

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

*BECOMING A TEACHER LEADER: A GROUNDED THEORY
STUDY*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the outcome of a doctoral research project that involved analysis of the development of teacher leadership in a cohort of 21 experienced teachers who undertook facilitation roles in a school change program known as IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools).

The aim of the study was twofold; to develop a deep understanding of the teachers' growth as leaders and to uncover their personal perspectives on their growth and development as leaders as a consequence of their 2-4 years engagement as IDEAS Facilitators. Through the use of a qualitative research approach, and employment of orthodox grounded theory in particular, the study sought to illuminate the manner in which the participants resolved their main concern (Glaser, 1978). Consistent with the expressed purpose of grounded theory of generating substantive theory, the thesis has developed a new construct for consideration in teachers' professional development: *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

The *Becoming a Teacher Leader* substantive theory which has been developed is presented as a Basic Social Psychological Process (Glaser, 1978), comprising five phases (or sub-core categories). It presumes to deepen the understanding of the manner in which the 21 teachers, who were experienced but did not initially think of themselves as leaders, developed recognised leadership skills and generated active personal constructions of themselves as teacher leaders. In doing so, the substantive theory that has been developed establishes the interrelatedness of three core concepts: *Learning*, *Leading* and *Safety*. The theory

makes explicit the centrality of safety as a necessary ingredient for the development of teacher leadership.

The core category, or dominant theme, that pervades the experiences of the 21 teacher leaders is presented as *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*. It connects the five sub-core categories that emerged from the data analysis as resolving the main concern of the participants. The five sub-core categories are: *Sizing Up*; *Preparing to Commit*; *Becoming Ready*; *Experiencing Learning and Leading* and *Enhancing Capacities*. Each sub-core category is individually detailed in Chapters 4-8.

The substantive theory that is presented in this thesis asserts that the 21 experienced teachers who comprised the sample were in a state of readiness to exercise educational leadership when they undertook their IDEAS facilitation work. They then sought throughout their engagement with IDEAS to *Experience Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*. Additionally, the theory asserts that, when the teachers were provided with opportunities to participate in extended periods of learning and leading in safe environments, they were enabled to develop knowledge and skills typically associated with the construct of teacher leadership. The particular knowledge and skills base that was developed by the participants was shaped by an approach to school-based leadership, known as parallel leadership (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann, 2002, 2009) and incorporated into the IDEAS program. The substantive theory also maintains that, as a consequence of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*, the participants were not only able to

develop the confidence to lead, but also to construct images of themselves as teacher leaders, thereby becoming teacher leaders in both practice and perception.

This study presumes to contribute to the extant literature in two ways. First, the study has extended understanding of the concept of safety as an environmental factor which enhances the development of teacher leadership. Second, it has provided a career development perspective on teacher leadership. The *through the eyes of the participants* approach of the study represents an alternative to the dominant positivistic, normative paradigm most commonly associated with research into teacher leadership. Thus, through participant-based exploration of the core category of *Experiencing Leading and Learning in a Safe Environment*, the research enabled the identification of three interrelated concepts - leading, learning and safety, which are deemed to be essential to the process of teacher leadership development.

The substantive theory that has emerged from this research should prove useful to the teachers and principals in the many schools which are currently using the IDEAS program as a model for school revitalisation. More broadly, it should also be useful to experienced teachers who wish to deepen their understandings of teacher leadership development. For principals who wish to nurture the development of teacher leaders, the study makes explicit the nature of their roles in establishing and maintaining environments which are safe places, in which prospective teacher leaders can experience learning and leading.

CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, results, analyses and conclusions reported in this folio are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signature of Candidate

Date

ENDORSEMENT

Signature of Supervisor

Date

Signature of Supervisor

Date

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I would like to thank the many people who have shared this journey with me. As I sat to write this I realised however, that this journey began even before I enrolled as a PhD student. My mother instilled in me a love of learning, my father showed me the importance of persistence and my wonderful brother taught me about friendship and love. I needed all of these to get to the starting point of this journey.

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CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the thesis which follows. I begin by reflecting on those experiences which ultimately led me to undertake doctoral study and in doing so I make reference to the various factors that collaborated and resulted in my decision to adopt grounded theory as the methodology for this study. This is followed by a brief overview of the aims, methodology and the research problem. It includes a discussion of the manner in which the methodology of grounded theory affected the emergence of the research problem and the development of the substantive grounded theory. The assumptions which underpin this study are provided, followed by a discussion of the significance and scope of the study. This chapter concludes with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background

Owens (2001), in discussing a humanistic perspective of growth and development, reminds us that “one is always in the process of becoming” (2001, p. 375). This thesis is a study of the psychosocial process of *becoming*; in particular the manner in which a cohort of teachers grew and developed as a consequence of experiencing a facilitation role in a school revitalisation program. It is a consequence of my own interest in teacher growth and development and my work as an academic facilitator in the whole school revitalisation program known as Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS).

I have been an educator for most of the past 30 years. During that time I have worked with many other educators, some it seemed were born to teach. These great teachers were passionate, inspirational, energetic and caring. The students respected them and responded positively to them; they loved life and were highly regarded by their colleagues, parents and the broader community. For them, it seemed that their professional journeys were smooth, while for others the beginnings were rough; they struggled to interact with students, or to understand what it means to be a teacher. Some left the profession, often after extended periods of anxiety, frustration or even illness. Others overcame their rough starts to become successful, not unlike those I have described earlier. There were others who stayed in the profession and continued to struggle, always remaining frustrated and in some cases being ineffective teachers through the entirety of their careers. Yet others started their careers as energetic, dedicated, enthusiastic educators, only to end up disengaging or becoming embittered. Others went on to leadership roles; some were highly effective leaders while some, despite the apparent positional title and implied power, struggled to lead. Finally others retained the title of teacher but displayed considerable leadership qualities.

I have long been interested in the personal and professional journeys of my colleagues and of course I have reflected on my own journey. As I reflected, it became clear to me that my own journey of becoming was often as a result of conscious and deliberate choices and decisions. I believe that it is reasonable to posit that my colleagues' journeys were also self determined to some extent. My journey however (once again, my observations lead me to believe that my colleagues have experienced much the same), has been influenced by others, by the nature of my

work, the influence of colleagues, family and friends and society at large. There have been chance happenings, some beneficial, some otherwise. There have been critical junctures where I have been forced to make decisions or accept alternatives, some for which I was prepared, and some for which I was not. Like my colleagues, I have become what I am, as a result of that over which I have some degree of determination or influence and as a result of that over which I have none. Sometimes I have been aware of the impact of that over which I have no control, however for the main, I believe that I have often changed or developed (become) as a result of a myriad of influences around me, about which I was not explicitly aware. Thus, in the process of becoming I recognise that I was often unaware of the influences around me, or what I was becoming. Was I the proverbial frog in the vat of slowly heating water; changing with the changing environment, however not aware of either?

I have concluded that I have become what I am, without a clear understanding of how it happened. As I reflect on my own journey I can sometimes identify, after the event, the influences and better understand what has happened, always conscious of my frequent inability to do so at the time.

In the year 2000, I became aware that some of my colleagues at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) had developed a whole school revitalisation program, known as the IDEAS program. In this program, academic consultants from USQ work closely with schools, for a minimum two-year period, in a comprehensive process of school development. Those who lead the IDEAS program within their schools (IDEAS facilitators) engage in a series of USQ facilitated professional development activities, some at their school site, while others

involve facilitators from a variety of IDEAS schools working together with their counterparts.

I joined the USQ IDEAS Team in 2000 and during the past nine years I have worked as an IDEAS external academic consultant. In doing so, I have had the privilege of working with and getting to know, educators in a range of schools across Australia. As I worked with these educators (IDEAS facilitators) I observed many of them change, many becoming what I would describe as more confident, more satisfied, having higher efficacy, displaying greater professionalism and becoming more committed. They began for example, to work more with their colleagues or they stepped forward to lead where previously they would not have done so. I discussed my anecdotal observations with my colleagues who also reported similar changes in the teachers with whom they worked. While my observations seemed to be typical of teachers in many IDEAS schools, I was cognisant that there were also some cases where the teachers in question (IDEAS facilitators) began the process of change only to retreat quietly to the relative isolation of their classroom.

As I worked with the IDEAS facilitators, and witnessed their growth and development, it seemed that like me, in the process of growing and developing (becoming) most were not aware of their own becoming or explicitly aware of the forces that shaped their growth. It also appeared that they changed, almost always for the better; however there also seemed to be times when some teachers did not benefit from the program and appeared to be damaged. I wanted to understand these phenomena. I wanted to understand the experience of the teachers who reported changes as a result of facilitating the IDEAS program in their school.

This thesis details the process through which I have been able to develop a better understanding of what I have observed. Because I adopted a grounded process of data collection, analysis and theory generation, and in order to demonstrate to others at least some of my own thinking, I have decided to write in the first person. In doing so, and through the incorporation of memos, it is my hope that readers of this thesis can share my experiences and better understand the processes through which I have generated the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

My decision to write in the first person, rather than the distant third person, was also influenced by my choice of methodology. Since I had adopted a constructivist approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005), it was important to recognise the co-construction of knowledge by both participants and researcher. Charmaz, (2005) and Mills, Bonner and Francis (2006) recommend the constructivist grounded theorist include his/her voice, as well as that of the participants, in the write up. In accordance with this advice, and given that I wanted to remain “transparently grounded in the lives of those who constructed the data-the participants and the researcher” (Mills, et al., 2006, p. 8), I have followed the recommendation to include both my own and the participants’ voices in the data analysis and presentation. Thus, my voice is evident in my writing and memos, while the voices of the participants are evident in the many included excerpts.

1.3 Why Adopt a Grounded Approach?

I wanted to understand what I was observing. Initially I hypothesised that I was observing changes in teacher satisfaction, however as I read and understood the

work of Dinham and Scott (1996, 1998, 2000), Evans (1998, 2000) and Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) I realised that what I was observing went beyond satisfaction. While most teachers were anecdotally reporting greater satisfaction, the concepts of satisfaction and dissatisfaction did not capture the changes that I had observed.

I read more widely, believing that I was observing an enhanced professionalism (Day, 1999; Nias, 1985, 1989) or enhanced teacher leadership (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson & Hann 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001), or improved self efficacy (Bandura, 1997). However the more I read, the more I realised that while each of these concepts may be useful and possibly highly relevant, proving for instance; that the process of facilitating IDEAS enhanced teacher satisfaction, efficacy or the like, was not going to advance my understanding of the participant's actual experience, or adequately explain what I was observing. Furthermore, while I believed that the concepts already mentioned were useful, none adequately seemed to capture the nature of what I was observing. I became increasingly unsure of what it was that I was observing and realised that this research was an opportunity to better understand it.

I was aware that if I wanted to understand the experience of the participating teachers, it was necessary to adopt a research design and methodology that would enable me to do so. Thus, my reading turned from a search for an explanatory concept or existing theory, to the search for an appropriate methodology. I realised that one of my first tasks was to determine whether or not I wanted to test theory or develop theory. Given that my research aim was to understand the experiences of the

participants, and to develop an explanatory framework from what I had observed, I realised that my task was to develop theory (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

After exploring a number of methodologies I decided to adopt a grounded theory methodology, since according to Glaser (1978), and Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory enables the researcher to understand social psychological processes, is not constrained by existing theoretical constructs and enables the development of a substantive theory grounded in the data.

1.4 The Aim, Methodology and Emergent Research Problem

In a grounded theory study, the researcher begins without any preconceived theoretical framework or hypothesis (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Unlike most other approaches to research, with a grounded theory approach, the research problem and associated questions emerge through an ongoing process of interactions with the participants and adherence to the processes inherent in the methodology (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Thus, by adopting a grounded theory methodology I needed to accept that I could not identify the exact nature of the research problem from the outset. I had to become comfortable with the emergent nature (Glaser, 1978) of the process. My broad aim was to generate an inductive substantive theory “that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (Glaser, 1998, p. 93). Thus, in order to commence the data collection, I identified my broad aim was to *develop a deep understanding of*

the teachers' experiences and perspectives of their own growth and development as a consequence of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators.

As a consequence of the decision to adopt grounded theory as the methodology, it was only during the research that it became clear to me what was emerging. While my broad aim was as already stated, it became increasingly clear as the research unfolded that the central research construct was *the manner in which teachers who facilitate IDEAS in their school become teacher leaders*. The progressive illumination of this emerging construct also facilitated an understanding, from the participants' perspectives of:

- the conditions that must be present and maintained in order for teachers, in IDEAS schools, to develop into teacher leaders;
- the phases in the psychosocial process of IDEAS facilitators becoming teacher leaders;
- the main issue that is being continually resolved by the participants throughout the process;
- the complex interrelationships between learning, leading and safety in the lives of teachers and the centrality of safety as a precondition for teacher leadership development;
- the manner in which the participants in this study engaged in a reconstruction of their role, from teacher, to teacher leader.

In the process of developing a deeper understanding of the above, and consistent with the purposes of grounded theory, I developed a substantive grounded theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in IDEAS schools.

1.5 Assumptions that Underpin this Research

It is essential that those who adopt grounded theory methodology begin without “a priori assumptions” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3). While I adhered to this advice, it became clear to me that, during the process of theory development, it was important to acknowledge and be aware of the assumptions that shaped the construction of the substantive theory being developed.

The research is underpinned by the following assumptions. These assumptions are the consequence of my long career as an educator, my extensive reading in areas related to school improvement and my work as an academic facilitator of the IDEAS program for the past nine years.

It is worth noting that the majority of the assumptions that follow have emerged as the study progressed. I was not necessarily able to articulate most of them before the process of data collection and analysis began. This was largely due to the adoption of a grounded theory methodology and its iterative and simultaneous approach to data collection, analysis and theory development. As the various categories and properties emerged during the course of the study, I realised that it was important to articulate the assumptions upon which my theory development was based. The seven assumptions that emerged are:

Assumption one

- The personal and professional lives of teachers are interconnected; many teachers view their careers as meaningful to, and integrated into, their image of themselves.

Assumption two

- While leadership can be learned and developed, there needs to be greater understanding of the nuances of the process if teacher leadership is to become more widespread in schools.

Assumption three

- Teacher leaders are more effective when they have an understanding of leadership and perceive themselves as leaders.

Assumption four

- While teacher leadership can be represented as a social and a psychological construct, there is limited understanding of the manner in which the psychological construct develops.

Assumption five

- Constructed images of self determine the actions and behaviours of individuals. Thus, teacher leadership cannot exist to any significant extent, unless there are teachers who understand leadership, perceive themselves to be teacher leaders and enact such roles.

Assumption six

- An understanding of the experiences of those who make the transition from teacher to teacher leader will provide a new perspective on the conditions necessary for teacher leadership development.

Assumption seven

- In order to facilitate the development of teacher leadership in teachers it is important to understand the manner in which teachers construct images of themselves as teacher leaders.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

It may seem strange to begin a research study without having a full understanding of the significance of what was to be researched. However, as a consequence of my decision to adopt Glaser's (1978, 1992, 1998, 2001) orthodox approach to grounded theory, I had to become comfortable that this too would emerge. My broad aim was to develop a substantive theory "that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Glaser, 1998, p. 93). I knew that I wanted to understand the participants' perspectives of their own growth and development as a consequence of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators. I was aiming to contribute to the literature in the broad area of teacher professional growth and development (Day, 1999), in particular teacher career development (Huberman, 1993; Keltchermans, 1993). Furthermore I was seeking to contribute to the understanding of teacher growth and development in schools that are themselves changing and where the participants in the study are agentic in that change process.

Thus, while I was interested in what was happening in the professional lives of the participants, the significance of the study was not fully clear to me at the beginning. However, as I progressed through the various stages of the study, my

understanding of what I was investigating and its significance emerged. Finally, when it emerged that I was researching the process whereby *teachers become teacher leaders*, the full significance of my research also became clear. This study is significant because it:

- deepens the understanding of the psychosocial processes that contribute to the development of teacher leaders in IDEAS schools;
- enables a better understanding of the experiences of teachers in the processes of becoming teacher leaders;
- deepens an understanding of how teacher leaders perceive, enact and construct their roles;
- develops a substantive theory of becoming a teacher leader in contexts of change (IDEAS schools);
- contributes to an understanding of the growth and development needs of experienced teachers;
- makes explicit the centrality of safety as the key feature of environments where teachers can experience the learning and leading necessary to become teacher leaders;
- clearly demonstrates the important role of the principal as a major contributor to the establishment and maintenance of safe environments for teacher leadership development;
- identifies the need for further research into the nature of the construct of safety, especially as it relates to the emergence of teacher leadership.

Any study that deepens understandings of teacher leadership has the potential to benefit teachers and students, thereby demonstrating significance. Harris and

Muijs (2004) in their aptly named book *Improving Schools through Teacher Leadership* maintain that “the nature and quality of leadership within schools is important for maximising school effectiveness and improvement” (p. 73). They do however explain that the leadership to which that statement refers is that of the principal. Subsequently they note that principal leadership is “mediated through the actions of teachers and administrators” (p. 73) and cite Mulford and Silins (2002) who report a more direct relationship between improved student outcomes and teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership is associated with increases in teachers’ self esteem and effectiveness (Harris & Muijs, 2004) and is associated with positive influences on self efficacy and behaviour (Lemlech & Hertzog, 1998 as cited in Muijs and Harris, 2006, p. 74). Additionally, Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) found positive relationships between student engagement and teacher effectiveness.

Existing research establishes that teacher leadership is associated with a range of beneficial outcomes for students, teachers and schools. There is also much written about the development of teacher leadership, particularly the role of the principal in developing opportunities for leadership and creating cultures, structures and policies that enhance the development of teacher leaders (Crowther, et al., 2002; Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Moller & Pankake, 2006). Crowther et al. (2002), Crowther et al. (2009), and Murphy (2005) elaborate on the characteristics of teacher leaders, their impacts, their behaviours and contributions to school improvement.

