting the process?

Starting the process.

I think knowing the school. Seeing if what you have to offer can enrich that school. Definitely get a sense of the school. Looking at the website is always useful because you can see the vision and mission and like all those things give you a really strong sense of the school. I think having that knowledge is a very powerful way to identify if you would have a good connection.

Thank you. From your experience as a Catholic school leaders what leadership style do you use and what do you think is the most effective?

So I have a....I don't have all the terms for leadership so I have to explain. I really lead kind of by example so I feel if I am trying to tell or build the capacity in teachers I try to demonstrate it myself.

Can you give me an example of when you have done that?

Yes, if I am trying to instill in teachers what a good literacy block would look like I would show them, or if I wanted to show teachers a good way to model behavior management I would and let them see the way I speak to students. I would do a lot of modelling. I feel that as a leader you have to be someone who is very positive in the role and when people see the AP they see someone in a happy role, and perhaps something they would like to do in the future. So I try to make it like that and I try to make it very much about leading learning. I see myself as a very strong leader of learning, all the admin things I have to do I just get them done. I feel that I want to be defined as the leader of learning that would be my mode. In the AP role that would not be the one defined by organizing casuals even though that is an important part, I want to be known as a leader of learning in the school and that encompasses the whole community with parents, students and teachers so that I am building capacity in the parents knowledge, building capacity in the teachers to teach and building capacity in kids. Yeah I want to be that leader of learning. I don't know if that answers the question.

Can you tell me about your day to day job? I would like you to speak from your experience of being a leader in a catholic school not what you think you should do.

I do a lot with behavior management as that is part of my role. I would spend a lot of time with teachers of difficult kids. Some time in classrooms negotiating with teachers if there is some need that we had negotiated I would come in and support and build capacity there. I spend um time doing some admin that has to be but the dominant time would be supporting teaching and learning, running a NAPLAN... supporting teachers... planning meetings...running a parent group about say place value warm-ups and behavior, a lot of behavior.

Thank you. How would you define leadership now in the context of your role?

In the context of my role is see that.... For one the roles of P and AP are very much about learning now and not managing, yes that is a strong focus I think that.... Can you say the question again?

Certainly. How would you define leadership now in the context of your role?

I think it is very much about community, so that you need to be able to access...because there is so much diversity in a school you have to be able to access the community and know what is out there in the community because there is so much diversity in the community, so that you can access help for students, maybe a student with behaviour needs. Knowing about specialists in the area to help with reports for example. The leader of today is always needing to better themselves it is like sharpening the sword and not just saying what I have been doing from so long ago but the continual growth of the leader, always continuing to learn and have best practice.

How would you see this definition differing from the definition for Principals?

I think it could almost be similar but I think the P has the final... everything rests with the P. So it's the P's ultimate decision making and I think being AP I could bring across some good ideas. A great partnership the P and AP have to have for things to really work. However the P can say that is a good

idea but no because it doesn't suit our context. The P has the final deliberation but I think it is crucial for the P and AP to work well together to run things by each other and get feedback from one another.

You have spoken about context a few times could you tell me a little bit more about that?

Firstly the context of a Catholic school is the Religious Dimension, so I think that context of the importance of Jesus and children knowing Jesus and knowing those values, celebrations and rituals. The context of knowing the needs of the school. If you have a high EALD school it is very important to know about the needs of the school. I think if you have an underachieving school this is context. I think you just really have to know like a teacher has to know their kids you have to know your community so you are not just bringing out a handbook that says this is what you do. You have to know the community and have good processes for being aware of the needs so that there's a match.

Thank you

REC 2

Now we will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been an REC in a Catholic school and they asked you to tell them what Catholic school principalship involved, what would you say to them.

Mm..um..good question, let me think. It would be to be involved in the evangelisation of our students and our parents; um with like Jesus Christ at our centre of everything we do and say at our school.

Can you tell me a little bit more about evangelisation in a school community?

With staff it would be in accordance with their own experiences, with the liturgy to just work out where they are with PD. Find out what their needs are and with PD cater for them. It would also be the RE curriculum so more PD in programming and planning to know the needs of the children, using data to know how they would learn, best learn, what they already know and go from there with programming. That would be two ways. With parents it would be working with the Family Educator because we have one here at our school, and inviting them to liturgies at our school, involving them in the liturgy some way. Inviting them to anything that the Family Educator runs inviting them to whatever is happening and I usually put that in our family newsletter fortnightly to inform them of issues and what is happening in our school. Never assuming that they...

Can you tell me about the path you took to becoming a leader in a Catholic school?

It was one well um in my first period 1981 to 1988 um I think it was a nun who saw potential in me and said you know have you thought about being an REC.... I didn't think much about it as I liked being involved in the Liturgies the music part I was only young and very enthusiastic then. I got married and then had to resign because I had children. Coming back in 2008 just getting my feet back into teaching and then in 2011 again being tapped on the shoulder, having someone see potential in me... my strengths... saying you can do this... offering me encouragement and so 2011 was when that first happened.

Was that person able to articulate what those strengths were?

Yes... yes because they could see in me that I was a faith filled person, I strongly believed in the Catholic ethos and that I lived my life that way, the way I treat people in relationships, I think that is what they saw.

Then you followed the self-nomination process and applied for the paperwork online and gone through the process after this person identified you...

Yes and I was successful.

Reflecting on this experience of yours what advice would you give to someone thinking about self-nominating for an REC?

I would suggest they talk to an REC before... the pros and cons and if they thought that was for them then go ahead and apply..um..yeah.

From your experience of leadership in particular that of REC, what style of leadership is most effective?

I think it is always good to be the type of leader who builds capacity in other teachers because I am only here now and if I leave tomorrow you would hope that what has been put in place is something that can be sustained and keep on going um... it is more distributive leadership I think, not doing everything myself... building relationships with each teacher, like I said looking for those strengths and weaknesses and supporting them if they need support in an area...so I think that is the type of leadership I believe... LONG PAUSE

What do you believe are the benefits of being an REC?

Um that is a good question, I suppose it is seeing a staff member grow um.. yeah... confidence to teach, to plan but also to grow in their faith as well. Instilling those opportunities to grow and watching the students also grow from that impact and grow in their faith as well.

Thinking about your teaching/ leadership time ratio, what opportunities over the week do you have for that? What does your role look like day to day?

Day to day it is in the classroom with my own children in class watching them respond. Through the Story Telling and the I Wonder questioning... statements I should say I really love their responses and take on things. That gives me great joy and um seeing them engage in the different exploring activities as well, just trying to get them to articulate and make a connection to what they are learning and apply it to their life in some small way or...

In your role do you get opportunities to see this happening in other classes?

In my leadership role as REC I also get to go into all the other classrooms and observe and support the teachers. Especially this year it has been my mentoring New Scheme Teachers in Story Telling so I have been able to prepare and program where we look at Story Telling in detail. Looking at the elements, looking at documents on RE online and just noting what makes an effective Story Telling Lesson and using the same process of Instructional Rounds, just going round and watching each other and giving each other feedback and things like that. The follow up to that is going into classrooms myself and um... telling a story and then asking the teacher to watch the way I ask questions and to then discuss in feedback after. I get to see other classes as well it is not just about Story Telling but other areas of the RE curriculum.

Tell me a little more about the difference between building rapport with a teacher in you role as a leader compared with that of teacher.

It is very important to build rapport with teachers because it is not you against me it is everyone working together as a team K-6. If we do that we are going to see... keep improve in our RE knowledge... working together having a shared vision.

How would you define your role as REC here at?

First of all the most important thing is the RE curriculum. That is my first role.. just to see that it is um being carried out according to the guidelines um and then....PAUSE

How do you do that in your role?

I have a look at programs each term. Our focus has been on looking at differentiation and comprehension strategies so looking at that and I do piggy back a little bit and I encourage them to

use those strategies in RE as well. I look to see that there is differentiation and they are using scripture stories in English and they are able to unpack them and we do also have a major task in RE as well as English and Maths where they match the outcomes with an activity. That is K-6 so I look for that as well. So programs is one and next year the focus is to look at RE in detail more and come up with a plan...What Is Effective RE Teaching? Consider the staff and what is the best way to be teaching? What the elements should be for this school. They can be used in other schools as well because we do follow the RE online Units and direction from RE Advisors. It is just the activities that can differ but the outcomes and skills are the same for all schools. We need to read the background knowledge and those elements we can have a discussion about.

It is obvious from my meeting with you and with the whole leadership team here at ... earlier that it is collaborative approach to school leadership here. Can you tell me where you go as an REC for further development in that role and support?

I have been able to work with CEO RE advisor and eLearning advisor and others as well for embedding technology or eLearning in to the RE program. So I have been skilling myself this year so that when I come to look at programs next year I have done this or I have experienced this just so if we have questions I am able to um I am able to speak to it.

Can you tell me something about induction into being a leader in a Catholic school?

From my own experience, induction is something I could have had more of. Not so much from the Principal but from the CEO. I know that they do that now but in the lead up in my own situation there could have been more of that. Not so much support because if I did ring them there was but more the process.... What RE leaders do? What is expected? I just didn't feel there was that much.

Where do you think that would have been most beneficial, when you got the position, in the self-nominating?

I think after getting the position. Just having some sort of formal induction. They do that with New Scheme teachers. That kind of induction would be great for RECs'. I think they do that now but I am not sure. I think from my experience that was lacking.

Thank you for taking part in my research project.

School 3

P 3

Thank you for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

The word that really distinguishes that is Catholic because I think that has to be number 1 because it gives you your Mission and gives you your um principle under which you work. So um to be a Principal is a very um diverse role but to be a Catholic Principal I think is the word that really distinguishes being in the role in Catholic education um. You have to have the faith at the centre of what you what you do, you certainly need your skills you need to have a broad understanding of curriculum um you need to know how to relate well with people um how to um be an educator with um amongst adults I think all that is really important and you need all those skills to be able to fulfil to role, but at the centre of that if you don't have your faith that drives you well then um I don't think you can really fulfil the need that Catholic education is asking us to do. It is a faith that is not only personal but a faith that starts as being personal but is able to be communicated and shared and invitational to other people.... PHONE RINGS and interview is stopped with interviewer leaving office for privacy.

INTERVIEW RESUMES

We will resume now. When we stopped you were speaking about Catholic Principalship and the significance of the word Catholic. Can you describe what you mean by Catholic?

I think Catholic is a really big.. but a word that is used a lot and has a lot of meanings attached to it. But when I think about the word Catholic it is not just about being catholic in fulfilling the requirements of what you do to be Catholic like fulfilling what your Parish has...I'm not saying it isn't hugely significant, but to be a Catholic leader you have to bring that experience and make it an experience for other people around you and to do that you have to be a person of Mission who really puts the humility of Christ first and understand what it means to be a Servant Leader um a person who brings other people to an understanding of what it means to be a un disciple of Jesus...um and to me that means your actions your words um the way you manage people must align with the principles of what you believe Jesus is like. It is a really hard, challenging job... it sounds like it is saintlike LAUGH I am not try to make it sound like that but you have to aim to be a person like that to make a difference, otherwise you are just a teachers who can teach anywhere.

Thank you. If this or another person asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

Um I think they have to be prepared to understand that is not just a job. To take a leadership position....um... it is not a position you aspire to for your own progress it is a position that you aspire to because you think you are going to make a difference to other people and I think that should be at the core of why you nominate yourself. Um because if you are nominating yourself um just to get the credit of being a person who goes through the channels and hierarchy and go from one position to another you are going to be disappointed in what you get because its um not all about rising to stardom there's a lot of work that goes into it and a lot of that work is from your own self that you are giving it is not work that you can expect to get fully compensated for... it is about you giving. Yep

Thank you. Can you now describe what you do as a Catholic school Principal reflecting on your experience and not what you should do?

What you actually do is um can differ. You can come to work on a day thinking there are all these things I have to do and then all these things happen and it changes the whole day, because it is about dealing with people. It is not about being timetabled to have this that and the other... that is an important component but you have to be flexible enough to be able to deal with people who come to you. So you might have a parent who comes and has a story to tell you that you completely did not imagine or something you didn't know and then you have to respond to that. It could be that somebody calls on you for a little bit of compassion so that you need to put things aside and respond to that. There could be a special needs child who comes to school and decides this is not the day I want to work and so your day is changed because you have to meet the needs of that child and um keep them working in the classroom or address that need... so that can happen. Then you have the complexity of your own staff. Someone comes with a need so you have to respond... I think every day is different um every day is challenging, every day is hugely rewarding. You can go home at the end of the day and say I did some good things, I mean most days. Sometimes I go home and say what did I do that day? But when you spend some time reviewing... with things you may not have got through a whole lot of stuff you thought but you made a difference in other ways, um... My digest um area that I have a real joy for and I try very hard to build it into my day is the actual leading learning. I think it is challenging and I know that a lot of Principals say how do you fit that in? That is the most important thing and it is hard to fit it in, sometimes you can't fit it in and that is the reality of it but I think you have to find time to fit it in because that is where you get your joy from. You can't forget that that is why you are a leader because you came to make a difference to children and if you remove yourself from that excitement at core level, interacting with children, you lose focus of what you are here for.

Can you give me an example of how you would have that interaction in a day?

I like to visit classrooms. Sometimes I will take a class if I can. I have a real passion for Mathematics teaching... well I have passion for all subjects....I have done a lot of Professional Development with the staff so I will go in and take a Maths group. If there is a child who is not quite behaving I will take the opportunity to just go into that class and see what is going on um so just things like that. Um I work with the teachers so if they have collaborative planning time I will make time during the week to make sure I have the time so I know what they are planning, what their discussion is, so that I can put my experience of teaching in... I think if you are a pretty effective teacher you can put that into the practice of what teachers are experiencing in the classroom. That is the challenge because you can be a Principal and have a wonderful but what is your impact in the classroom? If I lose that link to the classroom then I start to question my effectiveness in my role.

Thank you. From your experience, what style of leadership do you think is most effective? You did mention before, Servant Leadership so you might like to begin by expanding on that.

I think there's, I think there's... people have to find their own style. You have to fine your own style of leadership and you have to be authentic to your own style and I think that is something I have spent a lot of time reflecting on... especially earlier in my leadership career because you are surrounded by effective people who have very different styles and you soon learn that that might be effective for them but you just can't take somebody else's style and think it is going to work for you. You need to know what your strengths are and what are your areas of weakness and you need to come to an understanding of self and you need to see from that how I can make a difference. For me the difference that I know I can make is by not fighting the parts of my personality that... by that I am not saying I try

to be someone that I am not. I mean I try to choose who I am and make that the best leader I can be. So for me the Servant Leader is what works for me um and I think that the best leaders are leaders who can do that. Know themselves and make their skills that they have been given and make a difference in their leadership.

What assistance, learning, mentoring have you had to help you discern this?

There has been a lot of reflection because earlier in my career I would have thought the most effective leaders were authoritative because I had Principals who I had great respect for and I learned a lot from... that were quite authoritative in the way that they ran... earlier in my career I would say that a lot of principals did take on that and I was never like that so I didn't identify myself as a leader because I couldn't be that person who was.... I am generally quite a soft person and I found it very difficult to be a person who stood up and said this is a rule and this is how it is because I didn't identify myself as being capable of that for a long time..... and then I had the opportunity to be a leader as a co-ordinator, just a point 1 co-ordinator which gave me some experience in um leading some little projects in the school and I thought WOW I can do this and um I think I can do this OK and then other people also said that was really good, why don't you try and do this? And so from other leaders encouraging me, little by little I took thing on and I always had a deep passion for faith and I had the opportunity to be REC and I loved REC and I didn't see myself being anything other than an REC and that also gave me the opportunity to develop and see myself as being my own style of leader and then on top of that I did the Masters of Leadership and from further study that I think was the most valuable study I have done, doing the Educational Leadership because it opened my eyes to so many things I had been pondering about and here I had research that said I am on the right track. It was very affirming and um it helped me to see you can be a leader and authenticity is what it is. It's not that you have to be... There is no formula for it, you find what it means for you to lead in your own context.

Having just touched on it a little can you outline the path you took to Catholic school leadership?

I kind of fell into the point 1 co-ordinator about 20 years ago because there was a need in the school and someone was on maternity leave and there was a position and someone had to fill it. I had quite a bit of teaching experience at the time and I was asked to do it so I kind of did it LAUGH... That's how it all started. Of all things the thing was to organise sport and sports carnivals that is not my area of strength, but it gave me the opportunity to see I am a very good organiser and I could get other people on board and we had really successful things going in the school even though sport was not my skill area. I liked encouraging people to work with me and that was good so I did that for a very short term um for about um a year or so and from that there was the REC position that came in the same school. It was all in the same school and so I put my hand up no that is not really true... I did not put my hand up because I was quite shy and I didn't identify... I didn't think I had the capacity to do it but because others, other leaders in the school said you can... go on have a try. I said no I didn't want to do it until I did some study so I started to do the study and from doing the Masters of RE I started to think I can um I have a bit of knowledge, I feel credible enough to have a turn LAUGH, and then I took the REC position up in the school and I absolutely loved it just had enabled me to put all those things that I really had ideals about Catholic education,. I could really do something in the Liturgy and the prayers we were leading in the school. The community building it was just such a wonderful experience and I loved it so much I did it twice. I was REC in 2 schools um for almost 10 years. Um and then from that there was the opportunity to step up as AP so I applied for that and I was successful in that and I was AP for 4 or 5 years... closer to 5 years and I had 2 Principals in that time in the same school um and then from that I became Principal in the same school again. So that is basically it and that is how I am here. This is my 2nd principalship.

Thank you. Finally.... How would you define leadership from your experience of it in Catholic education?