Those who research teacher leadership have observed their behaviours (Crowther et al., 2002), and projected how schools benefit from their actions (Harris & Muijs, 2004). Researchers are gradually developing an understanding of the cultural and structural requirements necessary to enable the development of teacher leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Others (Frost & Durant, 2003; Murphy, 2005) are also developing an understanding of the important role of the principal in the development of teacher leaders. These researchers are making significant progress in conceptualising and understanding teacher leadership from an organisational perspective. However, an understanding from a psychosocial viewpoint, from the perspective of those who become teacher leaders, does not yet exist. This study contributes to an understanding of teacher leadership development from this psychosocial perspective, albeit only in IDEAS schools. It aims to make a contribution to the existing literature by complementing the understandings of teacher leadership as an organisational construct.

While acknowledging the organisational and reciprocal nature of teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2002; Crowther et al., 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy 2005) this research focuses on the perceptions of those who become teacher leaders. In arguing that teacher leadership as an organisational construct cannot exist unless teachers behave and think like leaders, this research establishes the need for a greater understanding of the teacher leaders themselves, in particular, those who make the transition from teacher to teacher leader. How do teachers, who did not perceive of themselves to be leaders and had a limited understanding of teacher leadership, develop leadership skills, and begin thinking and acting as teacher leaders? How did they develop an active

construction of themselves as teacher leaders? This thesis hopes to make a contribution to a deeper understanding of such processes. In developing an understanding of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* from the perspectives of the participants, this thesis makes a contribution to a different understanding of teacher leadership development; one that does not currently exist.

Like other grounded theorists, I have developed a substantive theory. In this case, the substantive theory has been developed from the experiences of a group of teachers who facilitated the IDEAS program in their respective schools. I refer to the participating schools as IDEAS schools. The substantive theory that has been developed is one for a substantive or empirical area (a cohort of IDEAS facilitators), and has less generalisability than formal theory (Glaser, 1978). While the substantive nature of the theory limits generalisation and while that is not my aim, it is expected that the understandings that emerge from this study should have some degree of applicability in other IDEAS schools. As the University of Southern Queensland has already implemented IDEAS in over 300 schools and many more schools are interested in adopting the process in the near future, the potential importance of the substantive theory developed in this thesis is evident.

This research has the potential to directly enhance the development of teacher leaders in schools, particularly future IDEAS schools. From my work in many IDEAS schools I know that the development of teacher leadership is of deep interest to a wide range of educators. Those interested in becoming teacher leaders themselves, and those who wish to facilitate the development of leadership within others, may benefit from the insights that emerge from this thesis.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The substantive grounded theory which has been developed in this thesis is based on the experiences of 21 IDEAS facilitators. The data collection, analysis and write-up extended over a period of three years, beginning in 2007 and extending into 2009. Data were collected from IDEAS facilitators in four Victorian and seven Western Australian schools which were using the IDEAS program as a mechanism for school revitalisation. All the facilitators were experienced teachers, most of whom had been teaching for a period of at least 20 years.

Like many grounded theory studies, this study seeks to develop a substantive theory to explain the main concern of the participants in this study. As the study progressed it became clear that the focus was teacher growth and development, in particular, the emergence of teacher leaders. The research involved teachers in processes of learning, leading, reflecting, challenging assumptions, and developing new images of themselves. In doing so, their experiences impacted on them at both personal and professional levels. While I, like many researchers (Day, 1999, 2004; Huberman 1993; Kelchtermans 1993; Lambert, 2003; Nias, 1985, 1989, 1996; Palmer 1998; Sachs, 2003; Vandenberg & Huberman 1999) recognise the important connection between the personal and professional lives of teachers, I have chosen for pragmatic (time related) and purpose (for this dissertation) related reasons, to bound this study by concentrating only on the professional lives of the participating teachers. The decision to bound the study in this manner also limits the potential significance or applicability of the substantive theory which has been generated.

Despite my intent, there were several occasions during the interview process when participants, without prompting, wanted to, and willingly divulged information of a personal nature. As I already had a close and trusting relationship with all the participants, and because of the nature of their experiences and the general topic being explored, it was not surprising that the personal/professional boundaries that I had established at the outset were sometimes breached. In such circumstances I allowed the participants to take the interview in the directions that met their needs, later using appropriate questioning techniques to refocus on the related professional issues. Throughout the entire data collection period, I was always careful to prioritise concern for the participant above that of the research.

By focusing on the professional lives of the participating teachers, this study has sought to develop: (a) a substantive grounded theory to account for the main concern of experienced teachers as they facilitated the IDEAS program in their respective schools, and (b) an understanding, from the perspectives of the participants, of the effects of that experience on their professional growth and development. In doing so it has enabled me to develop a substantive grounded theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in IDEAS schools.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis follows the structure of an orthodox grounded study. Orthodox grounded theory theses are usually structured differently from more traditional theses. There are two general points of departure. Firstly, in a grounded thesis it is normal for the literature comparison to occur after the presentation of the research

findings. Secondly, in a grounded theory study, the substantive theory revolves around the resolution of the “core category” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 40). The *core category* is central to the substantive theory and relates to the various *sub-core categories* (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Depending on the nature of the core category, it is sometimes difficult for a reader to easily make sense of an individual sub-core category without knowledge of the core category and the connection to other sub-core categories. As I believed that the various sub-core categories that constitute this substantive theory are best understood subsequent to knowledge of, and connection with the core category, I have presented the substantive theory in Chapter 3, followed by a more detailed exploration of the various sub-core categories in the ensuing chapters. In essence, the whole is presented first in order to enable a better understanding of the component parts.

Throughout the thesis, I have included several memos. These serve two purposes; firstly, as evidence of conceptualisation, and secondly, in order to provide an audit trail for the reader. An audit trail, according to Bowen (2006) ensures “that the process of theory development [is] both visible and verifiable” (p. 1).

Chapter 1 introduces the study, provides a rationale for the adoption of the grounded theory methodology, details the aim, methodology, emergent research problem, outlines the assumptions that underpin the research, discusses the significance of the study, explains the scope of the study, and finally, concludes with an outline of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2 deals with research design, addresses issues of ontology, epistemology, choice of paradigm, symbolic interactionism, as well as grounded theory processes for data collection and analysis. This chapter also includes a description of context, including relevant details of the IDEAS program and the role of the IDEAS facilitator. The two sensitising concepts of *Career Development* and *Teacher Leadership* are acknowledged and detailed. Towards the end of the chapter, there is a discussion of the role of the researcher in the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the various measures adopted to ensure ethics and confidentiality

Chapter 3 presents the substantive grounded theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. Beginning with an overview of the theory it goes on to outline the core category and the various sub-core categories and their relationships. This chapter includes a description of the emergence of the core category *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*. A diagrammatic representation of the process is also included.

Chapter 4 details the various categories and properties of the sub-core category labelled *Sizing Up*. This chapter describes the process whereby school professional communities engage in processes of decision making, the goal of which is to decide whether the school adopts IDEAS as a vehicle for revitalisation.

Chapter 5 details the various categories and properties of the sub-core category labelled *Preparing to Commit*. The sub-core category of *Preparing to*

Commit describes the process whereby teachers make the decision to commit, or not commit, to the role of IDEAS facilitator in their respective schools.

Chapter 6 details the various categories and properties of the sub-core category labelled *Becoming Ready*. It describes the more passive phase that precedes the *Sizing Up* and *Preparing to Commit* phases. I have included it at this point in the thesis, as it was not until after these two phases emerged that I realised there was a preceding phase. For me it was a realisation that the order of emergence of the various phases was not necessarily linear.

Chapter 7 details the various categories and properties of the sub-core category labelled *Experiencing Learning and Leading*. It describes the process whereby the participants in this study, as a consequence of their learning and leading in a growth environment, begin the process of transformation from teacher to teacher leader.

Chapter 8 details the various categories and properties of the sub-core category labelled *Enhancing Capacities*. It describes the process whereby teachers transform their image of themselves and their role in their schools. This chapter details the manner in which the IDEAS facilitators develop confidence in their leadership capacities and become comfortable in identifying themselves as teacher leaders. By this phase of the psychosocial process, the participants have developed an understanding of leadership, the confidence to lead and an active construction of themselves as teacher leaders. They readily adopt and enact teacher leadership roles in their school.

Chapter 9 contains the literature comparison. It serves the purpose of locating the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in the extant literature. The literature comparison is eclectic, coming from a range of discipline and interest areas including: career phases, motivation, leadership, learning and teacher development, transformative learning, constructivism, the importance of safety, psychological safety, the role of the principal, career self-concept and career construction, role perception and transition, role breadth self-efficacy and role crafting.

Chapter 10 explores the conclusions and implications of the research. It begins by asking whether the broad aims and purpose of the research have been attained. This discussion is followed by a review of the significance of the research and its contribution to the literature. As is the case in grounded theory studies, the implications of the substantive theory to practitioners and researchers are discussed. This discussion is followed by a consideration of the possible limitations of the substantive theory and an evaluation of the substantive theory, using criteria developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978). The thesis concludes with a brief personal reflection of my experience as a novice grounded theorist.

CHAPTER 2-RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Introduction

Research is not simply a technical issue; it is impacted by the world of the researcher and the purpose of the research to be undertaken. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) “research is concerned with understanding the world and that it is informed by how we view our world(s), what we take understanding to be, and what we see as the purposes of our understanding” (p. 3). A well developed research design should reflect this and before commencing, the researcher needs to clarify and acknowledge his/her underpinning assumptions, and aims, as well as demonstrating how these impact the intended study. This chapter aims to provide the reader with a discussion of these and a range of other issues relevant to the research undertaken in this study. It includes an overview of context, including detail about the IDEAS program and the role of the IDEAS facilitator. The “sensitising concepts” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 17) of *Career Development* and *Teacher Leadership* are also made explicit.

2.2 Selecting a Research Design

In considering the design of this research I referred to a range of literature including Charmaz, (1999, 2003, 2005, 2006), Cohen et al. (2003), Crotty (1998), Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2003; 2005), Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) and Patton (2002). As I did, I became more confused, for what was represented in one text as a factual and simple process or construct was contested in another. Often I found

alternative or even conflicting views, eventually realising that being a qualitative researcher requires one to choose from alternatives. In the following chapter I seek to provide detail about the research design process, outline my choices and the reasoning behind those choices.

Cohen et al. (2003) outline a five step research design. Beginning with locating the field of inquiry in terms of either the use of a qualitative, interpretive approach or a quantitative, verification approach. Secondly, the researcher should select a theoretical research paradigm that is capable of informing and guiding the process. Thirdly the researcher must link the chosen research to the empirical world through a particular methodology, after which (fourthly) he/she makes decisions about appropriate methods of data collection and finally considers the process of analysis.

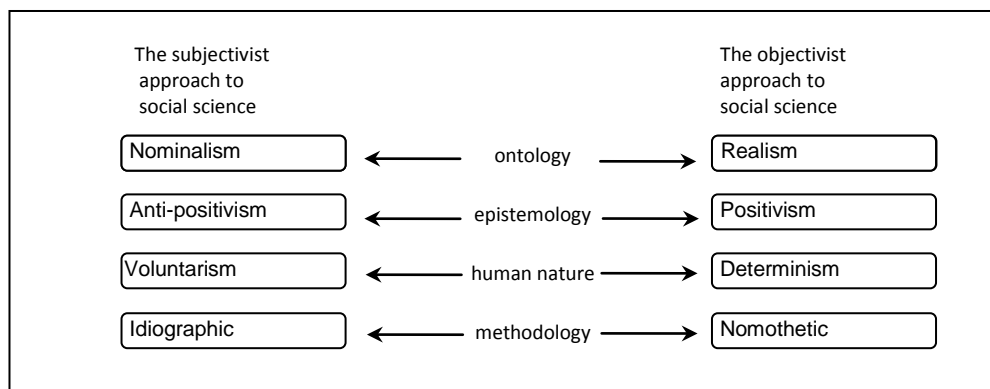
When it comes to selection of a research methodology, Crotty (1998) proposes a four step model that considers: epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods, while Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) state that “ontological assumptions give rise to epistemological assumptions: these, in turn, give rise to methodological consideration, and these, in turn, give rise to issues of instrumentation and data collection” (p. 21).

2.3 Ontology and Epistemology

While the language used and the specific number of steps involved varied from author to author, it soon became clear that I needed to choose a framework that

would enable me to clarify my own position and also demonstrate this to readers. In doing so I drew on the work of Cohen et al. (2003). In particular I found the framework developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) as cited in Cohen et al. (2003, p. 7) helpful in enabling me to clarify my various ontological and epistemological positions (see Figure 2.1 below).

FIGURE 2.1: A scheme for analysing assumptions about the nature of social science



(Burrell and Morgan, 1979, cited in Cohen et al., 2003, p. 7)

Cohen et al. (2003) explain of Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) diagram, that the first assumptions are “of an ontological kind; assumptions which concern the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being investigated” (p. 5). In referring to nominalist-realist philosophical debate they state:

the former view holds that objects of thought are merely words and that there is no independently accessible thing constituting the meaning of the word.

The realist position however, contends that objects have an independent existence and are not dependant for it on the knower. (p. 6)

The second set of assumptions is of the epistemological kind and concerns the basis of knowledge. Once again Cohen et al. (2003) refer to the writings of Burrell and Morgan (1979) who ask:

Is it possible to identify and communicate the nature of knowledge as being hard, real and capable of being transmitted in tangible form, or whether knowledge is of a softer, more subjective, spiritual or transcendental kind, based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature?
(p. 6)

Using the terminology in Figure 2.1, this study is subjectivist in its approach, adopting a nominalistic ontology and anti-positivist epistemology.

The third set of assumptions is about human nature and the relationships between humans and the world. In outlining the differences between the terms voluntarism and determinism, Burrell and Morgan (1979) explain (as cited in Cohen et al., 2003) that determinism involves a belief that human beings respond in mechanistic fashion and are products of the environment and are conditioned by the environment. In contrast voluntarism acknowledges the place of free will and sees humans as the creators and controllers of the environment.

Finally, when considering methodology the researcher must also locate him/herself somewhere along the nomothetic (an approach characterised by objectivity, hard data and adherence to rules and procedures) and idiographic (an approach that aims at understanding the manner in which individuals experience, modify and interpret their worlds) continuum (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, as cited in Cohen et al., 2003). As this research intended to develop a theory based on an understanding of the human experience, it located the study in the voluntaristic and idiographic ends of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) two continua.

2.4 Selection of a Research Paradigm

In using the framework of Burrell and Morgan (1979) I have already identified an anti-positivistic epistemology, however it is also necessary for researchers to be explicit in articulating what is referred to as a “research paradigm” (Sarantakas, 1998, p. 31).

According to Kuhn (1970) research paradigms are shared between like thinking members of a scientific community and determine the explanations that are acceptable to them. Guba (1990) explains that a research paradigm represents a set of beliefs that will underlie and guide the entire research process. Research paradigms are therefore shared by a community of scholars and relate to what they see as the nature of reality (Brooks, 1998). There are conflicting views as to the number of paradigms that exist in the social sciences. Lather (1992) argues that there are two (positivist and post-positivist) while Guba and Lincoln (1994) identify four; “positivist, post-positivism, constructivist and critical theory” (pp. 109-111). Sarantakas (1998) argues that there are three paradigms; “Positivistic, Interpretive and Critical” (p. 33).

A paradigm, Sarantakas (1998) explains, is:

A set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientists in general what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable. (p. 31)

FIGURE 2.2: Dominant Paradigms and Domains in the Social Sciences.

Positivistic	Interpretive	Critical
Positivism Neopositivism Methodological Positivism Logical Positivism	Symbolic Interactionism Phenomenology Hermeneutics Psychoanalysis Ethnology Sociolinguistics	Critical Theory Conflict School of Thought Marxism Feminism

(Sarantakas, 1998, p. 33)

Using Sarantakas' (1998) framework, this study adopts an interpretivist paradigm and a symbolic interactionist perspective. Further to this I have chosen the methodology of grounded theory. The links between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism and the interpretivist paradigm are now discussed.

2.5 Symbolic Interactionism, Constructivism, Constructionism and Grounded Theory

The debate as to where grounded theory sits on the positivist-interpretivist paradigm continues. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) explain that positivism sits at one end of the continuum and is a means of providing causal explanations and distinguish it from interpretivism, at the other end of the continuum. Interpretivism, they explain, is aimed at developing an understanding of human action. The interpretivist paradigm sees reality as created by people assigning meaning as well as the emergence of behaviour patterns relating to social conventions. The earlier grounded theory methods as outlined by Glaser (1978, 1992), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Strauss and Corbin (1990) are widely regarded as adopting a positivist-objectivist position (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Charmaz (2005) however has observed that these earlier epistemologies have been questioned. In challenging the earlier assumptions

about objectivity, external reality and the relationship between the researcher and the participant, Charmaz (2005) observed that changing epistemological stances reflect the changing approaches to qualitative research. She (Charmaz) advocates a social constructionist method and refers to “constructivist grounded theory” (p. 509), explaining that:

A constructivist grounded theory adopts grounded theory guidelines as tools but does not subscribe to the objectivist, positivist assumptions in its earlier formulations. A constructivist approach emphasises the studied phenomenon, rather than the methods of studying it. (Charmaz, 1995, p. 509)

Grounded theory has evolved to fit a range of epistemologies and ontologies (Mills, et al., 2006). Charmaz (1999) and Schreiber and Stern (2001) have acknowledged that the methodology of grounded theory has some positivist features, acknowledging that grounded theory employs both inductive and deductive thinking. However in discussing the emergence of grounded theory and the nature of symbolic interactionism, both have concluded that the connection between grounded theory and symbolic interactionism is obvious, thus locating grounded theory as a methodology in the interpretivist paradigm.

Blumer (1969) explains that symbolic interactionism “sees meaning as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact” (p. 4). Blumer (1969) and Stern (1994) maintain that symbolic interactionism and grounded theory are intrinsically linked, while Schreiber and Stern (2001) assert that the chief methodological implication of symbolic

interactionism (the understanding of human behaviour) is directly addressed through the use of grounded theory.

Symbolic interactionism, according to Schreiber and Stern (2001):

is a theoretical perspective that illuminates the relationship between individuals and society, as a mediated form of communication. The use of symbols to denote objects is an essential human characteristic that enables communication and allows shared meaning to develop. Humans are understood as creating meanings of objects based on their own internal dialogue and interactions with others. To understand human behaviour, the researcher must look beyond the behavioural component, to the underlying meaning that motivates it. (p. 178)

As I was aiming to understand the experiences of others, it was also necessary to understand the relationships between meaning making, changes in behaviour and interpretations/reinterpretations of self. Locke (2001) clearly articulates the manner in which each of these interact, stating:

It is our ability to hold a concept of who we are and to take action in light of our view of ourselves that forms the basis of the formulation of meaning and experience. Social and physical objects are defined by a person's interaction with them and in the light of who they are. Once these objects are defined they can be imbued with meaning and value. Consequently, according to Blumer, people's actions towards the objects in their world are sensible in light of meanings and values these objects hold for them. These meanings and values lead to self directed behaviour. Further, because the self is always subject to

reinterpretation, one's definition of self can change. New experience changes the sense of self, changes the meaning of objects, and thereby leads to changes in behaviour. Thus, with the creation of meaning at the core of human behaviour, symbolic interactionists view behaviour as a result of meaning making or interpretive processes. Social behaviour is inherently processual and it tends towards instability as behaviour shifts in the context of revised or different interpretations. (p. 23)

Manis and Meltzer (1972) explain that because people base their actions on their interpretations of meaning, it is necessary to understand the meanings in order to understand and explain the behaviour. With this in mind, the relationship between meaning making, symbolic interactionism, the methodology of grounded theory, constructivism and constructionism are worthy of consideration.

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge and learning that focuses on the learner as the constructor of knowledge and acknowledges the importance of experience and motivation as critical to learning (Larochelle & Bednarz, 1998). In the constructivist paradigm knowledge is seen as an individual construct; a social and contextualised process that takes place over time and emphasises understanding and performance (Hein, 1991). Schwandt (1994) explains that according to this paradigm, reality is pluralistic and relativistic and it is created in the minds of individuals such that truth is based in consensus rather than objective fact. According to Schreiber and Stern (2001):

when interpreting the stories of research informants and other data, a grounded theorist's goal is to construct a model to explain the action and

interaction surrounding a phenomenon of interest. Thus, a grounded theory is the researcher's reconstruction of the participant's constructed definition and resolution of the situation and should be immediately recognisable to the participants in the study. (p. 179)

While constructivism refers to the “meaning making activity of the individual mind”, constructionism includes “collective generation (and transmission) of meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Constructionism is the view that “all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). For the constructionist, meaning is an interpreted world only existing when there is a mind to create it, engage with the object and bring it into meaningful existence. As the nature of this research focuses on the exploration of meaning in the minds of the participants, ontological realities that may exist outside the mind are not considered, thus positioning constructionism as a relativist rather than a realist epistemology. The constructionist views the world as one that is constantly co-constructed by its members and represents an important epistemological influence in this study. The epistemological stance of this study encompasses elements of both constructivism and constructionism.

One common feature of grounded theory and symbolic interactionism is a focus on social behaviour, problems and processes. While Herbert Blumer's writings elaborated on symbolic interactionism, they did not provide the guidance which is given through the development of the methodology of grounded theory (Schreiber &

Stern, 2001). Grounded theory is therefore a methodology that enables one to understand social behaviours, problems and processes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

[It] entails developing increasingly abstract ideas about the research participant's meaning...seeking out specific data to fill out, refine and check emerging conceptual categories... and results in an analytical interpretation of participant's worlds and of the processes constituting how these worlds are constructed. (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508)

As this was the essential purpose of the study, I explored it further, later making the decision to adopt it as the methodology for this research.

2.6 The Methodology of Grounded Theory

Beginning with the grounded theory debate, the methodology of grounded theory was originally developed in the 1960s by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and culminated in the classic text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Dey, 1999). In later years however the two authors began to differ and there emerged two schools of thought; the *Glaserian* approach and the *Straussarian* approach. The Glaserian approach is based on the writings of Barney Glaser while the Straussarian approach is based on the work of Strauss and his colleague Juliet Corbin (Dey, 1999; Melia, 1996; Stern, 1994). The Glaserian approach, better known as *orthodox grounded theory*, differs from the Straussarian approach in important ways. Goulding (1999) identifies differences in style and terminology, noting that the Straussarian approach has been developed to incorporate a “strict and complex process of systemic coding” (p. 7).

Glaser strongly criticised Strauss particularly after the release in 1990 of Strauss and Corbin's book *The Basics of Qualitative Research* stating in 1992 that it: "is without conscience, bordering on immorality... and producing simply what qualitative researchers have been doing for sixty years or more: forced, full conceptual description" (Glaser, 1992, p. 3). Glaser (1978) argues that the goal of "orthodox grounded theory is to produce conceptual theory... not voluminous descriptions, nor clever verification" (p. 93).

Since the two originators of grounded theory have diverged in their views, it is important for researchers who intend to use a grounded theory methodology to identify the particular approach to grounded theory which they intend to use. Because I aimed to develop a substantive theory and after considering the arguments of Glaser (1978, 1992, 2004) especially in relation to the production of conceptual theory, I have chosen to adopt the orthodox approach to grounded theory. While I have followed Glaser's approach to grounded theory development, I do not subscribe to the objectivist, positivistic assumptions that underpin earlier formulations of grounded theory, instead adopting what Charmaz (2005) has described as a constructivist approach to grounded theory.

2.6.1 Purpose of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an inductive approach to theory development using systemic procedures and constant comparative methods of data analysis (Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). According to Stern (1985), grounded theory is a "research method used to search out factors (factor searching) or relate factors (factor relating) that

pertain to the research problem at hand” (p. 150). Schreiber (2001) explains that the aim of grounded theory is “the construction of a parsimonious theory with concepts linked together in explanatory relationships” (p. 78).

Glaser (1978) and Schreiber and Stern (2001) explain that theoretical sensitivity is one of the central concepts in grounded theory. Theoretical sensitivity requires that researchers be alert to possible biases that have the potential to intrude into the processes of data analysis. Schreiber and Stern (2001) state that “to ensure the necessary theoretical sensitivity, researchers should constantly check their interpretations against their own beliefs and positions thus increasing the confidence that emerging concepts patterns and theories are grounded in the data” (p. 61).

Hutchinson (1986) states it is “only through awareness of mind-set can the researcher begin to search out and understand another’s world” (p. 115).

Grounded theory is used for the process of inductive theory generation from empirical data rather than theory testing. Glaser (1978) explains that it is an inductive and iterative process with the theory emerging as part of the research process, not being developed *a priori*.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss the importance of theory generation and refer to “substantive” (p. 31) and “formal” (p. 31) theories. Substantive, they explain, are distinguished from formal theory in their level of generalisability, with substantive theories being developed to explain one specific area of empirical data while the formal theories are applicable to a broader range of data sets. The process

of formal theory development usually includes contributions from many substantive theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This study aims to produce a substantive theory.

Glaser (2004) says:

I wish to remind people, yet again, that classic grounded theory is simply a set of integrated hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area. Classic grounded theory is a highly structured but eminently flexible methodology. Its data collection and analysis procedures are explicit and the pacing of these procedures is, at once, simultaneous, sequential, subsequent, scheduled and serendipitous, forming an integrated methodological “whole” that enables the emergence of conceptual theory as distinct from the thematic analysis characteristic of Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) research. (p. 2)

Milliken and Schreiber (2001) state that “a grounded theorist’s goal is to construct a model to explain the action and interaction surrounding the phenomenon of interest” (p. 179). It is however the nature of the process that is critical. Glaser (1978, 1998) stresses the importance of remaining open to the emerging data, reminding researchers to avoid imposing their own preconceived ideas or biases on the data. This emergent rather than preconceived framework can be challenging, for at the beginning of the process the researcher is not sure of what he/she is looking for. Grounded theorists need to have a tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty (Glaser 1978, 1998). Esterberg (2002) refers to inductive reasoning as a process of developing a theory “consistent with what you are seeing” (p. 31).

Grounded theory however, is not for everyone as the framework for inquiry is an emergent one. As Glaser (2001) states:

In a grounded theory study our questions are constantly changing, our sample is unpredictable, and our analysis is constant throughout. We do not know what we are looking for when we start. Everything emerges. We do not preconceive anything. The research problem emerges, concepts emerge, the relevant literature emerges, and finally the theory emerges. We simply cannot say prior to the collection and analysis of data what our study will look like.
(p. 176)

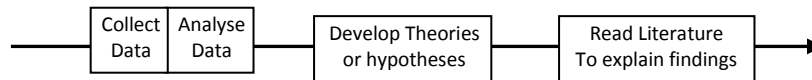
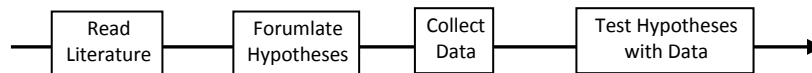
2.6.2 Commencing Grounded Theory

Orthodox grounded theory does not follow a linear path. Processes of data collection, coding and analysis occur simultaneously with the researcher moving back and forth through the various stages of the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Martin & Turner, 1986). Grounded theorists often begin a study in a broad unstructured manner with the focus becoming more evident as the study progresses. Additional sites and participants are selected as constructs and relationships begin to evolve. This process of selecting sites and participants is referred to as theoretical sampling and refers to the processes of selection based on theoretical relevance rather than being pre-determined (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data collection and analysis occur concurrently, with the researcher looking for similarities, differences or patterns that emerge across participants and sites.

Theoretical sampling involves the selection of participants/sites that are most likely to contribute to emerging concepts, categories and theories. In some cases, new participants are recruited while in others previous participants are re-interviewed (Glaser, 1978). The process is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.3 below:

FIGURE 2.3: The Grounded Theory Process vs. the Traditional Process

Traditional process



Grounded Theory process

(Jones, Kriflik & Zanko, 2005, p. 3)

2.6.3 The Literature Comparison

The strength of grounded theory is that it is not constrained by a preconceived theoretical framework. In their early writings Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that it was unhelpful to review the literature as the views of other writers may bias the researcher entering the field (Dey, 1999). In later writings however, both Glaser and Strauss acknowledged that some familiarity with the literature enabled researchers to develop sensitivities that could prove useful during the processes of data collection and analysis (Schreiber, 2001). Charmaz (2006) refers to them as “theoretical sensitivities” (p. 17). The theoretical sensitivities which guided this study are discussed later in this chapter.

While debate continues about where to locate the literature review, Charmaz (2006) reminds us that “the intended purpose of delaying the literature review is to avoid importing preconceived ideas and imposing them on your work. Delaying the review encourages you to articulate your ideas” (p. 165).

While in the years preceding my entry into the doctoral program I had read widely in related areas (for example- school improvement and teacher professionalism), I chose to do my major review of the literature after I had generated the substantive theory. As a novice grounded theorist, I now realise that this was very beneficial, as by approaching the analysis without what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as “theoretical blinkering” (p. 37), I was able to ensure that resulting substantive theory was actually *grounded* in the data. The decision to do the major literature comparison after the development of the substantive theory is also consistent with my decision to adopt a Glaser’s orthodox approach to this study.

2.7 Data Collection

While in a grounded theory study data collection and analysis occur simultaneously, for the purposes of this thesis and to explain the process in a more thorough manner, the two processes have been separated.

While the formal data collection period for this grounded study occurred between February 2007 and December 2008, I had been informally collecting data since becoming involved with the IDEAS program in 2000. Between 2000 and 2004 my role as academic facilitator enabled me to work with many (40-50 in all) schools

in Queensland as well as four metropolitan schools in New South Wales. I worked with schools ranging in size from a few teachers to larger schools with over 120 teaching staff.

Between 2004 and 2008, I worked extensively with schools in Victoria and Western Australia. During this period, in my role as academic facilitator of the IDEAS program, I have worked closely with six schools in Victoria and a total of 22 schools in Western Australia. All of the schools with which I have worked have been public schools and the majority have been large (school enrolment over 650 students) secondary schools.

Since 2000, when I began to work with schools, I have observed many teachers change and develop. At first it was not the focus of my attention in that I was mainly concerned with facilitating the processes associated with the development of school vision statements and school-wide approaches to pedagogy. My role however required me to spend considerable time in schools working closely with teachers, especially IDEAS facilitators. The IDEAS program extends for a period of at least two years, however many schools have continued participation over a period of four years. In my role, I facilitated workshops and visited schools. In doing so I worked closely, for extended periods, with IDEAS facilitators, including on-site visits with each of them, at their respective schools on at least four occasions per year. In addition, throughout the duration of the program I maintained communication through regular phone and email contact. I was able to interact extensively with them and get to know them. I formed relationships with them which

I describe as professional relationships of mutual trust and respect. As I worked with them, I consciously and unconsciously observed their changes.

As I worked with more and more facilitators, the horizons of what I observed expanded. I was also becoming aware of changes in the teachers with whom I was working. It seemed that their attitude, their enthusiasm, their commitment had changed. I wondered if I was observing a change in what Day (2004) refers to as “teacher passion” (p. 1). Eventually, I realised that the changes that I was noticing could no longer be ignored. I began to observe the work of these teachers, I began to talk with them, and I began to think about what was going on, in particular, about what they were experiencing. Between 2000 and 2004, I observed and talked informally with the facilitators. After I worked with the facilitators I often recorded my thoughts; for example see field note that follows.

Field note: August 2004.

[Name] told me that the last two years of her career have been the most enjoyable yet- she had decided not to retire after all. When I first met her she appeared tired and stressed; quite cynical about IDEAS and regretted spending her whole working life as a teacher.

I am not sure what has happened to this person, however there appears to be a new person inhabiting her body; someone positive and enthused about teaching; not the person I met a few years ago.

She claimed that *I have been teaching for twenty eight years and I finally know what it is means to be a teacher*. I wonder what she means by this?

2.7.1 Methods

When selecting a method(s) for data collection one must always consider the purpose for which the research is to be undertaken, for without this in mind, it is

possible to collect inappropriate data and not achieve the aims of the research study. As the purpose of this research study was to develop grounded theory, in the selection of appropriate methods, I was guided by the words of Mills et al. (2006) who state that:

Grounded theory does not aim to provide full individual accounts as evidence, rather, it seeks to move a theoretically sensitive analysis of participants' stories to a higher plane while still retaining a clear connection to the data from which it was derived. (p. 12)

To achieve my aim, it was clear that I needed to hear the stories of the participants. Thus, this study primarily drew on participant observation and interviewing as the two main methods of data collection, with interviewing as the single most important method. Patton (1990) claims that:

The purpose of interviewing then is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowledgeable and can be made to be explicit. We interview to find out what is in, and on, someone else's mind; to gather their stories. (p. 31)

Interviews

This study uses the process of qualitative interview as the primary data gathering method. Johnson and Christensen (2004) and Patton (2002) identify three types of qualitative interviews: 1) The informal conversational interview, 2) The general guide approach, and 3) The standardised open-ended interview. At one end of the continuum the informal conversational approach offers the greatest flexibility

with the standardised open-ended interview being the most rigid. The contrasting approaches are not mutually exclusive and several approaches can be combined giving greater flexibility (Patton, 2002).

Patton (2002) explains that the sequencing of questions is important and suggests beginning with non-controversial questions that are easy to answer. More complex questions (e.g. feeling questions) should be left until later in the interview. Questions can be categorised into: feeling questions, knowledge questions, opinion and values questions, sensory questions and background/demographic questions.

Patton refers to Payne's (1951) qualities of good questions explaining that good questioning is an art and that good questions should be "singular, open-ended and clear" (Patton, 2002, p. 353). Interviews are conducted in order to enable the researcher to answer the research question, thus the relationship between the research question and the interview questions is important. Kvale (1996) highlights the importance of translating the abstract academic research questions into "an easy-going colloquial form to generate spontaneous and rich descriptions" (p. 130). Sometimes, this can be difficult in a grounded study as the initial research question is vague. Thus in a grounded theory study, the early interviews are of a more open-ended nature, gradually becoming more specific in nature as the substantive theory emerges.

Kvale (1996) refers to two different approaches to qualitative interviews. Using a metaphor he relates the interviewer to a miner or a traveller. The miner metaphor implies an understanding of knowledge as "nuggets of essential meaning

waiting to be unearthed by the researcher” (p. 2). The traveller, on the other hand, “wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with people encountered” (p. 2). The two metaphors represent differing epistemologies. The miner views knowledge as waiting to be discovered, while the traveller sees it as being constructed. The latter is consistent with the epistemology that underpins this study.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) explain that “in stating the knowledge is extracted from the respondent ignores the most fundamental epistemological questions: Where does this knowledge come from and how is it derived?” (p. 2). They reject the interview conversation as a pipeline for transmitting knowledge (p. 3) arguing instead that knowledge is socially constructed, so researcher and respondent are active in the process. Their views are consistent with Mills et al. (2006) who maintain that in the use of interviews in constructivist grounded theory the interview is regarded as the site where the researcher and the participant work together in the co-construction of knowledge.

All interviews were conducted at the respondent’s school. A suitable, quiet and private location was found and interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the respondent. Most initial interviews were between 50-70 minutes in duration. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim, thus enabling minimum loss of information and an ongoing rich source of data for analysis. As I interviewed, I also maintained a carefully recorded research diary where any relevant notes, for example; a silence, a confused look, excitement, frustration or other interesting behaviours, were noted. These notes enabled me to record the

respondent's behaviour and responses to particular questions. Monitoring such behavioural and non-verbal responses during the interview helped me ascertain if the respondent understood the question. Often I found it necessary to rephrase the question or in some cases return to the particular topic later in the interview.