I think I will go back to what I said in the beginning and I think humility has to be number 1 for me. In the way it works for me, I can't talk for others because they have to go through their own experience of how they become... it is not about copying somebody it is about you finding for yourself what works for you and so for me, I define it um, um as a position where you have the privilege to work with other people, to see the gifts that they bring and to help them to see in themselves those gifts and to develop them and to bring that person to their fullest they can be. To open their eyes to see what they can do to make a difference to Catholic education. Not to make a difference to me and my own fulfilment but to make a difference to bring that passion to life in community. That's what I think leadership is. It is rewarding in terms of accomplishing what it is you set out to do but I don't think that is the focus of why you do it because it is vocational. You are doing it because we are called to do it. I can't explain that. Sometimes you say something like that and you think it is so corny, you are just saying it, but I think there is a real truth to it and that is what sustains you. It is a job that can take so many elements of your life over and can be so demanding that if it's not for that you wouldn't be able to sustain the level of energy you need to really do the job to the best of your ability.

Thank you for taking part in my research project.

AP 3

Thank you for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

It involves everything that it involves in a non-Catholic school but more so you have to have your knowledge of curriculum, HR, Systems processes but to be in a Catholic school, to be a leader in a Catholic school you need to have an understanding of your faith, how you live your faith and how you see... I would say that the Catholic school sits at the crossroads of the Catholic Church and society, so we are putting our faith into action. Our beliefs in the Catholic Church. We have secular views and we have church views. We are really putting it into action. So to give leadership in that situation, to be an AP in that situation, you have to know... have a knowledge and understanding of the Church, you have to have a knowledge and understanding of yourself and where you sit within the church, you need to have a knowledge and understanding of the community you are a part of and so you are putting the faith and life together through education. So you have the education component and as a leader you then... I think one very simple... the Arch Bishop of Ontario who came out last term put it quite simply..."In every interaction with staff and students are you showing them Jesus Christ?" So through the curriculum you are teaching, the way you are leading, interactions with parents, interactions with the wider community how are you leading and showing Christ in everything you do? So when you are disciplining a student, when you are working with a student are you being that face of Christ. The curriculum that you present is it showing the beauty of Christ's world? Are you using um... ahh... are you interpreting the world with a Catholic viewpoint so that it is showing Christ in the world? So I think to be the leader, being the leader in a Catholic school PAUSE you have to understand it is more than just curriculum and teaching, it is a world view. You have to understand also that you are a representative of the Church and you have to be able to PAUSE sometimes know what you think and know what the Church thinks but you still have to put forward... you have to have that emotional maturity to still put forward the Church's view but then I suppose the next step is to make it real to the people in our school.

Thank you. If this or another person asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

PAUSE

I will go back a step. Did you self-nominate for your first leadership position?

Yes. Um as a co-ordinator... no as a co-ordinator 1 I was tapped on the head. But then , but then we used to do the AP shortlisting, you know it went to a panel and without an interview they just looked at your paperwork and told you whether or not you were ready to be an AP, so I suppose I self-nominated for that.

Did you seek someone's advice before entering into that process?

Not a lot. Personally I had grown up in an education family and a very Catholic family. So with a father who was a State school Principal and a mother who was a school secretary in the Catholic system a sister who was a teacher and lots of cousins who were teachers. So I grew up in a, I grew up in a, in the fold so for me it wasn't... to me it was what you did, how you lived your life. That's how you lived your life, that's how you responded to your faith, how you served. It was about service so growing up it was how you can help others. You are lucky, you have been blessed with life, blessed with this home, so your life is not what I can get from this it is what you can take to the world. How can you help others? To me thinking about becoming an AP it was putting myself forward to give leadership back, to have

an impact on more or less that the 20/30 children in my class, how can I share my beliefs and my drive and wanting to serve and bring Christ to others? How can I do that on a bigger level? So I guess as you go forward you can have a bigger influence. As an REC, an AP and then a Principal you widen your sphere of influence. But then I did have, I had the Principal at the time I would talk to um... and she would not so much talk to me but she encouraged me. "Why don't you?" I suppose other people believing in you and noticing something in you, that make you' "Yes I can do this too!"

The person in our scenario... Would you need to see something in them to be able to give them advice?

Yes. You need to see... you need to see both classroom practice and faith. Like I wouldn't, there are... if I didn't see a lived faith or a yearning for a deeper faith within a person I would not nominate them for a leadership position in a Catholic school. I would have to be able to, you would have to see that. Um

How would you see it? How would you identify that?

I think you can see it in their relationship with children, their relationships with staff, their willingness to be involved in the religious life of the school, through conversations, through staffroom conversations, just from talking about life., you get to understand... just by talking about life you get to see a person's... how they make decisions, what is guiding them, their values, what underpins them as a person. Sometimes you can see people who are corporate, moving through steps, lock stop, the lock stop approach to getting into a leadership position, ticking off the boxes but... I think you can really see this in the REC level you can see people... this is being very judgmental, sometimes you can think you are seeing people just going through the process to get to a point. I have to do this for 2 or 3 years and I can tick the boxes and I can do it, but sometimes it is a lack of the lived response um... I remember when my wife was an REC she didn't want to be an REC, she got tapped on the head to be an REC she didn't want to be but the person said, "You are a Catholic person, you are the type of person we need in this role." And I think, you can see that in people you know like in the modern day do people go to mass every weekend? No but they can still be committed to the Church. They can still be committed to the Mission, what we are here for um... so I think we have to be a little bit lateral about how we think about what makes us Catholic. You need to see that in the person.

Please describe to path your career has taken the Catholic school leadership?

Mm, mm, um classroom teacher for... probably 8-10 years, then a co-ordinator 1, I did that for 4 years, REC for 2 years and this is my 6th... 4 years as AP at a small school teaching 4 days a week and AP one day a week, then this is my second year in this bigger school where I have a vastly different role. All of my teaching has been in CEO Sydney, initially until REC in Eastern Region and then AP in IW region.

How would you define leadership in the context of your role?

Do you mean what I think a leader is?

Yes

A leader is about influencing. It is how can you influence for the good, the greater good the common good to improve... to give the children the best education, Catholic education we can give them. So how do you lead people, how do you influence people, how do you make teachers better teachers? So one part of your leadership.... For example as AP in a small school my class was 30 children here in a bigger school my class is the teachers. How do I work with the teachers to influence... how do I have

influence with the teachers to influence their practice? How do I have influence with the parent community to either deepen their faith, to make them not just observers but active in the education process, um PAUSE.

Can you tell me more about that transition from a teacher of children to a teacher of adults?

Of adults...a teacher of teachers PAUSE. Sometimes there is no difference LAUGH. You have to take teachers from where there are... you have to, just like a classroom you have to differentiate your instruction, you have to know where they are, and you have to know what they want. You have to know how they tick. Until you can build a relationship with them it's hard to take them forward. It's, so, it's just like Jesus you take them from where they are. You take all people from where they are, not where you want them to be.

What support, mentoring have you had in your experience of a leader to facilitate this transition?

Ok. Um a Jan Robinson coaching course, ELIM and the Principal, through talking about how we work with teachers, what we want from teachers. So I think the whole concept of Coaching and Growth Mindset has been very beneficial in working with teachers. Um if I have a problem P has an open door policy it's like the two of us are like one, we are just always back and forward about this person about that person the P is like have you tried this have you tried that... if you say that are you going to get their back up? Are we going to get the desired result? What is your desired result? How are we going to get to our desired result? If we do this will that block us? Will it be a blocker or are we applying the right lever to get us forward? Yeah, I am lucky having been able to do Coaching and Growth Mindset and going to ELIM and getting their influence.

Which of these have been System's initiatives?

Jan Robinson, ELIM really I suppose PAUSE. P and I working together I wouldn't say is a System's initiative LAUGH.

Even though the pairing of the two of you has been their responsibility. Tell me a little about your style of leadership.

I believe... I hope... it is better to ask other people really if you want a more truthful answer LAUGH. I try to be relational, to build, my first thing is to build strong relationships with people. I try not to be an ambulance chaser, I try to empower people to answer their own questions. Push, push back so they can grow forward. That was another, a good little Coaching philosophy, push back to grow forward. Um I like to be a model. Sometimes... actions speak louder than words and I try to be authentic, really try to be who I am as a genuine person. I think if people see you are trying to be true to who you are then there is respect. They may not agree or disagree with you but at least if you are just being who you are and gently who you are, not like I am the AP and you will bow at my feet, if you are authentic in who you are as a leader, a teacher, a catholic, a human being I think that gets you buy-in with the teachers and they will come with you on the journey because if you don't have followers well you are not really a leader LAUGH. So it's how do we get them to follow? I would hope, I would see that as the strength of my leadership.

Can you describe for me your day to day activities as a Leader in a catholic school?

It looks different every day, it does not look the same every day. It could be a day INTERRUPTED BY A PASSING TEACHER WHO WANTED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE RESEARCHER. Rather than talking about the

jobs because it could be teaching, it could be working with a teacher, working with P or working with a child and being kicked around the school, if I was to describe my day as a leader I would say it is about being present in every single situation that occurs. I try and be present. The act of being genuine and present, you have to be there whether it be the student, the teacher, the parent and you have to be there and give yourself in the moment authentically. I think as a leader that is one of the biggest things is not being... if you are not present people just think well why you are here. I think being present means even if the person annoys the living daylights out of you, you are looking and listening, it means to be present to that person at that time and then move on. Being present to the wants and the needs of the student, the school and to the community and Priest I think that is the most important part of my day and putting my knowledge and skills into action in the presence. Because I think a lot of us... we generally all have the same knowledge and understanding, we have that, but it is putting it into action that is what our most important part of the role is and I think if you did a test on all the leaders we would probably all answer the knowledge questions the same way but why are we all different from one another. It is how we put that into practice. How are we present? Because sometimes I'm not present, when I am not present there is not a good solution.