Data collection extended throughout 2007 and 2008. Initially the main forms of data collection were field notes which I recorded as I worked with the facilitators. Sometimes I facilitated workshops where the participants would reflect on some of the IDEAS constructs and processes. On other occasions I observed the participants as they facilitated workshops with their colleagues. I also took field notes when I attended the various meetings, or sat in on a conversation between a principal and a facilitator. It was my initial observations that led me to become interested in what was happening to the facilitators with whom I worked. I watched them as they learnt, as they discussed, as they planned and as they facilitated workshops. I listened to the questions they asked, always noting their actions and behaviours and always writing memos to myself.

As I worked closely with the participants, I developed trusting and close relationships with all of them which proved to be very useful when I began to interview them. While some interviews were conducted earlier in the data collection period, most occurred later in the data collection period (late 2007 and early 2008). This proved to be advantageous, for as I have indicated earlier; I had already developed a close and trusting working relationship with the various facilitators who were to be the focus of this study.

The interviews were designed to enable the participants to reflect on and reconstruct their experiences. Kelchtermans (1994) refers to this type of interview as a “biographical interview” (p. 100) where the respondents are asked to retrospectively construct their biographical career experiences. He reminds us that the teacher’s perspective is central and that the prime role of the researcher is to engage in an interactive process of creating meaning (Kelchtermans, 1994).

“In biographical research, the relationship between the researcher and the respondent pervades every aspect of the research process” (Kelchtermans, 1994, p. 100). Only a respondent who feels safe and perceives the research as trustworthy will be prepared to share his/her biographical story (Kelchtermans, 1994). Even though I had established a trusting relationship with the participants, I was guided by the advice of Kelchtermans (1994), Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Woods (1985) who refer to reciprocity, advising that the collection of biographical data should involve “mutual storytelling” (Cole, 1991, as cited in Kelchtermans, 1994, p. 100) which can be accomplished through sharing relevant personal anecdotes.

In his discussion of biographical research, Kelchtermans (1994) refers to the affective dimension reminding researchers that biographical research is “more than a pure cognitive exchange” and that both parties engage in processes of “build[ing] a personal image of each other” (p. 100). Biographical research requires a relationship of trust and familiarity. It has affective and cognitive components and not only should the researcher acknowledge these, but he/she should also heed the advice of Denzin (1970) who states that “the only way to control these aspects is permanent self-reflection by the researcher” (p. 11). This view is reinforced by Bergold and

Breuer (1987) who also maintain that only through this reflective commitment is the researcher able to understand the world as experienced by the respondents.

Throughout the interview process, I was careful to follow Kelchtermans' (1994) advice to remain active and interested and be a non-evaluative listener. As well, Woods (1985) also advises that biographical researchers, in order to listen with what Kelchtermans (1994) terms as "alert open-mindedness" (p. 101), should be empathetic and acknowledging of the respondents.

Participant Observation

While interviewing was used as the main data collection process, I was also able to make use of participant observation to collect data. As the IDEAS program required me to work with the participants in their settings, on multiple occasions over a minimum of two years, I used these opportunities to gather useful data.

Participant observation is a widely used data gathering technique in qualitative research and depending on its use and purpose can have different meanings. In this study I was guided by Patton, who uses Lofland's definition. According to Lofland (1971), participant observation "refers to the circumstance of being in or around an on-going social setting for the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of that setting" (cited in Patton, 2002, p. 262).

Patton (2002) notes that the participant observation approach has a number of strengths. In this study I used participant observation in three main ways. Firstly, to develop an understanding of the context in which the participants work and interact.

Secondly, being in and around the setting and the participants enabled me to get to know the participants and develop trusting relationships. Like Patton, I found this enabled them to be more open and willing to discuss sensitive issues and share feelings and perceptions. This was particularly important during the various interviews as the relationships that I had formed with the participants enabled them to feel comfortable with the interview process and more willing to share their thoughts, feelings and perceptions with me. Thirdly, Patton (1990) notes that the researcher may make observations and note nuances that are routine to the participants and escape the notice of those who are in the setting all the time.

Because of my particular knowledge of the participants and their contexts, during the interview process I was able to formulate meaningful questions, or probe specific issues. On reflection, I believe that it was this knowledge which helped me develop what Kelchtermans (1994) has termed an *alert open mindedness* that was not static, however altered with the changing interview situation and interviewee. During the interview I found that my knowledge of contexts and participants helped me hear things that I would not otherwise have heard. For what may be a passing comment for one participant may have deep meaning and significance for another.

In short, my participant observation was useful in that it enabled me, through the associated interview process, to develop a deeper insight into the participants' experiences and perceptions.

2.7.2 Participants, Participant Selection, Purposive Sampling and Theoretical Sampling

Participants, 28 in all, were selected from schools which had engaged in the IDEAS program during the period between 2004 and 2008. As indicated earlier, during that time I worked primarily with schools in the states of Victoria and Western Australia and therefore I selected schools and participants who came from these schools. Of the 28 participants, 12 were from a total of four Victorian schools, one was a senior consultant from a district office and the remaining 15 were from seven separate schools in Western Australia. I knew all the participants well and had worked with each of them for a minimum of two years, up to a maximum of four years.

The initial sampling was purposeful, while later sampling was theoretical. Purposeful sampling is when the researcher uses his/her knowledge to select participants who possess certain attributes, and with a specific purpose in mind (Berg, 2001). In an orthodox grounded theory, Glaser (2001) suggests the main criteria for the purposive selection of early participants is that they have “some knowledge of the domain being studied” (p. 18).

Initially, all participants were selected on the basis of my knowledge of their IDEAS experience. All were IDEAS facilitators who had led the IDEAS program in their schools. Some had accepted the role as sole IDEAS facilitator at their school, while others had co-facilitated the IDEAS program in their school as part of a team of facilitators. There were two key attributes on which the participant inclusion was initially based; firstly, that I had worked with and observed the IDEAS related work

of the facilitators over at least a two year period and secondly, the participants had at least two years experience as a facilitator or co-facilitator of the IDEAS program in their school.

The nature of grounded theory means that not all participants can be selected up front. The grounded theory researcher begins the study with a broad idea of what he/she wishes to achieve. As the study progresses, subsequent participants are selected to help discover variations among concepts, elaborate on or exhaust various categories (Glaser, 1978). In grounded theory studies the researcher works progressively, however not in a linear fashion, towards a state of theoretical saturation (Glaser, 1978). Consistent with the process of theoretical sampling, and the inductive theory emergence, the emerging codes and theory guide the researcher where to go next. In order to enable the clarification of an emerging code, category, or property, the researcher may need to re-interview participants, sometimes on several occasions. Glaser (1978) explains that “theoretical sampling is used as a way of checking on the emerging conceptual framework rather than being used for the verification of pre-conceived hypotheses” (p. 39).

In this study I interviewed all participants on more than one occasion. All were initially interviewed face to face throughout 2007, mainly at a time when I was working with the participants on site at their respective schools. Later interviews were conducted, mostly in a face to face format during later site visits or in some cases, mainly due to distance and time issues, a number of phone interviews were conducted. Some interviews were also conducted in early 2008. In all 28 people were interviewed, most on two occasions, four on three occasions and two on four

occasions. In addition, as the theory began to densify, I also recruited four school principals, two deputy principals and a senior educational consultant (included in the total of 28) all of whom had worked extensively with the 21 IDEAS facilitators. The characteristics of the various participants are detailed in Table 2.1 below. While the IDEAS facilitators could discuss their own journeys and experiences, each from their own unique perspective, these additional recruits were able to provide alternative perspectives, enable verification or provide clarification of emerging concepts. This clarification proved to be particularly useful in the final stages of the theory development.

TABLE 2.1: Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Location	Type of school	Years in teaching	Role in school	IDEAS facilitator	Period of involvement in IDEAS	Number of interviews
1	Victoria	Large secondary	20	Head of Department	yes	3 years	two
2	Victoria	Large secondary	22	Deputy Principal	no	3 years	two
3	Victoria	Large secondary	24	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
4	Victoria	Primary school	32	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
5	Victoria	Primary school	33	Teacher	yes	3 years	Two
6	Victoria	Primary school	24	Principal	no	3 years	two
7	Victoria	Large secondary	26	Principal	no	4 years	two
8	Victoria	Large secondary	34	Deputy Principal	no	4 years	two
9	Victoria	Large secondary	30	Head of Department	yes	4 years	two
10	Victoria	Large secondary	24	Head of Department	yes	4 years	Three

11	Victoria	Large secondary	26	Head of Department	yes	4 years	two
12	Victoria	Large secondary	30	Teacher	yes	4 years	three
13	Western Australia	Large secondary	33	Teacher	yes	4 years	four
14	Western Australia	Large secondary	18	Teacher	yes	4 years	two
15	Western Australia	Large secondary	29	Head of Department	yes	3 years	two
16	Western Australia	Large secondary	8	Teacher	yes	3 years	four
17	Western Australia	Large secondary	27	Head of Department	yes	3 years	three
18	Western Australia	Large secondary	15	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
19	Western Australia	Large secondary	34	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
20	Western Australia	Large secondary	32	Principal	no	3 years	two
21	Western Australia	Large secondary	35	Principal	no	3 years	two
22	Western Australia	Large secondary	31	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
23	Western Australia	Large secondary	28	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
24	Western Australia	Large secondary	13	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
25	Western Australia	Large secondary	28	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
26	Western Australia	Large secondary	21	Teacher	yes	3 years	three
27	Western Australia	Large secondary	33	Teacher	yes	3 years	two
28	Victoria	District Office	32	Senior District Consultant	no	3 years	two

All the participants had a significant and ongoing experience with the IDEAS program; 15 were teachers who accepted the role of facilitators or co-facilitators of the IDEAS program, six were members of the senior administration team (principals or deputy principals), one was a district consultant who worked with many of the school based facilitators over a period of three years, six were middle managers (Heads of Department) who worked as IDEAS facilitators or co-facilitators. Of the total participants in this study, 21 were the teachers and HODs who facilitated/co-facilitated IDEAS and are the focus of the investigation, while the remaining participants were recruited in order to assist in the process of coding, forming categories, understanding properties or densifying theory.

Because of the nonlinear nature of the grounded theory approach, the processes of data collection, coding and analysis occur “simultaneously to the fullest extent possible” (Glaser & Strauss 1967, p. 71). I selected the early participants on the basis that they had been IDEAS facilitators for a period of at least two years. For pragmatic reasons I limited my selection to include only those facilitators at schools to which I had ready and ongoing access.

Beginning with purposive sampling, I recruited five IDEAS facilitators, all were teachers who I knew well and had worked with for a period of two years. To begin the study Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend that the researcher should minimise the difference between groups (my initial purposive sample was composed entirely of teachers) until basic categories and properties begin to emerge. According to Martin and Turner (1986) this usually occurs after about “three or four sets of data have been analysed” (p. 149). My first round of interviewing was undertaken in

Western Australia and these were *face to face* interviews of about 50-70 minutes in duration. Immediately afterwards I analysed my first five data sets and some early categories began to emerge.

After early categories begin to emerge, the researcher should maximise the difference between groups in order to more fully understand the various categories and dimensions; a term Glaser (2001) refers to as “site spreading” (p. 179). Site spreading is done in order to enable theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is a feature of grounded theory where decisions about recruitment are made as the research progresses, rather than being predetermined (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). There are two processes which are encompassed in the theoretical sampling; “site spreading” and “varied interviewing” (Glaser, 2001, p. 169). “Site spreading is the process whereby induction of grounded theory generations yields to deduction, in the service of further inductions for comparison” (Glaser, 2001, p. 169). “Later respondents are chosen because they are sources of information that may illuminate emerging hypotheses or theoretical questions” (Glaser, 2001, p. 181). Varied interviewing refers to “the practice of constantly refining questions and interview techniques during theoretical sampling” (Glaser, 2001, p. 176). The questions are refined with reference to the emerging categories and properties and become more targeted, enable verification, fill conceptual gaps and eventually lead to saturation (Glaser, 2001).

The initial participants were all from Western Australia and taught in large secondary schools. The next group was taken from Victorian schools and included participants from primary schools and secondary schools. I interviewed a further

five facilitators who had facilitated the IDEAS program in their school. After further analysis some of the categories and properties began to densify, some initial ones disappeared. As I visited the two states and the various schools I continued to interview facilitators. Some of the facilitators were Heads of Department (HOD), thus the sample now included teachers and HODs. On analysis, I realised that the *IDEAS facilitation related issues* identified by the teachers were the same as those identified by the HODs, however I was now further into the analysis and the core category was beginning to emerge.

The participants were making reference to their relationships with the school administration (the principal or the deputy principal), they talked of learning with the administration and working with them in different ways. Denscombe (1998) explains that theoretical sampling occurs when the researcher uses the emerging theory to make decisions about the next phase of data collection. In this study, theoretical sampling led me to interview some of the key school administration personnel (principals, deputy principals and in one case a senior district consultant) who had also worked alongside the IDEAS facilitators.

Throughout most of 2007 and into 2008, I interviewed, analysed and theorised constantly moving back and forth through the various stages of the research process. As the theory began to densify, I went back to participants and re-interviewed them, sometimes face to face, however where that was not possible, and given that I had developed mutually respectful and strong professional relationships with the participants, I also used telephone interviews. In each case, the initial interviews were conversational in nature, usually 50-70 minutes in length and

conducted on a *face to face* basis. Later interviews were shorter in duration (5-15 minutes), more structured and were conducted in person or by telephone. The later interviews were theoretical in nature, more structured, and were necessary in the process of theoretical saturation and member checking.

2.8 Analysing the Data

2.8.1 Coding the Data

Glaser (1978) discusses two types of codes; substantive codes and theoretical codes, further explaining that substantive codes can be “open” or “selective”(p. 46). Open coding is the first stage in analysing the data and aims to code various incidents into as many categories as might fit (Glaser, 1978). In the coding process Glaser (1978) reminds the researcher to keep the following questions in mind:

- 1) What is this data a study of?
- 2) What category does this incident indicate?
- 3) What is actually happening in the data?

In later times he added two additional questions:

- 4) “What is the main concern being faced by the participants?” and
- 5) “What accounts for the continual resolving of this concern?”

(Glaser, 2004, p. 13).

Open coding breaks data into incidents and is the necessary first stage of analysis. In this stage the analyst codes incidents into as many categories as might fit and as many categories as possible.

Open coding occurs prior to the establishment of a core variable [also known as a core category] while selective coding begins after the analyst has established a core variable and codes only in relation to those variables that relate to the core variable. Open coding allows the analyst to see the direction in which to take the study by theoretical sampling. (Glaser, 2004, p. 13)

During the process of open coding all data are accepted, thus allowing the researcher to look for patterns and develop categories. As the categories begin to emerge those that are most dense become known as core categories (Glaser 2001). As the core categories begin to emerge selective coding begins. Selective coding is so called because the researcher is beginning to filter and code data according to emerging concepts.

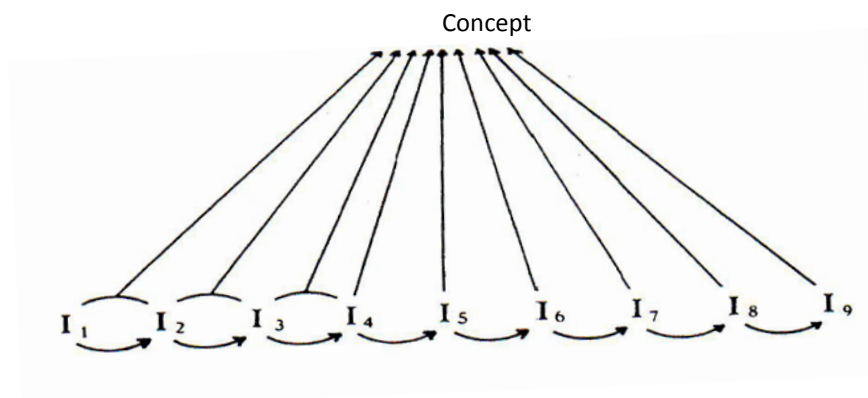
When the analyst adopts the language of the participant in naming a code it is referred to as an “in-vivo” code (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical codes on the other hand, are codes developed by the analyst based on his or her knowledge of the substantive area. Glaser (2004) explains that:

the code conceptualises the underlying pattern of a set of empirical indicators in the data. Theoretical codes conceptualise how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory. Theoretical codes give integrative scope, broad pictures and a new perspective. They help the analyst maintain the conceptual level in writing about concepts and their interrelations. (p. 13)

2.8.2 Constant Comparison

Grounded Theory uses the process of “constant comparison” (Glaser, 1978, p. 16) to generate concepts rather than descriptions. Constant comparison is the process of comparing incident to incident and later incident to concept. Glaser (1978) explains the Grounded Theory is based on a “concept-indicator” (p. 62) model. In Figure 2.3, I₁, I₂, I₃... refer to the various indicators “that become evident in the process of coding” Glaser, 1978, p. 62).

FIGURE 2.4: The Concept Indicator Model



(Glaser, 1978, p. 62).

Constant comparison requires line by line data analysis to ensure that each comparison is conceptualised. Glaser (1998) maintains that “with constant comparison a dense theory is generated with parsimony and scope” (p. 193).

2.9 Theory Development

A *core category/variable* is the central focus of a grounded theory, around which the other *sub core* categories converge. It is the central issue or main concern

for the participants. The central purpose of grounded theory is “to account for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (Glaser, 1978, p. 93). The resulting theory is conceptual and its generation occurs around a core category (Glaser, 2004).

2.9.1 The Core Category

A core category is a condition, consequence or a storyline used to describe relationships between the core category and other concepts. As Glaser (2004) explains:

the criteria for establishing a core variable within grounded theory are that it is central, relating to as many other categories and their properties as possible and accounting for a larger portion of the variation in the pattern of behaviour....It relates meaningfully and easily with other categories. It has clear and grabbing implications for formal theory. (p. 15)

Grounded theorists are constantly interrogating the data looking for the emergence of the core category; that which sums up the pattern of behaviour or substance of what is going on in the data; that which is the main concern or problem for people in the setting (Glaser, 1978). Goulding (1999), in referring to the core category, refers to pulling together strands and explaining the behaviour under study. Glaser (1978) further elaborates about core categories listing a number of criteria, including: it must be central, reoccur frequently in the data, relate meaningfully and easily to other categories, have clear and grabbing implication to formal theory, must be a dimension of the problem and have “carrythrough” (does not lead to dead ends).

Glaser (1992) explains that grounded theory studies should enable researchers to identify a Basic Psychosocial Process (BSP). He explains of a BSP that it should explain the social or psychosocial organisation of people and identify the manner in which the participants identify and conceptualise their key concern. It enables the relevant social or psychosocial organisation of the participants to emerge. A BSP should be linked to the core variable, have temporal dimensions or stages (at least two stages) and involve change over time. There should be two or more emergent stages, and these should differentiate and account for variations in the pattern of behaviour (Glaser, 1978).

In grounded theory, a core category is often known as a Basic Social Process (BSP). While BSPs are one type of core category, not all core categories are BSPs, however all BSPs are core categories. The distinction between a core category and a BSP lies in the *processural* nature of BSPs. BSPs can be further separated into basic social psychological processes (BSPPs) and basic social structural processes (BSSPs). In this study the core category is a BSP and a BSPP. The BSPP, Glaser (1978) explains, is more prevalent and relevant to understanding behaviour.

The sub-core categories which emerged in this study (*Becoming Ready*, *Sizing Up*, *Preparing to Commit*, *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, and *Enhancing Capacities*) are unable to stand alone in explaining the behaviour of the teachers at the centre of this study and rely on the core category (*Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*) to link them into a coherent theory.

2.9.2 Theoretical Memoing

Memoing aids the researcher in recording his/her thinking processes. Glaser encourages researchers to write memos as records of the process. In 1978 he stated of memoing: [it is] “the bedrock of theory writing, its true product is the writing of theoretical memos. If the analyst skips this stage by going directly from coding or sorting to writing - he is not doing grounded theory” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Glaser (2004) reminds readers that “memo writing is a continual process that leads naturally to abstraction or ideation” (p. 18).

Throughout this study I wrote hundreds of memos including multiple iterations of many. In order to demonstrate the manner in which the memos assisted my thinking, reflection, theory development and abstraction, I have included several memos in the presentation of this work. Theoretical memos allow the researcher to compare incidents to each other, codes to each other and categories to each other. This constant comparison method enables the researcher to discover relationships, discover theoretical constructs and record questions, hypotheses and ideas; Glaser (1978) refers to this as the “core stage” and “the bedrock of theory generation” (p. 18).

While many modern researchers make use of computer programs to assist in this process, I chose to do this task manually. I found the process of comparing, sorting and looking for relationships easier when I could actually see all the data simultaneously. I found this process hard to duplicate on a computer screen. I spent much time spreading memo cards on the floor, moving cards from pile to pile, and writing new memos. I could stand or sit in the centre of the cards and literally

immerse myself in the data. It was a messy and time consuming process, however it worked for me and as a novice grounded researcher I felt connected to data. I found being able to see all the data very useful in the theory development and abstraction process, especially when searching for the *core category*.

2.9.3 Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation occurs when the researcher determines that he/she has reached a stage when no additional data can be located. As one approaches theoretical saturation, less and less new data emerge and existing categories and properties are continually reinforced (Glaser, 1978). In grounded theory, theoretical saturation occurs as a result of the iterative process of data collection and analysis and when reached, signals the end of data collection.

2.10 Writing Up

The final stage in grounded theory methodology is the write up. Glaser (1998) refers to the process of “funneling down” (p. 195); a process whereby the researcher develops a theory around a core category and is able to develop a substantive account of the main concern of the participants (Glaser, 1978).

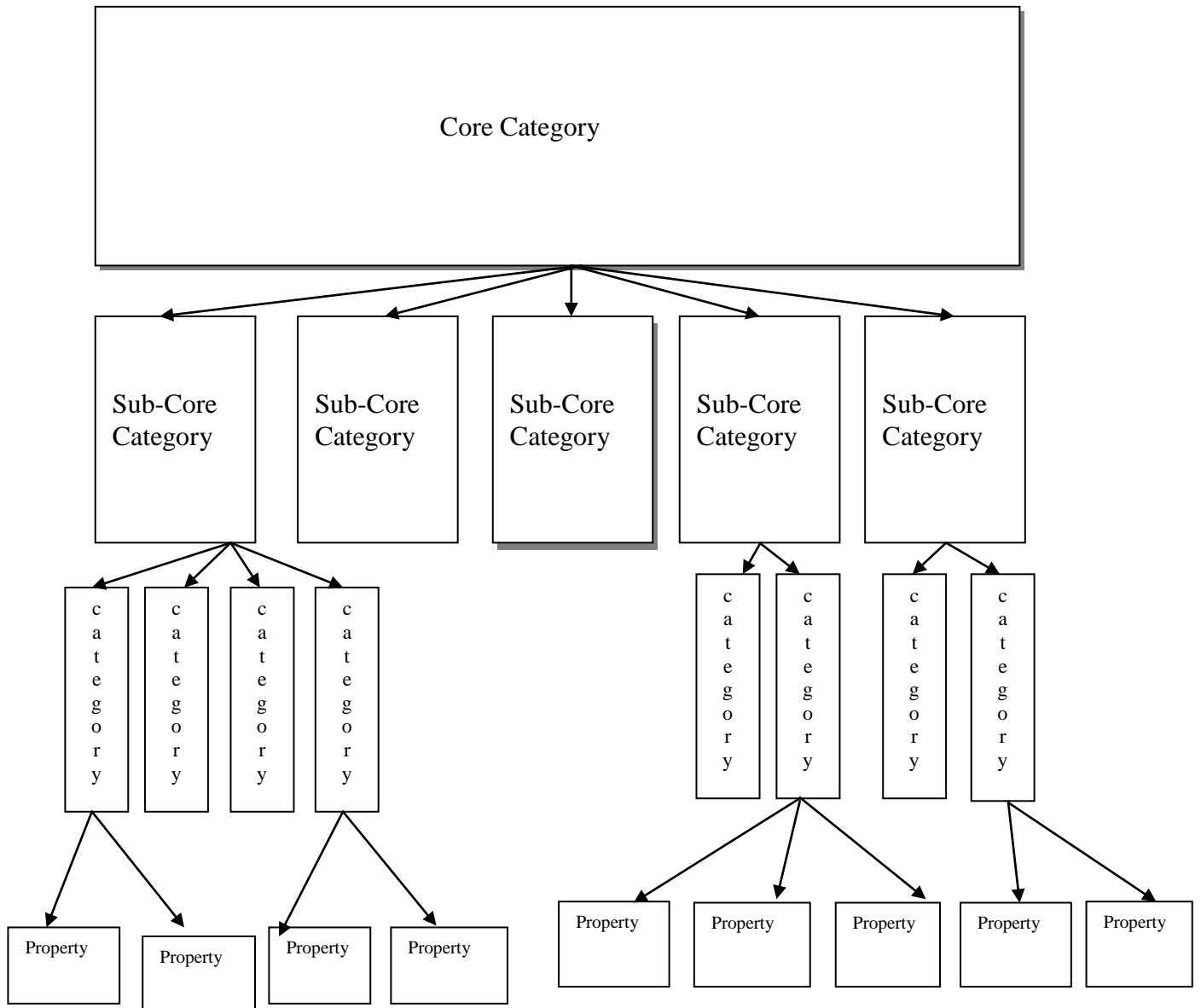
“Grounded theory does not produce findings or facts; it produces conceptual hypotheses” (Glaser, 2001, p. 160). The purpose is not to describe, rather it is to write conceptually by making theoretical statements about the relationship between concepts. According to Glaser (2001) “conceptualisation is abstract of time, place

and people” (p. 133). Goulding (1999) explains that “through systematic analysis and constant comparison of data” (p. 13) the number of codes are reduced and the relationships between codes are represented in the formation of concepts. “At the pinnacle of the hierarchy are categories which unite the concepts and reveal gestaltian theoretical explanation of the phenomenon under study” (Goulding, 1999, p. 13).

The substantive theory which is presented in this study uses the Glaserian terminology in the presentation of the theory and includes terms such as category, concept and property. Glaser (1992) defines a concept as “the underlying meaning, uniformity and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents” (p. 38). A category is “a type of concept, usually used for higher level abstraction” (Glaser, 1992, p. 38). A property is “a type of concept that is a conceptual characteristic of a category, thus a lesser level of abstraction than a category. A property is a concept of a concept” (Glaser, 1992, p. 38).

The categories, concepts and properties and their relative levels of abstraction can be represented in a hierarchy as indicated in Figure 2.5.

FIGURE 2.5: The Relationship between Categories and Properties in Orthodox Grounded Theory



The hierarchical relationship shown in Figure 2.5 also demonstrates that not all sub-core categories have properties and that not all categories are composed of properties. However, whatever the case, all relate back to the core-category.

2.11 An Insight into the Context of the Study

The following section is included in order to provide the reader with an insight into the context of the study. Beginning with a broad overview of *Organisational Change in Schools*, it then provides more specific detail about the *IDEAS program* and the *role of the IDEAS facilitator*. It is anticipated that the discussion of organisational change in schools will provide the reader with some appreciation of the context in which contemporary schools exist, as well as making explicit some of the challenges which the teachers face on both a daily and ongoing basis. Because this study focuses on those who were working as IDEAS facilitators in IDEAS schools, an overview of the main features of the IDEAS program and discussion of the role of the IDEAS facilitator are also included.

2.11.1 Organisational Change in Schools

Unrealistic societal expectations, rapid discontinuous change and catering for the needs of an increasing pluralistic population are just some of the significant challenges faced by schools and teachers in the 21st century. In an effort to respond and adapt to these challenges, educational organisations of all types are engaging in processes of improvement, and while there seems to be all too few statements that we can make with certainty, it seems safe to conclude that schools will continually be required to navigate the complexities of change. As schools evolve and adapt, as societal expectations change, as learning environments change, it is also reasonable to assume that the nature of teachers' work will be affected. As it seems that change

will become a feature of teachers' work environments, it is useful to understand the imperatives that contribute to the need for such change.

2.11.2 The Imperatives for Change

It seems that even how we think about schools is contested. In 2001, Beare told us that even our imagery must change, stating that "imagery held over from a past era is now dysfunctional and holding schools back" (p. 25). In the past we likened schools to factories and strived to create order out of chaos (Beare, 2001). Pascale, Millemann and Gioja (2000) make reference to a new mind-set, more appropriate to the knowledge society and state "the world is not chaotic, it is complex" (p. 6) and that schools are like "living systems" (p. 6). Fullan (2001) not only reminds us that "businesses and schools certainly are" (p. 108) he maintains, that in today's rapidly changing society, schools and businesses need to be able to create coherence out of complexity. Fullan (2001) cites Hatch in explaining:

In schools, for example, the main problem is not the absence of innovations but the piecemeal, superficially adorned projects. The situation is worse for schools than businesses. Both are facing turbulent, uncertain environments, but schools are suffering the additional burden of having a torrent of unwanted, uncoordinated policies and innovations raining down on them from hierarchical bureaucracies.... [It seems that there is] an endless cycle of initiatives that seem to sap the strength and spirit of schools and their communities. (Hatch, 2000, cited in Fullan, 2001, pp. 109-110)

From the teacher's perspective, Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) remind us that teachers often find change stressful. Furthermore when discussing reform (change) they describe two different paradigms that underpin the nature of the

reforms. The first type of reform they refer to as “standards and assessment” (1999, p. 72). These tend to be mandated by state or head office, developed by bureaucrats, to be implemented by teachers, resulting in a lessened sense of control and increased standardisation, which according to Hargreaves (2003) means “too many schools are being mired in the regulations and routines of soulless standardisation” (p. 2).

The second type of educational reform is what Vandenberghe and Huberman (1999) refer to as “teacher leadership” (p. 74). They explain that teacher leadership initiatives have been developed widely throughout the United States as well as Australia, Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand and Spain.

In contrast to the regulatory orientation of the centralised standards and assessment policies, teacher leadership initiatives are orientated towards the development of teachers’ professional knowledge and skills and the discretionary exercise of local expertise in problem solving and school improvement. (Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999, p. 74)

The IDEAS program fits this latter description and aims to enhance teachers’ sense of professionalism and participation in school improvement.

Smylie (1999) refers to the two types of reform (standards and assessment and teacher leadership) as waves. Such imagery leads one to imagine that schools have been given time to regroup between these successive waves, however Smylie (1999) states that the main problem is that “as the second wave has begun to swell, the first did not subside” (p. 77).

Schools however do not exist in isolation from society and they are profoundly affected by what happens in broader society. To get some perspective of the scale of the challenges that face broader society, it is timely to consider Drucker's (1993) view. He reminds us that:

every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation....Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself-its world view; its basic values; its social and political structures; its arts; its key institutions. Fifty years later, there is a new world....We are currently living through such a transformation. (p. 1)

There is little wonder that schools are changing and that the calls for change are commonplace. The school improvement literature is replete with calls for schools to change. Hedley Beare (2001), in his aptly named book *Creating the Future School*, draws our attention to the impacts of globalisation and advances in modern technology. Hargreaves (2003) reminds us that we are living in times of growing "social instability" (p. 1). Today's knowledge economy, he says is driven by "creativity and ingenuity" (p. 1). These are capacities that both individuals and organisations need to develop; they depend on "collective as well as individual intelligence" (p. 3). For teachers it means greater risk taking, collaborative learning, continuous professional development, and treating parents as partners (Hargreaves, 2003).

Beare (2001) says as the new century unfolds, emerging schools will have amongst others, the following characteristics:

- Self-managing; encouraged to operate as stand-alone enterprises;

- More staff employed on short-term or contractual bases often working across more than one school;
- They will be networked through a rich variety of alliances and interactions;
- Progressively, the leading schools will be global;
- They will accumulate other functions e.g.: full service school centres are alliances among welfare and community development agencies community health and private medicine and recreational agencies;
- Education, especially schooling will be offered in ‘found space’; home schooling, at least in part is becoming a major component of education.

(Beare, 2001 pp. 2-3)

Caldwell (2005) calls for the “re-imagination” (p. 1) of schools. He states “there are signs everywhere and in greater numbers than ever before that learners and learning have changed at a much faster rate than schools have changed-or could have changed-and that a new conception of school is taking shape” (p. 1). In Caldwell’s (2005) view, the fundamental unit of organisation, the classroom, is wrong and that schools need to be re-imagined with the fundamental unit of organisation being the student.

Many books have been written focusing on the need for schools to change. Stoll, Fink and Earl (2003) in their book entitled *It’s About Learning (and it’s About Time): What’s in it for Schools?* discuss the need to change our schools. In his book named *Leading in a Culture of Change*, Fullan (2001) explores the complexities of school change while Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) speak of *The Sharp Edge of Educational Change*. In discussing school change, Vandenberghe and Huberman

(1999) talk of contradictions, Fullan (2001) refers to complexities and lack of coherence, while Hargreaves (2003) refers to paradoxes. Hargreaves (1997) reminds us that the heterogeneity of schools is likely to expand and that schools and systems will have a range of distinct and unique challenges to which they must respond. Whatever the terminology, it is clear that schools, including those which were the sites for the data collection undertaken for this study, are under a great deal of pressure to respond to multiple and complex agendas arising from a range of sources.

What emerges clearly and unambiguously from the literature is the need, across all developed countries, including Australia, for schools to engage in processes of change. While the manner in which any change may occur will vary from school to school, the participants in this study all worked in schools which were using the IDEAS program as the mechanism for that change.

2.11.3 The IDEAS Program

As this study seeks to develop an understanding of the experiences of those who facilitate the IDEAS program in their respective schools, it is useful to gain an insight into the program. What does the IDEAS program hope to achieve? What are the main features of the program? What is the role of the person who facilitates the IDEAS program in the school?

Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools (IDEAS) is a comprehensive approach to school revitalisation that values, above all else, the work and professionalism of teachers in our schools and other educational institutions. In doing so it recognises the extraordinary complexity and

subtlety of pedagogy and the capacity of the teaching profession to exercise forms of leadership that have historically been obscured. (Andrews et al., 2004, p. 5)

The IDEAS program commenced in 1997 and has been developed by the Leadership Research Institute (LRI) based at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ). From small beginnings in a handful of Queensland schools it has now been used as the main process for school revitalisation in over 300 mostly Australian, as well as a small number of overseas schools. It is founded on authoritative research, including that of Newmann and Wehlage (1995) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who found:

When teachers engage as a professional community to shape their school's philosophy, and when they proceed to develop shared pedagogical principles and strategies that complements their school's philosophy, the effects on student achievement, particularly in disadvantaged schools can be quite remarkable. This insight-that the professional community of the school must be accorded key responsibility for school revitalisation and reform, remains fundamental to IDEAS today. (Andrews et al., 2004, p. 6)

What are the Main Features of the IDEAS Program?

The IDEAS program is distinguished by the use of four essential interdependent constructs, being:

1. The Research-based Framework (RBF); a conceptual model of a school as a whole;
2. The *ideas* process: a five step implementation strategy;

3. The concept of parallel leadership: a mutualistic view of teacher and principal leadership that creates opportunities for teacher leadership to flourish;
 4. Schoolwide Pedagogy- an agreed whole school approach to teaching and learning.
- (Crowther, Andrews, Dawson, & Lewis, 2001a, p. 36).