You mentioned there the Priest. In your day to day leadership what is that role between you and the priest?

Um we talk... I think as an AP you can sometimes insulate yourself from the priest because you are not REC you are not P you are more in a curriculum space so you have to build a relationship with the Priest. Um I would think Fr... sees P and I while not equal... he knows he can come to me, I know I can go to him, we can go to each other so there is a very strong relationship. I listen to his concerns, we do things together as a school and parish like together we put in electronic noticeboards so if he wants things on them he can come and talk to me, we can talk about it... for example, this morning the P was late to school so I took father and 2 council workers out to show them a problem on site. We have a very strong relationship. Also I'm head... because of my music I am heavily involved in the liturgical life of the school so as an AP that skill I have actually keeps me in the Liturgical life of the school whereas as an AP... I think other APs sort of miss that, you can dodge that. Once you are not REC you can leave that to somebody else whereas I am fully involved in the Liturgical celebrations, Father sees me as an integral part of how we celebrate our faith.

Thank you for taking part in my research.

REC 3

Thank you for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

PAUSE. It involves collaboration, um working closely with the Leadership team the P and AP. It involves a lot of collaboration um with the Parish Priest and other people in the parish like the sacramental coordinators, um it involves a lot of co-operation and collaboration with the staff... in building their capacity ahh in areas of Liturgy and curriculum, RE curriculum, um resources and so on... working with

students... students in social justice issues... and students in sacramental programs and the liturgical life of the school, mmm I think that answers the question LAUGH.

It is representing the school at network meetings things like that... liaising with the Leaders of Learning...

Can you tell me a little bit about those meetings from your experience of having been going to them for a year?

Ahh yes so... there is one a term and an extra one at the beginning of the year for people who are new to the role. Um ahh it is an opportunity for the Leaders of learning and the Faith and Evangelisation Team to um... co-ordinate different things, get messages back to the schools via RECs, introduce concepts or ideas for pedagogy or to just build up a network of people so you know other people and what it is like in other schools and so on would be my experience so far and there has been an extra PLC (Professional Learning Community) for new RECs as well, a sort of support for helping people in their first few years of the role which has been very good.

Thank you. Did you self-nominate for this role?

Yes

If someone asked you for advice before self-nominating for a leadership position in a Catholic school, what advice would you give them?

Mm... to be a L... you don't need to have a leadership role in the school to be a leader in the school and that the focus needs to be about leading in other areas and using your skills and gifts to work and lead the school community in the areas that you feel passionate or interested in. Um so to explore...I don't know if I am answering the question right...but to explore what can you do how can you lead and not just being asked to lead...does that make sense?

Yes if you are referring to the reflection of self, required for self-nomination.

That is what I mean. I had to think about my skills and strengths. I was asked to nominate but I was thinking about it for some time and got into some processes but the time wasn't right. So when the time was right it happened for a reason and I was just lucky I got the opportunity to work in my own school but in that role, an acting role at the moment... it was excellent to have that opportunity but it was something I had already identified for myself as well.

Thank you. What does your day to day job entail as an REC in a catholic primary school?

Um... so developing the catholic life of the school and making um the, the school Catholic... making it visible in the school, creating displays that reflect the Liturgical Seasons we're in and key events that are happening. Ahh working on rosters um for Liturgies um working with teachers on planning the Liturgy. Um depends... terms 1 and 2 were busy with masses, terms 3 and 4 have been a lot more quiet. Um so then looking at Storytelling and developing the process of Storytelling in the school and making... trying to take stock of all the resources and making sure all the resources are appropriate or need replacing... um... I...

Can you explain you ratio classroom to admin?

Point 3 as REC so Point 7 in the classroom and Point 3 as REC and when you factor in release and that I am out of class all day... one full day and one afternoon from 1pm. Out of class to do the... out of class to do the REC role, but I tend to frequent my office many more times a week than those LAUGH. So I will call in and see different things that need to be done or follow up. We have an Executive meeting on a Monday afternoon that involves... that is when I work with the AP and P um on a whole range of issues and RE.

Do you prepare a report for that meeting?

No not at this stage. I add items to the agenda as they arise and I... as much as possible meet with the P every 2 weeks just to have a closer mentoring relationship to help steer me in the right direction LAUGH. In the school in the right direction. I think I am doing a lot. I am trying to get Mini Vinnies happening and that is taking up a lot of time for term 4 as well.

Thank you. From your experience of leadership in a Catholic school, how would you define leadership? What style of leadership do you think is the most effective?

Um PAUSE I would define leadership as PAUSE. Not... what I don't think it is as a boss with people following um I think it is I think leadership is combining many wonderful years of experience and um and knowledge and love of teaching and pedagogy and balancing that with administration and um human relations... human resources and being um a leader in the school community. Ah so um guiding, facilitating um I don't know... I am not very good at defining leadership... um PAUSE it's...

Regarding your style of leadership, how do you see yourself as a leader?

I don't know yet LAUGH. Um I think I see myself as a facilitator, um, to, and a bit of an organiser. I think I personally need to do more reflection on what you know skills and things like that... I think personally I need the human resources side would be an area to grow um...

Where would you go to get this assistance from?

I think a lot of it comes from watching good leaders... and having worked with good leaders and picking up good leadership styles from, from them. But I guess I would look at reading, at the Ted, the Ted talks, you know I guess the Masters of Ed Leadership would be one area, would be one avenue. Um so I don't know as far as... I am not a dictator LAUGH so as far as a formal leadership, leadership... in leadership styles I am a bit behind in my leadership knowledge as in styles of leadership, but it would be in bringing people with me through hopefully good modelling and example.

From your experience how do you see yourself as an organiser and facilitator?

It is my leadership strength.

Finally can you tell me about the path you have taken to become a leader in a catholic school?

I began at with the P there nominating my to do a course Leaders of the Future. I think it was called that back then, attending different talks and sessions over a year or 2 um...

This was after how many years of teaching experience?

Um it was after about 5 or 6 years teaching, and then um I guess well in my first year, in my first school I taught at in my 4th year of teaching I took on a sports role in that small school and I took on another

role the year before I think as a Mathematics co-ordinator so just helping the co-ordinator 1 role. So I took them on in those years... I was a mature age student kind of LAUGH I am not that mature. So that was in that school. Because I did Science first, three years of Science and a master of teaching and then worked as an Education Officer at Ocean World so I was really twenty PAUSE I was 24 before I started teaching, um again it was just a very small school of 7 teachers. Um we all got to do extra so I got opportunities fairly early. So then I did the Leaders for the Future, and then I did... I kind of looked at broadening my skills where I could with Inclusive Schooling and different little courses and when I moved to ... I just took on little projects in the school and I went last year to a new... I think a new version of Leaders of the Future... a two hour session with the Regional Director and a few other people from CEO.

Was this PEARL?

No I didn't do PEARL. I missed the beginning of PEARL at the start of last year and this year I didn't do PEARL either not for any... because I was already in the role. I have been getting assistance in the role rather than outside the school.

Can you tell me a little bit more about the course you went to last year? Was it specific to the IW region?

I think it was Archdiocesan and it was secondary and primary teachers and there was a very large turnout I think...oh gosh I can't remember what it was called. The P put me forward to attend it and then we had a revised... we had a catch up in maybe term 2 and maybe only 6 or 8 people came to that on... it was still interesting to look at and it was for people... not in leadership... I think most people saw it for if you weren't in a leadership role which I wasn't when I started because when I went back this year I hadn't started in the role, um I wish I could remember what it was called, I will see when I go out if I can find it. And that was like a workshop... the second time round was like a workshop um on where we are now and just what they thought we could do for the future and I think there is another day coming up but I am not sure if that is just for new people or a continuation. Um but I started my Masters last year as well.

Is that specifically in RE or Leadership?

RE so that has been an interesting, a good experience too.

Is that sponsored by CEO?

Mmm. It is RE but it is half-half Theology, I think ideally through CEO 4 units of RE and 4 units of Theology.

Are you doing that at ACU?

Yes.

Was the course suggested by CEO or did you find it yourself?

I looked for that sort of thing on my own but I was nominated by my P. I think it is about P identifying leadership potential in staff and giving it to staff to see if they to see if it is something for them.

With regard to the Masters sponsored by CEO how did you get introduced to it?

I had been toying with further study then when I looked at leadership roles... it is a requirement to have a masters of RE but I am not doing this just because of that because I feel... my own faith journey is growing with the university degree, um my first unit was Theology and morals and ethics in the Church which was extremely interesting and I already use some of my further knowledge in my teaching as I teach Year 5. So it is about um me and my faith journey as much as it is about leadership if not more and it will help me with my style of leadership.

Thank you.

School 4

P4

Good morning, you are the Principal and a female. Can you tell me how many years you have been teaching.