Complementing the four essential components, are five basic principles that underpin the program. The five principles are:

1. Teachers are the key; it is teachers who drive the process and are central to the creation of the whole school solution;
2. Professional learning is key to professional revitalisation: this principle places professional learning at the centre of school renewal;
3. No blame; is an explicit commitment to the development of safe and supportive environments that are essential to the process of professional learning;
4. Success breeds success; based on the premise that a professional community can achieve a great deal when positives are emphasised;
5. Alignment of school processes is a collective school responsibility; it is a collective responsibility to develop vision, community cohesion, infrastructure, classroom practices and professional development that enables the creation of a distinctive and sustainable school in the 21st century.

(Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 37)

The IDEAS program is designed to have an impact on the manner in which teachers work. The IDEAS vision refers to “engaging schools in journeys of self discovery” (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 2). It requires that teachers work in more

collaborative ways and accept responsibilities beyond their own classroom. By using tools such as the Research-based Framework (RBF) it enables them to develop a conceptual view of a school as an entire entity. Moreover, IDEAS involves the use of processes that assist in facilitating collaborative work, using data as the basis for decision making and enabling a whole school focus. It enables teachers to work collectively in the process of whole school revitalisation. The IDEAS program is designed to enable this to occur, while the concept of Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP) provides a conceptual framework for teachers to discuss and deepen understandings of pedagogy. Lastly, the concept of parallel leadership is conceptually useful as teachers seek to understand their new role as pedagogical leaders and the new relationship with the meta-strategic role of the principal (Andrews et al., 2004).

The essential components and principles of the IDEAS program act as enabling tools allowing teachers to respond to the ever increasing challenges that constantly confront them and the schools within which they work (Andrews et al., 2004). In their evaluation of the IDEAS project in 2004, Chesterton and Duignan found that teachers identified these components as useful tools. Furthermore this same evaluation acknowledged that when teachers facilitate the IDEAS program they have experiences that are generally considered to be beyond the work of the typical teacher, stating that “having the opportunity to undertake this process had not generally, to date, been part of their normal activities” (p. 17).

The *ideas* process is also worthy of further exploration, for it is during the process that the opportunities for professional conversations and collegial learning take place. The *ideas* process presumes to answer the question: How does a process

of school revitalisation work? It is a process in which the professional community of the school engages in collaborative learning in order to enhance the school's approach to pedagogy. This is achieved through the integration of teaching and learning with the school's vision, values and infrastructures. The essence of the process is captured in five main phases that are linked in a conceptual sequence (Crowther et al., 2001a):

i—initiating: resolving to become an IDEAS school, establishing a management team and appointing an IDEAS school-based facilitator;

d—discovering: revealing the school's most successful practices and key challenges;

e—envisioning: picturing a preferred future for the school - an inspirational vision and an agreed approach to pedagogy;

a—actioning: implementing plans to align school practices with a school's revitalised vision;

s—sustaining: keeping the revitalisation process going by building on successes and includes the re-administration of the Diagnostic Inventory.

(Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 37)

According to Crowther et al. (2001a):

the *ideas* process represents a new approach to workplace learning and planning: an approach to school reform and revitalisation that both recognises the maturity of the teaching profession and is responsive to the needs of communities for enhanced identity with their schools. (p. 29)

The nature of the various activities which are undertaken during the various phases of the process are also significant. In particular the processes of *Visioning* and the formation of the *Schoolwide Pedagogy (SWP)* enable teachers to engage in deep

exploration of personal and collective values. Further to this, the development of the Vision Statement, the SWP are highly contextualised, complex and creative.

(Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 37)

While most teachers have opportunities to develop significant expertise in their classroom environment(s) most, it seems do not have similar expertise in processes of collaborative whole school revitalisation, or as Chesterton and Duignan (2004) found in the use of the conceptual tools.

In the case of IDEAS schools, the concept of Schoolwide Pedagogy enables teachers to engage in meaningful whole school discussions of pedagogy. It provides a framework that enables IDEAS program teachers to engage in dialogue where deeply embedded pedagogical practices are shared and new levels of insight to pedagogical practice can be generated. These discussions inevitably relate to classroom practice and have the potential to impact teacher thinking and feeling. (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 37)

The five basic principles that underpin the IDEAS project, while complementing the four components, also have the potential to affect teachers. Chesterton and Duignan (2004) found that some teachers who participated in IDEAS referred to the process as “empowering” (p. 26). The important principle of *teachers are the key* resonates with Walker’s (2005) concept of “hope” (p. 1) and Fullan’s (2001) revelation that “once folks at the grassroots realise that they own the problem, they also discover that they can create the solution” (p. 112).

IDEAS sees professional learning as a key to school renewal and professional revitalisation and the program provides many opportunities where teachers can work collaboratively on whole school issues (Crowther et al., 2001a).

Success breeds success is a principle which enables teachers to participate in a school revitalisation program that builds on successful practice. It encourages teachers to interrogate their successful practices, look for underpinning principles and develop a deep understanding of what works and why. It celebrates and acknowledges successful practice, thus enabling possibilities for further refinement and uptake of such (Crowther et al., 2001a).

The construct of Parallel Leadership encourages a particular relatedness between teacher leaders and administrator leaders that enables the knowledge generating capacity of schools to be activated and sustained (Crowther et al., 20021a). Parallel Leadership represents a unique view of leadership. The industrial age view of school leadership has been associated with personal authority and hence tended to be seen as the province of the principal. The IDEAS program however recognises teachers as leaders. The leadership according to Crowther et al. (2001a) “that derives from the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youth and adults” (p. 19). Parallel leadership recognises the teacher’s leadership role in shaping curriculum and pedagogy while acknowledging the principal’s role as the metastrategic leader of the school. Parallel leadership is characterised by a mutual sense of trust between the teacher leader and the administrative leader (in this study it was the various school principals), a shared sense of purpose and an allowance of

individual expression by the respective leaders. They work together as co-leaders without a hierarchy being evident (Crowther et al., 2001a).

Peter Drucker (1946) introduced the concept of “harmony” (p. 26) to describe an effective organisation. Such an organisation he reflected is like a tune “it is not constituted by the individual sounds but by the relations between them” (p. 26). Murphy (1992) explained that attention to consistency; strong structural, symbolic and cultural linkages are a sustaining legacy of school improvement. Crowther et al. (2001a) have called it “alignment” (p. 7) and identified the relationship between the contributory elements of the RBF explaining that “as one element is developed in depth by the professional community, meaning is generated around each of the others”. Furthermore, “schools that have generated both depth and integration across the elements of the organisation have been found to produce enhanced sense of identity and greater capacity to pursue high expectations for student achievement” (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 7).

2.11.4 What is the Role of the IDEAS Facilitator?

In IDEAS schools, the IDEAS facilitator(s) is a member of the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). The IDEAS facilitator(s) works in association with the members of ISMT and facilitates the implementation of the IDEAS project in the school (Crowther et al., 2001a).

The *ideas* process is managed by the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). The ISMT is formed during the initiating phase of *ideas*. Membership is voluntary and tends to be heterogeneous (for example, a mixture of experienced and less experienced teachers, Heads of Department (HODs),

senior administrative members, teacher aide representation, parent representation and sometimes student representation). The diverse membership can lead to richer discussion because of the range of perspectives represented. (Crowther et al., 2001a)

The ISMT is distinct in its membership and role from any School Management Teams that may exist. The mandate of the ISMT is to implement the IDEAS program in the school as distinct from existing School Management Teams whose role is to manage and lead the school on a day to day basis. When IDEAS works successfully in schools, the two groups work closely together, however the distinction between the two is important in understanding the role of the IDEAS facilitator, as it is the IDEAS facilitators who are the focus of this study. Many ISMTs will also have several members who are middle managers, for example; Curriculum Heads of Department or Key Learning Area Heads of Department. Often the principal and other members of the school leadership team will also be members of the ISMT.

Facilitators, as members of the ISMT, enable the implementation and ongoing development of the *ideas* process within their schools. They manage professional learning processes and through their management strengthen professional communities. They help in the clarification of the school's vision, approach to pedagogy and alignment of school elements. In doing so, they contribute to enhanced school capacity. (Crowther et al., 2001a, p. 37)

Some schools prefer to appoint a single facilitator while many appoint multiple facilitators who work collaboratively in the delivery and implementation of

the process. Consistent with the construct of parallel leadership and the assertion that *teachers are the key*, the facilitators in most schools are teachers or middle managers. The facilitators who participated in this study were all teachers or middle managers who accepted the role of facilitating the IDEAS program in their school. This thesis focuses on their experiences. Those who participated in this study were known to me and have facilitated the IDEAS program in their school for at least two years.

2.12 Sensitising Concepts

I was interested in understanding the participating teachers' (in this case a specific group of teachers; facilitators of the IDEAS program) perceptions of their growth and development, as they went about their work as teachers and IDEAS facilitators in their workplaces; the various schools. Their work however, was beyond that of a typical teacher. The participants in this study were teachers who were also facilitators of a school revitalisation program known as IDEAS, and the schools within which they worked were also in the process of change. These teachers were developing into teacher leaders in simultaneously changing environments.

In an orthodox grounded theory study the literature comparison is presented towards the end of the write-up, after the substantive theory has been developed (Glaser, 1978). While I have followed this advice, I have also included a brief theoretical overview in this chapter. I have done this in order to familiarise the reader with what is useful background theory in understanding the following study. Furthermore, in stating that I am interested in *deepening my understanding from the participants' perspectives of their professional growth and development as*

consequence of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators, I am making explicit my interest in their experiences, especially from the perspective of *Career Development*. As the study progressed it emerged that it was also about how teachers become teacher leaders, therefore I have also included a brief overview of *Teacher Leadership*.

Charmaz (2006) refers to Blumer's (1969) notion of sensitising concepts explaining that grounded theorists have certain research interests and a general set of concepts that give them ideas of what to pursue and sensitise them to the type of questions that they may need to ask. Charmaz (2006) states that the sensitising concepts can be used as "points of departure" (p. 17) to form research questions and think about and analyse data. Sensitising concepts enable grounded researchers to develop, but not limit ideas; they are "vantage points" (p. 17) to start and not end a research study (Charmaz, 2006).

Thus while the study that follows adheres to the orthodox approach to grounded theory and is not constrained by any (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) theoretical perspective, the broad theoretical areas of career development and teacher leadership are sensitising concepts that proved useful in this research.

2.12.1 Career Development

This study is a grounded study of teachers who chose to accept the role of IDEAS facilitator in their schools. It maintains that as a consequence of their experiences they developed new ways of working and a new professional image of

themselves; one of a teacher leader. In facilitating the IDEAS program in their respective schools, they enabled the whole school community to change and adapt to the types of challenges already discussed. As the schools changed, those who worked within them (including the IDEAS facilitators themselves) also experienced changes in the way they worked. These experiences occurred over a period of time and for the participating teachers, represented changes in their career development, their work and the manner in which they came to view themselves professionally.

The career development literature encompasses the definitions of career development, career and work, distinguishing each at a conceptual level, with career development, encompassing career and career, encompassing work.

Career development, according to Sears (1982), occurs throughout the lifespan, incorporates a combination of the psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to shape the career of an individual. Herr, Cramer and Niles' (2004) definition is broader and encompasses:

...those aspects of an individual's experience that are relevant to personal choice, entry, and progress in educational, vocational and avocational pursuits; the process by which one develops and refines such characteristics as self-identity and career identity, planfulness and career maturity. The lifelong behavioural processes and the influences on them that lead to one's work values, choice of occupation(s), creation of a career pattern, decision making style, role integration, self-identity and career identity, educational literacy, and related phenomena. (pp. 42-43)

For many people, career development and personal development are interconnected with career development being driven by a search for meaning and identity. Savickas (1997) explains that career development is really a process of adaptability, where individuals respond to changing selves and work environments, ideally in ways that enable them to become the person they want to be.

In discussing the construct of career, Raynor and Entin (1982) state that:

A career is both a phenomenological concept and a behavioural concept. It is the link between what a person does and how that person sees himself or herself. A career consists of time-linked senses of self that are defined by action and its outcomes. A career defines how one sees oneself in the context of one's social environment-in terms of one's future plans, one's past accomplishments or failures, and one's present competencies and attributes. (1982, p. 262)

The preceding definitions establish career as a multidimensional construct and demonstrate the important place of career in the personal and professional lives of individuals. For most people, including all the participants in this study, careers encompass the experience of work. As work and workplaces are important factors which can impact career development, brief overviews of work and the workplaces of teachers are included.

2.12.1.1 The Definition of Work

In understanding the manner in which the changing nature of work affects career development of teachers, it is useful to begin with a definition of work. Herr et

al. (2004) remind us that work does not have a singular meaning and that individuals perceive experience and define work in a multitude of ways. Despite this there are three widely accepted purposes for work; economic, psychological and sociological (Herr et al., 2004). They articulate a view of work that recognises the significance of work as an activity and its meaning in our lives, stating that:

although virtually all paid work has the potential to meet the economic needs of humans, all work, paid or non-paid, has the additional potential to meet broad social and psychological needs; effective interaction with others, personal dignity, a sense of competency or mastery, identification with some purpose or mission larger than oneself, and human relationships. (Herr et al., p. 78)

While this definition is very useful, it is general in nature and relevant to a broad number of contexts. As this study was about teachers, I explored the literature further in order to better understand the work of teachers. However as I did, I wondered if the teachers in this study accepted the role of IDEAS facilitator as a mechanism to meet their psychological needs, to gain recognition, to seek fulfilment, as an opportunity for growth or a way of defining or redefining themselves.

2.12.1.2 Understanding the Work of Teachers in Times of Reform

In contrast to earlier depictions of teachers' work (see Lortie, 1975 for example), which are highly classroom-centric and isolationist, are later depictions (Hargreaves, 2003) acknowledging the growing need for teachers to accept responsibility beyond the classroom and the incorporation of such activities into the

work-life of teachers. According to Lortie (1975) and Lieberman and Miller (1984) teachers' work is characterised by role conflict, overload and ambiguity. Day (2004) reminds us that classrooms are crowded places, with many things happening at once. Smylie (1989) acknowledges that teachers frequently work in isolation and must also "reconcile the different demands of school, district, state and national policies" (Smylie, 1999, p. 67).

Today there is greater accountability and more bureaucracy than ever with teachers having less status and less time for actual teaching. In 1999 Woods observed that teachers have more to do, there is a proliferation of paper work and administrative work, "a separation of conceptualisation in long-term planning and policy making (others) and execution (teachers)" (p. 116). Dinham and Scott (2000) in a major study of teachers across four countries including Australia, found that teachers were increasingly dissatisfied with a decrease in status and recognition of the profession, external interference, increased workload and the pace and nature of change. Dinham and Scott (2000) found that teachers referred to an erosion of professionalism, less scope for professional judgement, reduced independence and time for teaching.

There still remain however, conflicting views on how teachers feel about their work. Day, Fernandez, Hauge and Moller (2000) maintain that the work of teachers is constantly changing and refer to teachers making a transition from old images, roles and perceptions to a "new work order" (p. 1), one characterised by conflicting expectations, reform and restructure. Furthermore they explain that the traditional support and respect afforded to the teaching profession is waning, that

schools are struggling to simultaneously deal with many non-complementary externally imposed innovations, and increased accountability. They (Day et al., 2000) however note that at the same time many teachers are becoming empowered through distributed leadership, participative decision making and organisational learning. Sachs (2000) argues that teachers should become “activist” (p. 77) professionals while Farber (1999) reminds readers that all too often teachers succumb to feelings of “inconsequentiality” (p. 160).

Farber (1999) notes that while the “teacher reform movement” (p. 160) has resulted in some teachers having an increased sense of belonging and a greater sense of power; it does not address the fundamental concern of inconsequentiality. According to Farber (1999), inconsequentiality is “a feeling that one’s input is disproportionate to the perceived output....Many teachers feel they are giving more than they are getting” (p. 160). Farber (1999) further maintains that many teachers are becoming frustrated and disappointed with many school reforms. Although such reforms may enhance participative decision making and leadership for example, the most gratifying part of a teacher’s work relates to that which is located closest to the source of the work; interactions with students. When teachers perceive that school reform processes do not make a difference in the classroom, they become embittered and the risks of inconsequentiality remain (Farber, 1999).

Today the changes, pressures, uncertainties, confusion and paradoxes continue and with them come changing interpretations and perceptions of what is expected of teachers. This has an inevitable impact on the lives and work of teachers. As workers, the workplaces of most teachers are the schools and the classrooms

within which they work. Thus consideration of both contexts (within the classroom and within the school, but outside the classroom) is important. This is especially relevant in this study, since, as it progressed, the construct of teacher leadership became relevant. The perspective of work adopted in this study acknowledges that work refers to the totality of teachers work, including that performed beyond the classroom. Moreover, it will become clear in the later chapters that for teacher leaders there is a growing emphasis on work beyond the classroom.

An understanding of work would not be complete without recognition that generally, the manner in which people view the place of work in their life tends to change with age or experience (Super, 1990). Reinforcing the earlier statement that work does not have a singular meaning, it is worth noting that an individual's definition of work and the place of work within the life of an individual is far from consistent and not static in nature. In discussing the work of the teacher it is relevant to remember that despite the existence of some powerful common factors influencing teachers' work, in the end, how one perceives work and career depends upon the individual's perspective. Relevant to this is Savickas' (2002, 2005) construct of "career construction" which is discussed later in this thesis.

As this study progressed, it became clear that it was about the psychosocial process whereby participating teachers constructed a view of themselves as teacher leaders. As it relates to this thesis and because teacher leadership is a relatively recent construct, a brief overview follows.

2.12.2 Teacher Leadership

As Lambert (2003) reminds us: “how we define leadership defines how we participate in it” (p. 4). Given that this study focuses on *Becoming a Teacher Leader* it is useful to gain a conceptual understanding of the term teacher leadership, explore the various definitions and make explicit the perspective adopted in this study.