Um 42 41 40 41 yes 41

And years in leadership.

10 years in Principalship and before that 9 years in AP.

Now we will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal in a Catholic school and they asked you to tell them what Catholic school principalship involved, what would you say to them.

I guess an important thing to me is relationships. That is core to everything, relationships with the parents, relationships with the students and the staff. Establishing those relationships, nurturing them and allowing them to grow. Um, and you can only do that by actively engaging within the life of the school. I think relationships is probably the most important thing. From that then if you are in a secure relationship with people then you can learn and they can learn also. So knowledge and growth about effective practice and um management of students, all of that will come when the relationships are right. So that in order to have those relationships so that the learning can happen doesn't have to go through leadership. But leadership isn't something that is solitary either even though sometimes it is, because when you walk into a room and you realise the conversation stops you realise it is solitary, but that also goes with the territory. Um so principalship is about being lonely sometimes but it is also about being able to network with your other colleagues who experience the same things. Um I was going to add something there Maria maybe it will come back to me. I think those things of core relationships leading for learning and um knowing that it is about leadership and then allowing others to develop into that leadership role to assist with the management of things.

And if this same person heard that and thought OK I am at level of my career now and I think I would like to self-nominate for a Principal's position that I see advertised what advice would you give them. How would you tell them to go about doing that?

You mean someone who would like to take a position.

Yes

The first thing I probably would say is the place you plan to go to, to nominate for you need to find out about that place. You need to find out about the nature of the school, the nature of the parish and the Parish Priest who works with you because religious Leadership in Catholic schools is extremely important and the Parish Priest has a lot of influence um with community. Has a lot of influence with staff and can have a great positive effect... can also have a questionable effect. So I would advise someone going in there to find out about the place that you are going into. Is that the sort of community you want to go into? If you are used to working with children who are not from a non-English speaking background then think about the places you want to go. If you are applying for something in the outer west are you ready for that challenge? Because it is a challenge when it is different from what you are used to. Make sure that you know and that that place you intend to go to is going to be a place that will allow you to grow, um and will allow you to take on that role knowing that you can make a difference there.

Not so that you can come and inculcate or indoctrinate because you know better, but one that you can help them be better. Yes knowledge about them is very important.

Thank you. Um now can you describe for me um your day to day job as a Principal in a Catholic school. I want you to speak from your experience of being one and say what you actually do rather than what you think you should do.

Um its quite complex because within the role there are those administrative and managerial things that you have to do day to day. But there are also those things that COME UP and take your focus away from what it is you have to do. Um so generally and then there are meetings and appointments that you have to make. Generally I try to make any meetings with parents either at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day because that is when they are dropping off their children. That is convenient for them and I always maintain that if you are going to have those meetings especially if they are not good ones it is best when they are less stressed. So a typical day might be a meeting with a parent and not necessarily over things that are a problem either. It might be over the child. PAUSE HERE BECAUSE OF MESSAGE OVER SCHOOL INTERCOM. We don't have a lot of parents who ae coming up with those sort of things we have parent who are coming with personal problems or problems with the child's emotions or social problems. Invariably there will be a meeting with a parent.

Of late in the latter part of the year there will be classroom visits that we are doing, observations, so I engage in those to see what is occurring in the classroom form Professional Development. Of course there are those administrative things that I do around finances and other chores, which they are (LAUGHING) that is within the life of the Principal.

I do playground duty, I always do a playground duty. Generally I like to do a lunch or an afternoon so that I am out there when the parents see me. I'm always out there at assembly in the morning so that I am out there and the parents see me. I also like to enjoy a recess and lunch with the staff so that there is another side of you, its not just... it is sitting down a talking about the light-hearted stuff as well. Um attending to emails, the increasing number of emails that have to be attended to. Some of which can be done there and then and others that carry over. And invariably to phone calls that you have to make throughout the day relating to matters of staff or relating to matters of future Professional Development or matters relating to the Annual Improvement Plan and securing support for A B C & D. Complex, varied and never the same for me and sometimes that is my fault too because I don't um plan it well enough but then very often you find that if you plan things you always write them down but it doesn't mean you get them done. But I know those key things I have to do during the day and I use my diary and I get things done because it is planned and I can fit some other administrative thins in between then.

You mentioned there things that are key. Is there something key to your role a Principal that you try to put into every day.

Speaking to children. Always, always. A day would never go by that I was not talking with the children. Sometimes it is conversational sometimes it is up here , if I am in the office if they come up I'll talk to them there, unfortunately sometimes it is talking to a child who has done the wrong thing but during the day there is always conversation with students.

Thank you. From your experience as a Catholic school Principal how would you define your style of leadership in the context of that role.

I think if we are looking for a technical definition I think it would be a distributive model of leadership.

Can you talk a little more about that.

Um Yeah. I have. We work from a plan that has been commonly devised um and that all of the executive are aware of and work through. Um and so in that then they know there are their own roles and responsibilities um m that they have to do as I have to do my own roles and responsibilities. So I allow them to lead that themselves and I am always there to support them but I do not lead that myself. For example they are all leaders of teams. They have their professional learning teams with the exception of the REC this year because she is new this year and hear on a temporary basis and wasn't ready for the leadership around curriculum. She felt safe and secure with her leadership around Religion and more of an organising and planning role so that is what she has this year. With our other exec team members they are leaders of teams so um and they know that is their responsibility.

How many do you have on your leadership team?

We have 4 others. I have 4 others. The AP and 3 co-ordinators one of whom is the REC. There is Literacy Co-ordinator and an ICT co-ordinator.

Is that based on the fact that this is a very large school or on your goals in your annual plan, how does that come about?

The fact that there are 4 is based on the staffing, the model that I have. I have 7 promotion points so I use them in this way. I also fund ICT from Integration Funding to increase that to a day a week otherwise it is not enough. Can we go back to the question again.

Yes we were describing style of leadership and you said yours was distributive. You have the team approach.

Yes I hope I that that is the way I am perceived. Sometimes it is not. Sometimes your perception is not reality. But in my mind that is what I believe I do. That I do work with the team, I do not override things. They know they are leading staff meetings, they are up there talking to the staff its not me all the time. Similarly with our assemblies I don't need to be the person up there all the time to show that leadership shared. That they share the leadership and show that leadership in front of the parent community is very important.

Generally staff come on board with that.

Yes yes. Yeah I think so, they are happy to work with their teams and their team leaders. Every now and then there are things that people object to but you usually find they are personal not professional or they become professional because they were personal. Ah but no the teams work well, um definitely.

How did you learn about teams? How did this team approach evolve over your years in leadership?

Sometimes I think you just stumble across it but then you realise the collective wisdom is much better rather than that one person approach. I have always worked with principals myself who have been very... who have always shared a lot with me in leadership and have been open and honest about that, and so being able to share with a leader at that level is something I myself have put into practice. Apart from that it is not possible for one person to physically emotionally to do it all anyway. It doesn't help to make any improvement at the school sustainable and that is key to developing teams

to have people participate in teams to see how the notion of the school improvement you are working on does not leave when that person leaves that it stays there and is sustainable.

Thank you that question leads into another one. Tell me about your path to leadership in Catholic education. For you it is along association if I assume that these 41 years have been spent in Catholic schools.

No No I was with State education for about 12 years then when my youngest was about 8/9 months I started in a Catholic school and um worked there for a few years and took on a co-ordinators role. Having had my 3rd child was looking for leadership. Even when in the State school I was looking at leadership but I didn't have that confidence that I knew I needed um so when I was in my first school in the Catholic system I took on roles more like reference teachers that sort of thing. And then to a co-ordinator role but at that time family was more important, a third child and my mother had Alzheimer's so I was not ready to move any further forward until my family were secure and everything was right. When I placed my mother into a Nursing Home I applied for AP and moved forward from there. Um and that's why it took so long because you cannot do both. If you do these poorly it brings you down and you need to be in a position to do both well, you have to take all that into consideration.

It becomes a personal decision.

Yes yes.

Along the way how were you identified as a leader? What was that process?

The principals of the schools realised I had those qualities and you did some professional development and that improved your practice and you you I guess you had a larger profile a higher profile.

By professional development you are referring to the CSLP courses...

No no just when process writing was happening and process maths. Doing professional development, becoming good at what you were doing. Being identified as someone who was good at what they were doing. And then presenting at meetings, so you become recognised regionally by an advisor.

The expert teacher model.

Yes yes, and then moving from there. Having that credibility through your practice being identified.

That ties back to my earlier question about teams as that is now the style you have brought forward to develop those expert groups/teams. Just the language changes.

That's right that's right identified those people who can a will lead and encouraging that growth. Looking for things that they can move towards.

To our final question for today. From you experience of a Catholic school P and AP what style of leadership do you think is most effective?

That is hard to know because I said my role, my style the distributive style works well for me I would say it is the most effective. By comparison transformational leadership. How do you define that because to transform something or someone? It is such a huge such a huge undertaking. Um I don't

know. What works best for you. It depends on the person and what you value leadership is and what is important to you as a leader. If relationships are important to you as a leader you are not going to get up there and dictate to everybody are you?

No

What support have you had in your years of leadership to discern this? You spoke before about networking and relying on colleagues but on a system's level.

I suppose my consultant is...I don't suppose, she is a great and advisor to me um, so whenever there is a difficulty, I would always seek her advice and she very freely gives that. She is always there at the end of the phone um or she directs me to people who she knows will be able to assist me and those people in the system perhaps who can assist me or other colleagues who are experiencing the same things or are doing work in that particular field who might be able to assist me as well and indeed she has done the same for other people who have come here and had a chat with me because I was doing A B C & d and they were doing it as well.

Thank you for being part of this research. When I switch this recording off I will ask you to complete a ranking from the Teacher's survey.

AP 4

Thank you for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

That is a really good question. So um number 1 it is a lot of commitment and um if the person taking up the position has a teaching position as well then it is like doing a double job. So you have to be well organised um not just with your own home life but with your school life because your school life is virtually broken up into 2 compartments... one is your teaching role and one is your administrative role, um and there is a lot of work in the administrative role. Sometimes I say to myself, "do I really need this administrative role when I have my own class to do as well?" Number 1 it is about organisation, 2 is knowing your school Principal really well because that is a partnership and if you don't get on with your school Principal then you can't do your job because it is a team show not a one man show... and um ask a lot of questions. If you don't know something, ask and try to bring people on board, delegate that is the other thing too um and I think you have to have confidence um I found that you can't come across as a weak leader because people will to an AP and a P of course to an AP to solve all their problems for them. You need to have answers. Sometimes you don't... it is not ok to say no.... you have to say I will get back to you on that... never say no, you know I'll get back to you on that. It is a really complex job, nothing is simple and nobody teaches you to be an AP, you have to make the role your own.

Let's follow up on a few things there. First of all can you tell me about a challenging time when you might not have had the answer?

Um for example um I have had a couple of experiences here where ahh we have had some staff who felt they were bullied by another staff member. I found that really challenging because I had to approach that staff member. It took a lot of soul searching for me to be able to do that. I don't like confrontation... that is just me personally. I found it really challenging um so I had to script some questions and things I had to do during the interview with him to make sure I stayed on track. I wasn't judging that person as a person but their behaviour and it was the behaviour I had to address and that was really curly for me. Adult to adult it becomes very.... Not confrontational but it does because you are addressing somebody who um is your colleague and you work with these people all the time and you socialise with them and then having to address a particular issue about their behaviour that is not appropriate that becomes really out there. The Catholic guilt... am I doing the right thing? I found that very challenging but it was a growing experience for me.

Your words earlier were, "no one teaches you how to be an AP. Can you tell me a little more about that?"

Well for example I was an REC because coming into this role and I was encouraged to apply for the job... I was never you know, "I want to be an AP." I was quite happy doing my REC job and my boss at the time said, "look you would be really good at this and the job has been re-advertised." I go... I gave it a go and I was never, never thought I would get the job and I got the job and I came here and like I didn't know where to start. I knew the basic things like you know schools and how they run but no one told me like you had to do Compliance and this and that and a thousand other things that are involved in the job, so my first port of call was to talk to my boss and we have a really good working

relationship. We sit down and OK what are the expectations, this is the AP role that CEO gives you but that is really you know broad and it can be interpreted in a thousand different ways depending who the boss is. So I had to sit with my P and say 'well what is expected of me?' That evolves and sometimes the expectations just keep coming. Like when you have been in the job for a while you know what is coming so that is when I said you have to make to job your own you have to organise your own time, you know what the expectations are, you know what the boss expects of you, you know what CEO expects of you and you move forward from there and you try and make to work as easy as possible so when someone else comes to the role they know how to work it. Things like putting things in the newsletter so... I had never done that before and I was expected to do that. Simple things like that. You have to look after that you have to look after this... no one ever says you have to be responsible for this and every school is different so I might go somewhere else and the role will be totally different. So Yeah... like I said to you it is making it your own and doable.

Thank you. If this or another person asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

First of all do your research about the school. Know who the Principal is um and how they run their school. This is my first appointment as an AP but I have been REC in a couple of schools and the Principal is the primary person who runs the school and their relationship with the staff is really important and depending on where they are going they need to know if that principal is someone they could work with. That is the first thing. The second thing is the paperwork is quite detailed. You have to know yourself as a person to apply for the job. You have to have your referees. You have to get your Parish Priest. I found that process... not... not difficult but like I had to contact a principal I had not worked with in two schools. She had left and logistically that was quite difficult. Somebody had to contact them... if you know what I mean so you have to be prepared to um put yourself out there in your paperwork, do your research about the school and make sure the Principal is someone you can work with. Ask around, ask discreetly... LAUGH

Please describe what your day to day role entail as an REC from your experience of it rather than what you may have thought or read about it.

So yeah my day to day job is... in the morning I come in... a part of my role is to check all the rosters and make sure all the relief staff are Ok. Sometimes that takes up all my morning by the time you do duties and all that. Um and that can even start before I get to work, if somebody rings in sick sometimes I am ringing 20..30.. to get a casual in the morning. I am trying to organise my own family and trying to do that as well so... already I can say I have put in an hour an hour and a half before I come into work. Um so um I come into work and I get all that organised, I might check some emails. Staff might come to me if they are troubleshooting with something on the computer or if they are having trouble with kids, sometimes a few phone calls and depending what time of year I might have to liaise with parents. I always try to meet with P at least one of the days I am out just to go over a few things. Sometimes that might take a while, sometimes 5 minutes. Sometimes Father comes over to talk to us, sometimes I go into classrooms. I have had to accredit 2 or 3 teachers since I have been here so it is classroom visits. Um talking to some of the students, behaviour things as well. Um so that is basically my day to day role. Sometimes I go home thinking "what did I do today?" It is nothing major but it is putting out fires and doing things here and there.

Can you tell me about your ratio of admin to classroom teaching?

I work 3 days in the classroom and 3 days in the office. Sometimes it's... like now it is getting close to report writing time I am writing my class reports and at the same time checking other reports. I am making sure Reporter-pro is up and running for the teachers with the secretaries. Really a lot of admin the no one really tells you about, it's just part of your role and I am lucky I don't have to do PHRYS where some other APs have to do PHRYS so that is an added burden. LAUGH

Reflecting on your experience as an AP in a Catholic school, how would you define leadership in the context of your role?

That is a really good question. I don't like to dictate I like to. To allow people to take ownership for what they do um sometimes I have to make thing a little more explicit but I do it in a way that is a little more inviting, um I think um I am a very approachable person. People come to me to discuss things and I think I am quite open to that. Um I like to bring people with me and I like to empower them to do their own... to be their own leaders I suppose. I don't, I don't like that issue of authority if you know what I mean. I have been somewhere where it's made staff really anti. I like to be around at lunchtimes to talk to people, just trying to get some comradery happening. Um and I think I am fair and open and I don't... I like to think people think I am free so they can come and talk to me about anything, I am quite open that way.

Can you tell me about your path to Catholic school leadership?

I worked at a school for about 9 years and then to another school for about 5 years when the REC position came up at the school I was working at and at the time um I thought I could do the job and applied for it. I didn't get it and what they said at the time was that one of the things was I didn't have any leadership... any executive experience. I thought OK I can take that. The person was doing the job and everyone said wow she is not doing it very well. She was there for about a year and left and the position came up again and I went for it again and got the job and was there as REC for about 4 years so altogether I was at the school for 9 years, 4 as REC. Then another position became available and just because one of my friends was there but she had not done the extra study and she was not going for it but she knew I had done extra study and did I want to go for it.

Explain the extra study to me please.

I did it many years ago. Not the Bachelor of Theology but I had done a grad Dip in RE and I had done that way back so I had the required study and I'm really glad I had done that because now it is just harder and harder. So um I did apply for the job and I did get it um and I was there for 5 years before I was approached to apply here. This job had been readvertised with no suitable candidates the first time and it was readvertised and I did get the job and when I did apply I wasn't really fussed if I got the job or not but I did so...

Can you talk to my about any support from CEO to help you identify for the role or further develop you in the role?

Good question because I don't think.... Apart from talking to your Principal and Advisor I don't think that there is. Like I did that CEO course at the time um what was it called?

CSLP

Yeah. I didn't think it was very useful for me um at the time I missed 2 sessions of that and when I came to make up the sessions the next year they had scrapped it so it is like I don't have the piece of

paper to say I have done it. I didn't find it taught me anything I didn't know. I don't think there is that support network. I know quite a few people in the State system and some are in Primary schools and some of them have two and three APs and some are smaller than us.

Correct because in the DET schools there is the Principal the Deputy Principal and up to 3 or 4 APs with various portfolios.

I think personally the way you give people that leadership is you give people that sort of thing. I'm juggling 2 or 3 roles at the moment. I think our system... I don't know if it is a monetary thing but it is a way to get people into those things and into leadership positions is to give them experiences with things. I know schools that are smaller and when I tell them there is only me they say, "Only You!" I think a bigger Exec is good it is very healthy for a school. You get more conversation happening, you get more perspectives um and it just eases the workload. The less stress on one person and things just work better.

Are you currently doing any post-graduate work?