Miller, Moon, Elko and Bryant Spencer (2000) in a study of maths and science teachers referred to teacher leadership as:

generally [referring] to actions by teachers outside their classroom that involve an explicit or implicit responsibility to provide professional development to their colleagues, to influence their communities’ or districts’ policies, or to act as adjunct staff to support changes in classroom practices among teachers. (p. 4)

Williams and Moller (2003) proposed that teacher leadership is inseparable from the processes that integrate professional influence and professional learning. Other researchers (see for example, Crowther, Hann & McMaster, 2001b; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 2003; Murphy, 2005) have also defined teacher leadership in terms of influence on their colleagues and communities.

According to Andrews and Crowther (2002), teacher leadership is interest driven and values based. It is a reciprocal process that links learning and leading (Crowther et al., 2001). Reciprocity reframes relationships and enables teachers to engage in inclusive learning (Lambert, Collay, Dietz, Kent & Richert, 1996), thus teacher leadership can also be defined as collective (Crowther et al., 2001b).

Reciprocal processes are associated with caring and learning (Chesterton & Duignan, 2004; Lambert et al., 1996) and enable participants to generate understandings of self and others. Lambert et al. (1996) explain that the reciprocity is an enabler of teacher growth helping them open beliefs, evaluate and challenge their experiences and assumptions. Participants emerge into leadership roles and see themselves differently (Lambert et al., 1996). The emergence, they explain, is evolutionary in nature and occurs through processes of dialogue, collective reflection and inquiry into practice. Through these processes teachers can reframe their relationships and their roles and emerge with new definitions of themselves as teachers and as leaders (Lambert 1998, 2003; Lambert et al., 1996).

What many researchers (Crowther et al., 2001b; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 1998, 2003) refer to as teacher leadership is often referred to as distributed leadership. Cuttance (2001) found that in schools where the leadership was distributed and the relationships between principals and teachers were collegial and supportive, that teacher leaders were able to contribute to school improvement. Teacher leadership is a social process (Andrews & Crowther, 2002) that occurs when teacher leaders engage in critical inquiry. In doing so, they exercise influence throughout their professional communities (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Leithwood et al., 2003; Newmann & Wehlage, 1996).

In synthesising the various perspectives above it is worth noting that the views of teacher leadership are not associated with a positional or hierarchical view of leadership. Instead, views of teacher leadership are couched in terms of social,

reciprocal, critical inquiry, caring, learning, influence, inclusive, collective. While it is these perspectives on teacher leadership that are consistent with those advocated in the IDEAS program, no one definition of teacher leadership has been adopted in this study, rather it is the individual's construction of this type of teacher leadership that is explored.

Furthermore, given that this study turned out to be an exploration of the emergence of teacher leadership, Lambert's (1995, 1998, 2003) view that teacher leadership emerges through processes of dialogue, reflection, practices and processes is consistent with what emerged in this study. So too is her view of teacher leadership as evolutionary and that when teachers emerge as teacher leaders they see themselves differently; in terms of teacher and leader (Lambert 1998, 2003; Lambert et al., 1996).

This study focuses on the experiences of IDEAS facilitators. In this study, all the IDEAS facilitators were teachers or Heads of Department (HODs), all of whom at the beginning of their IDEAS facilitation experience did not identify themselves as leaders. While I was surprised that at least some of the HODs in this study did not identify themselves as leaders, I did not seek to exclude any HODs who may have done so. Instead, I found that the HODs who participated in this study did not perceive of themselves as school leaders at the point of accepting the IDEAS facilitation role. Therefore, this study is of those IDEAS facilitators who did not initially perceive themselves as leaders, however as a result of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators over a period of at least two years, came to identify themselves as teacher leaders. Because the teachers and the HODs who participated in this study

initially identified themselves as teachers and not leaders, I have throughout this thesis not sought to distinguish between teachers and HODs, referring to both as teachers.

This study concerns itself with the career construction of those becoming teacher leaders and does not seek to deepen an understanding of the existing organisational construct of teacher leadership in doing so. This thesis looks at the process whereby teachers or HODs, who initially perceived themselves as teachers and not leaders, came to view themselves as teacher leaders. In developing an understanding of the process from the perspective of the participants, I have not sought to adopt or develop a definition of teacher leadership that could be used to distinguish between a teacher and a teacher leader or narrow the individual's perception of what a teacher leader is. Instead I have accepted that a teacher becomes a teacher leader when he/she believes that he/she is a teacher leader and has the confidence and skills necessary to take on what he/she believes is a teacher leadership role. Thus while the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is a psychosocial one, it is the psychological perspective that is an important focus in this study.

2.13 The Researcher in the Study

In writing about qualitative inquiry, Eisner (1998) in his aptly named book *The Enlightened Eye* reminds qualitative researchers that the self is the instrument. Given that “the self is the instrument that engages the situation and makes sense of it” (Eisner, 1998, p. 34), it is important to acknowledge the various characteristics

and qualities that I bring to the research. Sword (1999) states that “some qualitative researchers do not acknowledge among other things, their own background, gender, social class, ethnicity, values, and beliefs that affect the emergent construction of reality” (p. 270). Further to this, Rose and Webb (1998) remind qualitative researchers that sometimes the researcher has an effect on the research process and that this must be acknowledged.

Like other qualitative researchers it was my intent to remain open-minded and avoid making assumptions and falling victim to my own biases and preconceived ideas. My own close involvement with the IDEAS program over the past decade presented me with a significant challenge. I have worked closely with the conceptual development of the process and the program and in the last nine years have been an academic facilitator of the IDEAS program in over 100 schools. My closeness to the process worried me, so too did my own interests and accumulated knowledge.

I have already acknowledged my interest in teacher development, teacher efficacy, teacher satisfaction and understanding the nature of teachers’ careers and lives. This, combined with my interest in the process of school revitalisation, presented me with either an opportunity or a quandary. As I have already done much scholarship in these areas, as well as some research, I felt that I had a sound knowledge of the relevant literature and that this would advantage me in my doctoral studies. During this research, I continually reflected on my own assumptions and felt at times that my prior scholarship was limiting my thinking. There was a paradox in that the more I thought I knew about an area, the less comfortable I felt in researching it.

Because of my interest in teacher career satisfaction, I was tempted to focus on that area; however I was also interested in teacher efficacy and the manner in which participation in the IDEAS program seemed to enhance what I perceived to be professional efficacy. As I reflected on the teachers with whom I worked, I suspected that the constructs of satisfaction, efficacy and the like were too limiting. I realised that I was not sure of what I was seeing and that to adopt what Glaser (1978) refers to as *a priori* assumptions and theory would not enable me to understand what I wanted to know. I wanted to understand the experiences of those people with whom I had worked. I wanted to understand their main concerns. I wanted to somehow explain what I was seeing, yet the more I read the less convinced I was that traditional approaches to qualitative inquiry would enable me to understand what I wanted to understand.

As I broadened my reading, I re-read about the methodology of grounded theory and the more I read, the more I felt comfortable with the methodology. Grounded theory presented me with a methodology that enabled me to benefit from my broad, but possibly unrelated reading. I had been concerned that while I was interested in, for example teacher satisfaction, to confine my investigation to this or any other construct could blinker what I was able to see and hear. I also felt comfortable that grounded theory did not confine the research to any one discipline area and recognised that real life situations are not bounded by the researchers existing knowledge.

Grounded theory also gave me a fairly detailed process which, as a beginning researcher, appealed to me. As well, the processes of grounded theory are such that

they enabled me to recognise that many of my original hunches/biases did not fit the data. I was constantly reminded of Glaser's dictum of "not forcing the data" (2004, p. 1) and in strictly adhering to that throughout the process, I found it significantly reduced the potential for bias. While I had spent considerable time searching for a methodology that was appropriate to the research situation, I later realised that I was also and maybe more importantly, actually searching for a methodology that was compatible with the manner in which I approached the process of problem solving. In searching for a methodology, I had found out a lot about the way I thought.

In grounded theory the researcher must remain open to the data without imposing one's own perceptions or expectations on the data. Glaser (1998) states:

It is fantasy for the researcher to think he/she is not part of the data. The idea is to use the motivation that comes from being part of the data while at the same time keeping track of how one is part of it...[the researcher] is to find out what is going on by looking at the patterns that emerge from the people...[while his/her] own particular problem imbedded in an interest gets transcended to a grounded theory, which can then be brought back to help him/her understand the area of interest and his/her particular problem. (p. 49)

I found that the processes of member checking, reflection and the writing of memos very helpful, as they were useful in helping me clarify and limit my biases throughout this research. Further to this, my strict adherence to the methodology also served to reduce any potential bias, to such an extent that I was surprised when I realised that the emerging core category related to *safety*.

2.14 Ethics and Confidentiality

As is normal in a research inquiry, I sought and was granted ethical clearance (see Appendix A) from the University of Southern Queensland. In the same manner I was also granted ethical clearance for the intended research from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood (see Appendix B) and the Western Australian Department of Education and Training (see Appendix C). Prior to approaching individual schools, I forwarded the respective principal a letter of request. This provided a brief overview of the proposed research (see Appendix D). Appendix D is a copy of the letter of request used in the Victorian schools. A similar letter of request was used in the Western Australian Schools which participated in this research. Upon receipt of approval, and prior to commencement of any data collection, I also met with the principal of each school, further explaining the purpose of the intended study, and the proposed data collection methods.

All prospective participants were provided with a written (see Appendix E) and verbal overview of the research purpose and process. Each was asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix E) prior to the commencement of the research. All participants willingly participated in the interviews and were aware that they could withdraw at any stage. Anonymity was ensured and in the writing of this thesis there is no reference to participants' names or their schools. Data have been stored in accordance with the University of Southern Queensland's requirements for confidentiality and research data storage.

Interviewing was the main data collection method employed in this study and was potentially the most invasive. While I had a close and trusting relationship with

each of the participants, I was always cognisant that the experience of the retrospective biographical interview (Keltchermans, 1994) “reveals [in the respondent] subjective realities, ideas, feelings and experiences” (p.107) and therefore carries a “high ethical load” (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 223).

At the conclusion of each interview I asked the participants about the interview, about what they said and about what I had asked. Such questions enabled me to understand the experience of the participants and reflect on what I asked and how I asked it. All respondents felt comfortable with their responses and none were anxious or concerned. Many commented that the experience was enjoyable and that they were pleased that I was interested in their stories. As I reflected on their comments I realised how privileged I was to have had the opportunity to listen to their stories.

2.15 Summary

This chapter has outlined the research design adopted in this thesis. Following the identification of the ontological, epistemological positions adopted, I have explained the relationship between the paradigm that guides the research and symbolic interactionism, constructivism, constructionism and grounded theory.

The methodology of grounded theory, especially the decision to adopt orthodox grounded theory, was outlined along with the various processes (data collection, analysis, coding, sampling procedures, memo writing and theory development) which are incorporated in the methodology. As the main method of

data collection used in this study was retrospective biographical interviewing, a discussion of this method and its applicability was included. Towards the end of the chapter, the context is explored. Beginning with reference to organisational change in schools, the features of the IDEAS program and the role of the IDEAS facilitator are discussed. The sensitising concepts of career development and teacher leadership are acknowledged. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the researcher in the study and an overview of ethics and confidentiality

It is anticipated that the detail provided in this chapter has familiarised the reader with the research design and methodology adopted in this study, thus preparing him/her for the chapters which follow. Chapter 3 outlines the substantive grounded theory and is then followed by discussion of the various sub-core categories in the chapters which follow. The various sub-core categories are detailed in the order in which they emerged.

CHAPTER 3-THE SUBSTANTIVE THEORY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detail of the substantive grounded theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. It discusses the theory, identifies the core category and discusses the various sub-core categories that compose the substantive theory presented in this study.

Most grounded theory studies present and detail the various sub-core categories and conclude with an explanation of the core category, explaining how the core category unites and connects the various sub-core categories into a parsimonious theory (Glaser, 1978). There are times however when the sub-core categories can be best understood in relation to their connection to the core category and the substantive theory.

I have chosen to begin with a presentation of the substantive theory including the core category, followed by a discussion of the various sub-core categories in the chapters which follow. I made the decision to present the *whole* followed by an explanation of the various component parts, as I believe the various sub-core categories are best understood in relation to their connection to the core category and the substantive theory as a whole.

3.2 The Substantive Theory

The substantive theory that has been developed as a consequence of this study refers to the group of experienced teachers who participated in this research.

Beginning with their professional needs, the substantive theory maintains that, while the satisfiers and professional needs of these teachers may have changed and evolved with time, their desire to learn and grow in order to remain “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) had not. Unfortunately however, it soon became apparent that opportunities for the type of professional learning experiences that align with the needs of experienced teachers appear to be rare and it seems that many such teachers continue to work in environments where these needs are unlikely to be met.

Prior to their experiences as IDEAS facilitators, the experienced teachers in this study typically described themselves as *needing a boost*, or *looking for something that was not there*, referring to their diminished professional satisfaction and perceived lack of opportunity for professional growth. Most of the experienced teachers in this study had a limited desire to pursue promotional leadership positions and their understandings of the construct of leadership were based on notions of positional power. In taking on the role of IDEAS facilitator, the participants did not initially perceive it as a *teacher leadership* role. They were also aware that many of their peers were not supportive of initiatives such as IDEAS and that some of their colleagues may prove to be resistant or overtly oppositional. The teachers in this study were aware that the professional communities in which they worked could be in the words of one participant *dangerous places* for those who were associated with change or other initiatives.

Despite being aware of the potential challenges, so strong were their needs to once again feel “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) they perceived the IDEAS facilitation role as an opportunity and were prepared to become IDEAS

facilitators, however only if a safe environment existed. They may not have set out to become leaders, however in their desperation to feel “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) once again, they were prepared to take on the IDEAS facilitation role. They did not quite understand the leadership nature of the role, and yet were prepared to accept it, however, only if they were satisfied that a safe environment in which to work existed and could be maintained.

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* maintains that given the opportunity to *Experience Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* over an extended period (at least two years) the experienced teachers in this study developed confidence in a range of leadership capacities, along with a conceptualisation of themselves as teacher leaders; and that the process enabled them to become teacher leaders.

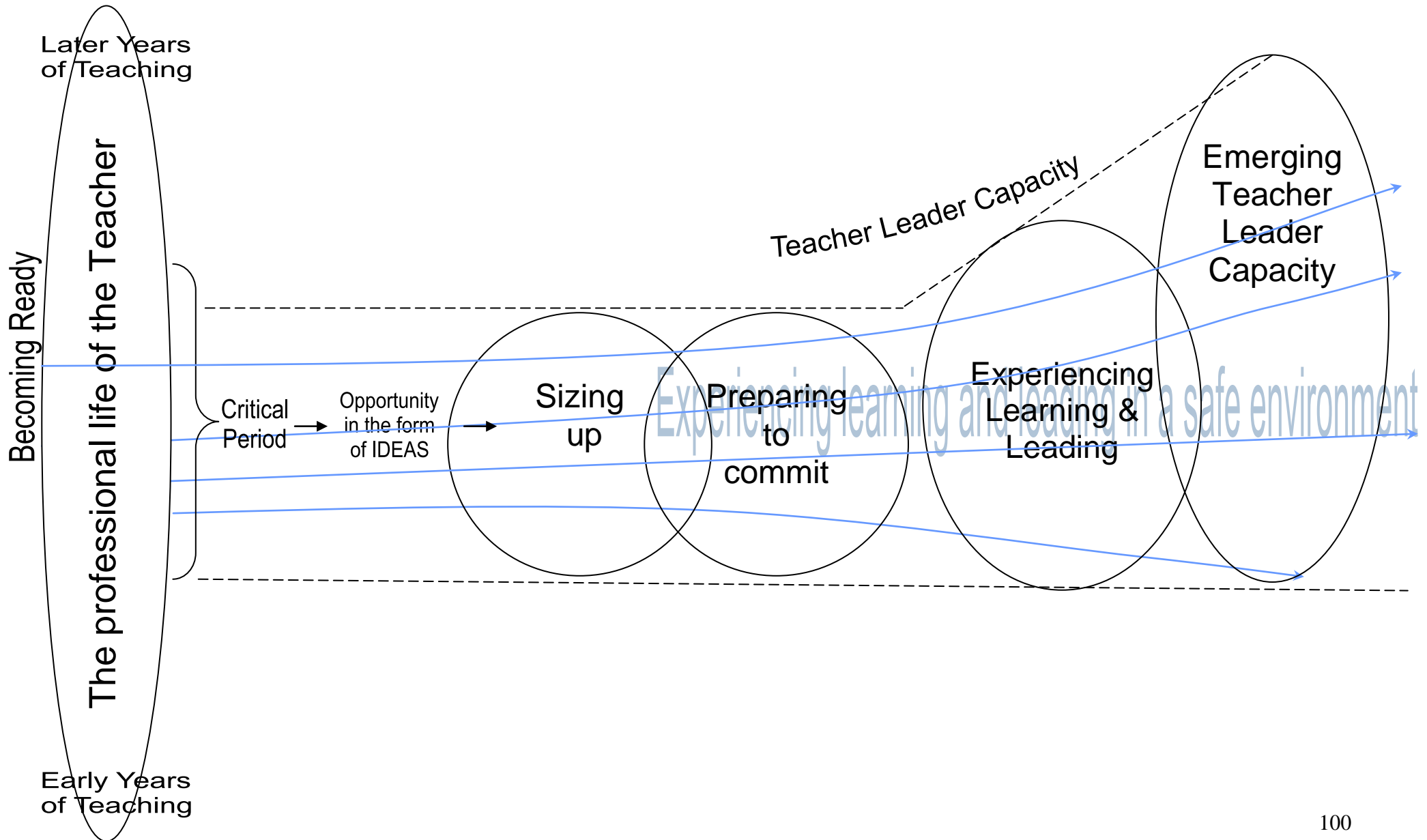
This study maintains that the professional learning environments in many schools are not conducive to teachers accepting leadership roles. If, however, teachers are provided with opportunities, are ready to develop teacher leadership skills and are provided with an environment where they feel safe, they will accept such roles. In doing so, they satisfy their desire to grow and develop; to once again feel “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). The provision of a *safe environment in which teachers can learn and lead* enables the teachers to experience success in leading and therefore develop the confidence necessary to persist and grow. If, for any reason, the environment becomes unsafe, many teachers will quickly retreat from the leadership role back to the relative safety of the classroom.