No, no. Just the family situation does not allow me to do any of that now. I don't think it is anywhere on the horizon.

Can you talk about your ideas for future leadership roles?

I know a number of Principal's positions have come up and a number of the APs have stepped up and I feel happy for them. Some have stepped up in the schools they are working at. I don't know if that is a good thing. In the case of male teachers, some of them step from Co-ordinator to AP to P whereas females in the main experience REC as well....This is just an observation of mine since being an AP.

From your experience do you think it was beneficial to your current leadership to have been an REC?

Um I don't know... probably yes probably it has been. I don't regret having been the REC even though it was stressful because you had to work with the Parish priest and thousands... and other people. The next step is moving into Principalship and when people ask me if I want to be a principal, I have to think twice about it because I don't know if I would. The demands of it are so intense um especially if you have a family. I look at it and say, 'What does a principal know about leading a building project?' If something goes wrong they say it is the Principal but NO the principal is not a person who has done a degree in building to be in charge of a building project. You know all these things that come up, um that is not what you are there for, you are there to run a school and you are an educationalist, not a builder or a planner or this and that, so I think the demands on the Principal really.... Yes you deal with parents, you deal with student, you deal with staff but the other things that are put on to a Principal sometimes are not worth it. I say no because I enjoy what I do even though the demands of the work are intense I can cope with it. I know from the P that every night this week she has had a meeting. "Do I want that?" I have to weigh that up with my family and my passion for teaching and being in the classroom so you have to weigh that up. An example is a meeting next week that I cannot attend because of family I feel so guilty that I cannot be there in my organising capacity and it would be good if there was someone to step in for me. I feel so guilty but other things sometimes have to take priority.

Thank you for contributing to my research.

REC 4

Thank you for being part of the interviews today. We will start with a simple scenario. If you had a friend who had never been a Principal, AP or REC before and they asked you what being a Principal in a Catholic school was like, what would you tell them?

Um first of all I would say that is fantastic and be very encouraging. Being an REC is a great opportunity to evangelise our faith. We evangelise at many levels that can make to job tough at times but very rewarding. Um I think, I believe from an REC perspective the leadership is about evangelising the faith and maintaining the Catholic identity of the school. There are many ways of doing that um through the curriculum, ensuring that you know really fantastic quality teaching in RE, modelling at every level making sure you are the person doing that yourself to give the best quality of education to the children. Being called to demonstrate that too. And just being Christ to the children and the staff and the parents and everyone you come in contact with. BACK TO YOUR QUESTION, if they asked me what it was all about.... Back to the question because I tend to waffle... I would be absolutely encouraging of it, it is a privileged role where you get to um evangelise the faith to everyone in the community.

Thank you. You spoke about Catholic Identity can you tell me a little bit more about that?

So as a teacher I thought I always knew that the school had a Catholic identity when you walked in and saw a prayer space in the front office and a prayer space in every classroom, but as a leader I know it is a lot more than that. That is very important that parents and children and staff walk in and see visible that we are a Catholic environment and community but also I think it is very much about how we treat each other and as I said before it is how we are Christ to others and displaying those Gospel values to everyone we meet. It is challenging at times um but we are called to do that as leaders, particularly leaders in a Catholic school and I would hope people walk out the door with a feeling that they have been Been treated with the love of Christ. Um with that warm feeling that they have been welcomed.... And they have experienced what it truly means to be part of God's community. Yeah.

Thank you. If this or another person asked you for advice before self-nominating for a Catholic school leadership position, what advice would you give them?

I did not self-nominate, mine was a secondment. My own experience was that I always wanted to be an REC and I was working towards doing all that I could to be and REC. I didn't myself think I was ready necessarily. I wanted to finish my degree first and but when the secondment came up it was.... If they believe I can be it then I must be and I really enjoyed it. BACK TO YOUR QUESTION. First I would help them because I think that is part of my role to show pastoral care and it is a way of building capacity in my role. Personally I have a passion for this role and I have a passion for making sure children receive quality RE, not just the curriculum but in everything you do so if someone was saying they wanted to do that and putting their hand up I would say go for it and show them the process that is online and show them how um to go about it. I would talk to them about what the role entails and I would get them to ask questions because there is a lot that we see about a staff member but a lot we don't, so.... I would feel it is very challenging to say are you a faith-filled person? But I really believe that it is essential for someone going into the role or at least to be open to it because when you are giving so much output it is important that you are getting that spiritual input.... So that would be my advice. LAUGH

Can you tell me a little bit more about your experience of secondment?

My understanding of the secondment, the technical... the technicalities behind it is because they really can't readvertise the position because it's so close... I don't know if that is the type of information you want. Close to the end of the year but they obviously need someone so in knowing that the position has not been filled yet... no one has applied they go to the pool of people they are aware of. For me I went to the PEARL course. It is a relatively new course. By being in that hopefully you have identified yourself and they have identified you then as someone who is interested in the role and preparing for the role in a different way outside of the classroom and the school environment and so from my experience they went to that pool of people and I was one of those and then I was offered the position on the very last day of school LAUGH after I had set my classroom up for the following year LAUGH. I was really excited about the role. To be seconded I found it very affirming. It was very exciting. Um it was a bit nerve racking, um you are stepping out of your comfort zone because this is not something you have applied for but it's... I put my faith in God and those who nominated me and um in a lot of prayer LAUGH um and I have really enjoyed the role.

This meant changing schools...

Yes I changed school, a new community which if you haven't... I think everything has its pros and cons LAUGH.

Please describe what your day to day role entail as an REC from your experience of it rather than what you may have thought or read about it.

It was a bit about what I thought. Everyday not just the half day I get to do it, but that's OK it is certainly a big role not a one day a week job, it's, it's always That is the same as any leadership role. No one is perfect, we all have challenges in life and because part of the job is to be pastoral you have to be representing Christ to your community not just as REC but in leadership because part of our job is faith leadership. It is very important that we recognise that you really need to strive to show those gospel values to everyone you meet. Because of that you are on all the time. You need to make sure that if there is someone who needs something out of the ordinary you need to attend to that in a Pastoral caring manner.

Can you give me an example of that?

For example if someone had passed away in a family you need to be understanding about that. If you know they have something pressing... A mass overhead or a Maths outline you need to be understanding about that. They need to get the job done but you also need to be pastoral to that person. It might mean taking on that part of their job, that responsibility because what is more important is there wellbeing um so that yeah that. It applies to your students too but in a leadership role it applies to your staff and sometimes it applies to your parents as well in different ways. I haven't come across it yet but I'm sure there are times when parents need some pastoral care.

Can you tell me the amount of release you have each week?

1 day each week out of class for REC. With that you always have to maintain the classroom focus so you find your hours before and after school, lunchtime and recess contacting people and following up on emails that have to be done. You can't put all things off for the day out of class. There is a lot in the admin side of it.... The budget but I love numbers I.... ensuring the curriculum is taught well, a

high quality and a positive outlook as well. Not everyone likes RE teaching, and promote RE as one of our really important subjects. I know that there is a lot of pressure on Literacy and Numeracy but it is about lifting RE up there too..... it is what we do.... Otherwise go to a public school

Would you see this aligning with the Catholic Identity you spoke of earlier?

Yes definitely.... The RE curriculum the children are not going to get it anywhere else. I said to my staff at the beginning of this year as part of my introduction... I said they would not get it anywhere else so they have to get it here... I used the quote... NO WHAT WAS IT..... It wasn't preach the Gospel by actions not just words.... That is something I try to live by.... It was basically about this being the place they will get their RE formation, Faith, love of God and the beginning of their relationship with God. With all those things it is really important to encourage those things and promote the curriculum to staff.

Thank you.

There are probably a lot more things in my role but I will stop there.

If I was to ask you to write a definition of Catholic school leadership, how would you define it?

Um OK.... Leadership in a Catholic school, well it involves WOW it involves so much to make sense of it. There is faith leadership the other things have gone out of my head... but at the heart of it is recognising that by being in the role you are helping children to take things from the bible to love life and live it to the full by ensuring that they have the best quality education. From the leadership perspective you are leading your staff to that love of learning and that love of pedagogy and doing it from the heart um that um I HAVE FORGOTTEN THE WORDS LAUGH... coming from a foundation of our faith. You know which is we have a love of Christ in our life and as leaders we realise there is a faith element in our leadership that is unlike any other school....public school system. When we step into a leadership role in a Catholic school it stems from our relationship with Christ, our love of our faith and our recognising that God has given us the gifts to live life to the full so we want that for our staff students and community, but we do it by leading and modelling that and encouraging it... a kind of top down effect. THAT HAS TAKEN WAY TOO LONG....SORRY ABOUT THAT.

As individuals we all have our own style of leadership. Can you describe your style of leadership?

MMM I am very faith filled. I think it comes a lot from that. Um I don't know how well I do it but I hope my leadership style.... I am being pastoral to everyone I meet and I am being Christ. I take Christ as a model in that I am trying to be like Christ with everyone I meet and everything I do. By modelling the charisms I suppose, the values you know that I believe come from our faith hopefully through a positive relationship with someone who adopts that that they see there is something positive in our faith and hopefully they see the value in what they are teaching. I THINK THAT IS MY STYLE. I HOPE THAT IS MY STYLE. The first thing I did was to make sure I had resources for them. That's where I come from. A Pastoral base.

I would now like to take you back to your secondment when you spoke about PEARL. Can you tell me a little more about that course please?

Yes I did PEARL twice because the REC gave me information and I didn't get all the information about it, I went to the last day. But that is OK I heard some amazing speakers.

Can you tell me a little more about those speakers?

Names escape me but what I did learn was that there were a couple of females, people who had been to leadership in school but then moved on and were not in teaching. I know we had a politician WHOSE NAME I CANNOT REMEMBER BUT ANYWAY um....

Was it guest speakers from outside CEO system?

Yes, yes sorry I can't remember his name the Premier when I was growing up in High School more than 10 years ago but he was lovely, everyone was lovely and it gave us the opportunity to learn about.... Basically it was their life experience and how they got to that point and learning how to juggle it, how to manage it, you know when you are a teacher you always take home your work and in leadership there is a lot more to do some more than others depending on the school and obviously that impacts on your family and the people around you and... hearing from really successful people and how they triumphed and failed and overcame that failure, how they managed it. Hearing that they were human and that so are we and we go through the challenges that.... It is possible to get around it and Triumph. There was more to it. The following year I did the full course. That was really, really good and that was the year I was seconded. It began with this is the role description... this is what it means. An REC shared her experience... I can't remember exactly and then it was hearing from an REC and how they went about that role. It was an opportunity to a lot of the leadership team from the CEO. Knowing who people were and that really helped because getting into the role can be daunting.... Puts you in the spotlight and it helps to know who people are and who to go to when you need assistance and who to go to when you need resources and that sort of thing is really important. LAUGH. There was some professional reading at some stage about leadership specifically um and finally.... Um one of the most amazing things we got.... They called it a resume.... At the beginning we filled out who we were, what our teaching strengths were, what our educational experience was, in terms of uni and postgraduate study... similar to what I think you do when you apply for the position and then we got feedback, like 1 on 1 feedback in a written document which was amazing because it told me this is where I am sitting with everybody... let me clarify, it did not rank you but by the end of that year I had done 4 units of my study that would definitely put me in front of somebody who had not done it. Knowing that that would be a question was good because the year before I heard from people who were studying because they were in the role, I felt confident to apply... Yes the feedback the listening to speakers and unpacking what the role was was really important.

Was that linked to any other leadership roles with CEO Sydney?

No only REC.

Thank you

Appendix 7: Interview Quotes by categories of description

Categories of Description	Description and Interviewee Reference
Catholic Faith	<p>'... being passionate about your faith and understanding the evangelising role of the Catholic Church.' P1</p> <p>'You are a Catholic leader first and foremost.' P1</p> <p>'...you have to be very committed to your Catholic faith.' AP1</p> <p>'My area of leadership is based around the faith formation of students, the Catholic culture...' REC1</p> <p>"What our leadership is that is different to state leadership is Religious Leadership...it is a massive challenge for us with some people who in some cases are not so churched or confident in talking about their faith." P2</p> <p>'... the context of a Catholic school is the Religious Dimension, so I think that context of the importance of Jesus and children knowing those values, celebrations and rituals.' AP2</p> <p>'...evangelisation of our student and our parents...Jesus Christ at our centre of everything we do and say at our school.' REC2</p> <p>'The word that really distinguishes that is Catholic because I think that has to be number 1 because it gives you your mission and gives you your principle under which you work.' P3</p> <p>'...to be a leader in a Catholic school; you need to have an understanding of your faith, how you live your faith...' AP3</p> <p>Religious Leadership in Catholic schools is extremely important and the Parish Priest has a lot of influence with community.' P4</p> <p>'The Catholic guilt... am I doing the right thing? I found that very challenging but it was a growing experience for me.' AP4</p> <p>'I think, I believe from a REC perspective the leadership is about evangelising the faith and maintaining the Catholic identity of the school.' REC4</p>
Privilege	<p>'... a very privileged role.' P1</p> <p>'... it is vocational. You are doing it because you are called to do it.' P3</p> <p>'Being an REC is a great opportunity to evangelise our faith.' REC4</p>
Modelling Leadership	<p>'... develop a team around you.' P1</p> <p>'transforming a school community with shared leadership.' AP1</p> <p>'Fostering presence, relationships collaborative partnerships.' REC1</p> <p>'...in leadership I would do a lot of modelling.' AP2</p> <p>'... to make a difference to bring that passion to life in community.' P3</p>

Modelling Teaching and Learning	<p>'... I decided it was time to go back to the classroom for a while.' P1</p> <p>'I work with the SCS Leader of Learning.' AP1</p> <p>'I'm on the Mathematics and HSIE/Geography Team.' REC1</p> <p>'I try to make it very much about leading learning.' AP2</p> <p>'First of all the most important thing is the RE curriculum.' REC2</p> <p>'I try very hard to build it into my day is the actual leading of learning. P3</p> <p>'... looking at Storytelling and developing the process of Storytelling in the school...' REC3</p> <p>' I know there is a lot of pressure on Literacy and Numeracy but it is about lifting RE up there too... it is what we do... Otherwise go to a public school.' REC4</p>
Building Respect and Relationships	<p>'... open to learning and very open to peoples' views ... respect because your teachers, your staff are your greatest resource... working collaboratively with staff, parent groups and students' P1</p> <p>'... working with people to take them with you.' AP1</p> <p>'be authentic and place myself in good relationships with others.' REC1</p> <p>'Arguable the biggest challenge in the job is around people management. P2</p> <p>'...this year it has been my mentoring New Scheme Teachers...' REC2</p> <p>'A leader is about influence. It is how you can influence for the good, the greater good the common good to improve...' AP3</p> <p>'... an important thing is relationships. That is the core to everything....nurturing them and allowing them to grow.' P4</p> <p>'I don't like to dictate I like to allow people to take ownership for what they do.' AP4</p>
Prioritising and Being Organised	<p>'... a complex role... strategic management of that school... I prioritise my tasks.' P1</p> <p>'I'm highly organised.' REC1</p> <p>' I am a very good organiser and I could get other people on board.' P3</p> <p>' I see myself as a facilitator and a bit of an organiser.' REC3</p> <p>'... I use my diary and I get thing done because it is planned and I can fit some administrative things in between.' P4</p> <p>'school life is broken up into two compartments, one is your teaching role and one is your administrative role.' AP4</p>

Prioritising SCS Agenda	<p>'... you need to be clever in integrating political and systemic process and polices that come down... wonderful support from the CEO' P1</p> <p>'I work with the SCS Leader of Learning... a lot of meetings' AP1</p> <p>'... representing the school at network meetings ...' REC3</p> <p>'... matters relating to the Annual Improvement Plan and securing support for A B C & D.' P4</p> <p>'... no one told me like you had to do Compliance and this and that and a thousand other things that are involved in the job...' AP4</p>
Student Learning	<p>'... a passion for learning.' P1</p> <p>'... you are the pedagogical leader the leader of learning.' P1</p> <p>'... setting up a professional learning community where we are learning off each other.' AP1</p> <p>'my teaching role is with Kindergarten and I try to make that come first.' REC1</p> <p>'there will be classroom visits that we are doing observations, so I engage in those to see what is occurring in the classroom for Professional Development.' P4</p> <p>"I have a passion for making sure children receive quality RE.' REC4</p>
Professional Learning	<p>'... a passion for learning.' P1</p> <p>'Number 1, be familiar with the system documents, the leadership framework.' AP1</p> <p>'I finished Masters in Educational Leadership.' REC1</p> <p>'... I'm going to give you some advice, if you are going to do a Masters do it in RE....' P2</p> <p>'The leaders of today are always needing to be better themselves it is like sharpening the sword.... Always continuing to learn and have best practice.' AP2</p> <p>'...I have been skilling myself this year...' REC2</p> <p>'... I did the Masters of Leadership.' P3</p> <p>'...a Jan Robinson coaching course... I am lucky to have been able to do Coaching and Growth Mindset and going to ELIM and getting their influence.' AP3</p> <p>'I started my Masters last year...' REC3</p> <p>'I have done a Grad Dip in RE and I had done that way back so I had the required study.' AP4</p>

'I went to the PEARL course...4 units of Post Grad study completed.'
REC4

Invited/Advised
to Apply

'... I was invited to take over that school... someone to troubleshoot it
and fix it' P1

'I worked with the current principal in another school and she gave
me an opportunity...' AP1

'... leadership found me. I was approached by my principal in a
previous school to apply...' REC1

'... I had great advice from my 1st principal...'

'... being tapped on the shoulder, having someone see potential in
me... my strengths... saying you can do this' REC2

'...I didn't identify myself as a leader... other leaders encouraged me.'
P3

'I was tapped on the head... they just looked at your paperwork and
told you whether or not you were ready for AP...' AP3

'I was nominated by my principal.' REC3

'I was identified by my principal and did some professional
development.' P4

'I was approached to apply here. This job had been re-advertised with
no suitable candidates the first time.' AP4

'I did not self-nominate, mine was a secondment.' REC4