The core category of *Experiencing Leading and Learning in a Safe Environment* recognises that teachers do not simply become teacher leaders as a consequence of experiencing leadership success in a safe environment. The importance of the learning component of the core category is central to the substantive theory that has been developed in this study. It maintains that to be a teacher leader one must think like a teacher leader. For this to eventuate, teachers need a framework that enables them to understand leadership concepts. Further to this, the opportunity to experience learning and leadership in context, over an extended period of time, in collaborative environments, with other supportive colleagues and alongside the principal, enables the self-reflection that is necessary for the transformation from teacher to teacher leader to occur.

While the experiences of leading in safety and experiencing leadership success enable the development of confidence necessary to lead, the nature of the associated learning environment must be such that it encourages the self-reflection necessary for the transformative learning experience that enables *one to perceive oneself as a teacher leader*.

Figure 3.1 is a diagrammatic representation of the psychosocial process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. Beginning on the left with the prior experience of *Becoming Ready* it represents the process over time (at least two years). The various sub-core categories are represented by the various circles in the diagram. The core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* is the main concern of the participants and is represented in blue. It unites all the sub-core categories and if it ceases to exist, the process will stop. The various *sub-core categories* are now explained in further detail.

FIGURE 3.1: Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment: A grounded theory of ‘Becoming a teacher leader’ in IDEAS schools.



3.2.1 Becoming Ready - the Prior Experience

This substantive theory maintains that teachers are not always ready to become teacher leaders. Further, it maintains that before a teacher can develop leadership capacities he/she must be ready to grow and develop. If he/she is not ready to grow and develop, then the teacher will probably not accept a role such as the IDEAS facilitation role and thereby not experience the teacher leadership opportunities embedded in the role. The teachers in this study who accepted the IDEAS facilitation role tended to do so after an extended prior experience of *Becoming Ready*.

For most of the participants, it seemed that the *Becoming Ready* experience was only understood in retrospect, as the participants referred to a time of confusion and anxiety, where they simultaneously became more competent and less satisfied, knew what they didn't want to become, but were not sure of what they did want to become, knew what they didn't need to learn, however were not sure of what they did need to learn, knew that they wanted to lead, yet had a limited understanding of leadership, and were aware of the risks associated with leading.

Consistent with the findings of Huberman (1993), the participants in this study talked about their changing professional needs. They explained that in the early stages of their careers their focus tended to be classroom centric. They were most concerned with achieving pedagogical competence and tended to gain most satisfaction from their classroom activities, in particular their own perceptions of increasing pedagogical competence. After a period of time, usually several years or

even decades, they tended to become increasingly competent, however paradoxically, often less satisfied. Their own perceptions of increasing pedagogical competence, which once were sources of satisfaction, tended to lose their potency and many became more competent but less satisfied. The respondents in this study talked of a period of anxiety and confusion; a time when they were anxious about their future and confused about why they were becoming less satisfied with what once satisfied them. Some even questioned their decision to become teachers or to remain in the profession. It was during this time that most tended to become aware that in one respondent's words they were *teaching in auto*. They were also becoming aware that their professional learning needs had changed. They recognised that while the only professional learning that once counted for them (professional learning that centred on teaching and learning) was still important, it was no longer enough. Their professional learning needs had changed, but to what, they were not sure.

Simultaneously, they were beginning to become increasingly aware of whole school (beyond the classroom) issues, and they began to look for opportunities to become involved in leadership type roles (for example the IDEAS facilitation role) while not necessarily recognising or understanding the leadership nature of the role. Most, including those who were already middle managers (Heads of Department) were reluctant to identify themselves in terms of leadership and many acknowledged their lack of understanding of what leadership was, or awareness of its importance.

They were looking for sources of satisfaction beyond the classroom and were becoming interested in participating in whole school decision making processes and thereby enhancing their feelings of control. They wanted to have some input into

where the school was heading. Yet at the same time, this is also a period when teachers were aware that the professional communities in schools can be dangerous places. Their colleagues can be cynical and aggressive in their opposition to new initiatives, in this case, IDEAS.

This was also a stage when the participants began to compare themselves to others teachers in the school. In a reflective, but future focused way, they were able to articulate what they did not want to become. There was a perception amongst the respondents that many teachers end their careers in a disillusioned state; in their terms *deadwood or bitter and twisted*. It was during this period of confusion and anxiety when the teachers in this study could articulate what they did not want to become, however could not articulate what they did wish to become.

In the sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* teachers are simultaneously engaged in processes of becoming aware and searching for. They are becoming aware of their own unmet professional needs and of whole school issues. They become aware of other teachers and begin comparing themselves to others. At the same time they are searching for professional learning, opportunities, safety, control and satisfaction.

The teachers in this study were experienced and successful teachers. They were widely regarded by their colleagues and their principals as competent teachers and importantly, they perceived themselves as competent. They had mastered the challenge of classroom teaching and were now searching for beyond classroom

opportunities to grow and develop. Sadly however, most of those who were interviewed spoke of a dearth of such opportunities.

When they accepted their role as IDEAS facilitators, they perceived it as an opportunity, not a burden. One referred to it as *the best thing that ever happened in my teaching career*. They maintained that their experiences as IDEAS facilitators had reinvigorated them.

What emerged was an understanding that competent experienced teachers can enter a period when their work as classroom teachers remains effective, even highly effective, however their satisfaction reduces. They enter a period where they are not really sure of what they are looking for; however begin to look beyond the classroom for challenges, sources of satisfaction, often finding little opportunity. When an opportunity presents itself (in this case, the role of IDEAS facilitator) and they experience growth and development associated with this experience they become more aware of where they had been. When the feelings of confusion and anxiety that had slowly become part of their life, and of which many were not aware at that time, have left, a retrospective awareness and understanding of the feelings emerges.

Only after their experiences as IDEAS facilitators were they able to articulate their prior experience. One respondent commented: *I've been searching my whole career for something that was not there*. Their retrospective realisation was that for experienced teachers, who are not actively looking for promotional positions, the opportunities for growth and development are rare, even non-existent. They feared entering a period of decline and disengagement that is all too common for many long

serving teachers. For the teachers in this study their desire for growth and development and continuing satisfaction prompted them to accept the role of the IDEAS facilitator, the subsequent growth and development manifested itself in many ways, especially teacher leadership. Ironically it was something that most did not understand or expressly seek to develop. Thus for experienced teachers, participation in programs (in this case, IDEAS) that develop teacher leadership capacities enable them to not only reinvigorate themselves by meeting their needs for growth and development, but also enable them to develop as teacher leaders.

For the experienced teachers in this study, *Becoming Ready* was an extended period which preceded their decision to accept the IDEAS facilitation role. The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* describes a process whereby experienced teachers become ready to grow and develop, not necessarily as teacher leaders, but in ways that meet their needs for growth and development. While the teachers in this study recognised that they were ready at the time when the IDEAS program arrived in their schools, they were quick to acknowledge that there had been times in their careers where they had not been ready and would not have perceived a role such as IDEAS facilitator as an opportunity. Some also commented, that as experienced teachers who were nearing the end of their teaching careers, that in a few years time, the thought of taking on a role such as IDEAS facilitator would probably not interest them.

For the teachers in this study, *Becoming Ready* represented a period in their careers, when they were highly motivated, to grow and develop. The teachers in this study acknowledged that it occurred after they had been teaching for many years, and

that it would probably not remain until the end of their careers. It became clear that *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is not something that can happen at any time, for it appears that there are times when one is ready and times when one is not. Furthermore, while the teachers in this study became ready at a particular stage of their careers, it should not be concluded that all teachers necessarily become ready at particular times, if at all.

For those teachers who were ready at the time when the IDEAS program was offered to their schools, they began a process referred to in this study as *Sizing Up*.

3.2.2 Sizing Up

The initial process of *Sizing Up* emerged early. All respondents referred to this initial phase where the program was sized up. This was a term that I have used to describe the sub-core category whereby the whole school community interrogates the program, determines its potential for their school and finally engages in a process of obtaining collective consensus. It soon became apparent that all three processes must occur before the school community can effectively undertake the IDEAS program.

In interrogating the program members of the school community were seeking to assure themselves that the program was credible. There were two important sources of credibility: 1) academic credibility and 2) practical credibility. The academic credibility came from two sources, firstly the knowledge that the program was based on sound research, and secondly the professional reading that prospective school members had done about the program. While the academic credibility was

important, it emerged that the practical credibility was just as important. This practical credibility came from other teachers, those whose schools had participated in the IDEAS program in the past. Their stories were an essential complement to the academic credibility. Neither form of credibility was enough on its own, however together they were enough to satisfy prospective school communities that the program was credible.

Teachers are practical people and before they were prepared to agree to the program in their school it was important that they could perceive that it could work in their school. This involved determining the potential; a process whereby the school community could link the IDEAS program to tangible future benefits in their school. While interrogating the process was focused on determining if the program was credible, this phase helped answer the collective question: Is it worthwhile for our school to participate in the program? The final phase involved gaining collective consensus, which, once achieved, involved the school community collectively deciding whether or not to engage in the IDEAS program.

In my many years working with the IDEAS program, I have observed that schools which process through the stages above have a much greater chance of successfully engaging in the IDEAS program. The sub-core category of *Sizing Up* enables the school community to understand the program and become familiar with the manner in which the program is likely to impact the school. It also enables the role of the IDEAS facilitator to be legitimised and engages the whole community in a process of decision making. The collective result of these processes legitimises the IDEAS program and the role of the IDEAS facilitator. If the outcome of the

collective consensus process is positive, then there is an acceptance that the program has not been imposed on an unwilling school community. The legitimisation of the IDEAS facilitation role is important as it relates to the safety component of the core category. Without the legitimisation of the program and the role, it would be very difficult for the IDEAS facilitator to lead the implementation of the program in the school.

The relationship between the sub-core category of *Sizing Up* and the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* is easily recognisable. The process of *Sizing Up* establishes the IDEAS program as one that is credible and voluntary, thus it is safe to be associated with. Unlike many programs that are imposed on school communities, the *Sizing Up* process reduces the likelihood that significant resistance will be encountered. For those who will later commit to the IDEAS facilitation role, this program, when compared to many others that involve forced participation, is a relatively safer program through which some teachers (in this case the IDEAS facilitators) can experience learning and leading.

Once the program has been established as safe, through the *Sizing Up* process, the stage is set for the next phase of *Preparing to Commit*. While all of those who eventually became IDEAS facilitators made reference to participating in the *Sizing Up* process, most commented that they had not seriously considered seeking the role of the IDEAS facilitator at that stage.

3.2.3 Preparing to Commit

Having developed some understanding of the IDEAS program in the *Sizing Up* phase, the principal begins to search for a suitable IDEAS facilitator(s). Once identified, the principal approaches the prospective facilitator(s) and encourages him/her/them (in some schools there were several facilitators who worked as a team) to accept the position(s) as IDEAS facilitator.

Initially I was not aware of the importance of this process. It seemed to be a logical action and one that would speed up the appointment of a facilitator and therefore the commencement of the program. It soon emerged, however that the principal's actions amounted to an endorsement of the prospective facilitator's capability and potential. One respondent who was interested did not initially step forward; however at a later date when approached by the principal, did so. It became apparent that the participants were very reluctant to accept the IDEAS facilitation role without the endorsement (Identifying Leadership Potential) of the principal.

Further to the endorsement, the prospective IDEAS facilitators also sought reassurance that the principal would continue to support them and stand behind them during the process. The act of endorsement began a process whereby the prospective IDEAS facilitators began to imagine themselves in their role as IDEAS facilitators. Although such a role is a leadership role, most at this stage were not imagining themselves as leaders; however in the act of imagining themselves as IDEAS facilitators they had begun the first stage of imagining themselves as leaders, even though they may not have been aware of it at the time. Thus it can be seen that for many of the teachers in this study, the endorsement of the principal was a critical

junction in the process of teachers beginning to think about leadership and their prospective role as leaders.

As the prospective IDEAS facilitators began conceiving themselves in the facilitation role, it stimulated them to once again interrogate the IDEAS program, however this time they were doing so for a different reason. They looked for tools or strategies which they could use, if and when they decided to accept the IDEAS facilitation role. Many referred to the importance of knowing they could use the protocols contained within the strategies of professional conversations (see Appendix F for further details) in their role and made reference to their concerns about the unprofessional nature of communications that were characteristic of many staff meetings.

This time when they interrogated the IDEAS program, they were actively looking for protocols or strategies that could be used to make the daunting task of working with their colleagues a little safer. Many commented that the principle of *no blame* which underpins the whole program enabled the staff to discuss complex issues in ways not previously possible. One stated that: *The professional conversations strategy was amazing; people were actually talking about the issue and not bickering or fighting. I never thought I would see the day.* Knowing that the IDEAS program provided the facilitators with protocols and strategies that made the daunting task of working with their colleagues less threatening, clearly relates to the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*, and was an important factor affecting the decision of the prospective IDEAS facilitators. It provided an added measure of safety beyond that provided by the principal's

reassurance of support. Those who interrogated the program and found the tools (protocols and strategies) they needed, and could see themselves as facilitators, accepted the role as facilitator, thus committing themselves to the IDEAS facilitation role and beginning the journey of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in earnest.

The process of *Preparing to Commit* is distinct from the previous process of *Sizing Up*, in that *Sizing Up* involves the whole school community and eventuates in the school community agreeing or otherwise, to adopt the IDEAS program as a mechanism of school revitalisation. *Preparing to Commit* involves the principal and the prospective facilitator; this time the decision affects the individual and not the whole school. For the prospective facilitator, committing to the IDEAS facilitation role represents a critical juncture in their professional lives and for those in this study, it appears to have changed their career trajectory.

By the time that the prospective IDEAS facilitator is ready to commit he/she has taken the time to understand his/her role as well as begin to appreciate the important leadership dimension of the role. Thus, in committing to becoming an IDEAS facilitator, the participants have committed to developing themselves as teacher leaders.

3.2.4 Experiencing Learning and Leading

For the IDEAS facilitators, the process of experiencing learning and leading occurred over a period of at least two years. The learning environments varied, sometimes at the school site where the members of the ISMT worked together,

sometimes at external workshops for facilitators and principals, sometimes at cluster meetings where facilitators from nearby schools met to discuss issues, and sometimes alone, when individual facilitators had time to read, think, plan and reflect. Wherever and whenever the learning occurred, safety was paramount, for it was the type of learning that the facilitators experienced that was important for the learning was personal and reflective. The facilitators were learning about themselves in relation to school revitalisation and leadership and in doing so they grew, developed and transitioned into teacher leaders.

As identified in the process of *Becoming Ready*, the experienced teachers in this study had expressed an ongoing need for growth and development that, until the arrival of the IDEAS program, remained unmet. While most did not articulate a desire to develop as leaders, it emerged that their need for growth and development was satisfied by their experiences of learning and leading in a safe environment.

The IDEAS facilitators in this study experienced growth and development through the process of *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, and they were able to experience the learning and leading because a safe environment existed for them to do so. The importance of the core concept property of safety was once again paramount, for the participants, the learning involved active experiential learning where the IDEAS facilitators were required to lead professional development sessions for the whole school. They were experiencing leadership, and learning about it simultaneously, and this was occurring in front of their peers. Given that there was unanimous agreement among the participants in this study that many professional

communities can be aggressive, threatening or difficult, the courage of the IDEAS facilitators cannot be dismissed.

While this courage should be recognised, the importance of safety cannot be overemphasised, and it is safety that is needed from the very beginning. The sub-core category of *Sizing Up* involves the whole school community ensuring that the IDEAS program was safe to be associated with. In the process of *Sizing Up* the role of the facilitator was also legitimised, in that the whole school community becomes acquainted with the role of the facilitator and accepts the role of the IDEAS facilitator as legitimate, thereby making the role safer. In the following sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit* the IDEAS facilitator begins to imagine him/herself as facilitator and in this process, ensures ongoing principal support and ensures that he/she is able to draw on protocols or strategies contained in the IDEAS program (for example: professional conversations and the concept of no blame) before committing to the role. The commitment occurs as a consequence of the prospective IDEAS facilitators believing that they will be safe. The safety that results from the whole school *Sizing Up* process, followed then by the adoption of protocols and assurance of principal support that are components of the *Preparing to Commit* process, must all be in place, and in the eyes of the facilitator be seen to remain in place (what I have termed establishing a growth environment) before the teacher can begin to experience learning and leading.

Once the safety of the growth environment has been established, the IDEAS facilitators begin what amounts to a transformation, from teacher to teacher leader. This transformation results from an extended period of learning and leading and

learning to lead. The learning experiences are valued by the participants as they have emerged from an extended period of anxiety and confusion (*Becoming Ready*). They have a strong desire to regain satisfaction and reinvigorate their careers, to once again become “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). They are ready to learn, develop and grow, are aware of the potential danger, however believe that there is enough safety to protect them from the danger of failing and the potential hostility of some of their colleagues. If however the safety is not retained most will step aside from the facilitation role. The place of the principal in maintaining support for the IDEAS facilitator emerged as central in establishing and maintaining the safety necessary for the particular learning and leading experiences to occur.

The learning, described in detail in Chapter 7, is not passive. It is experiential, it is participative and supportive, it enables renewal, is intellectual and practical and encourages the participants to reflect deeply about themselves, their school, their role, their teaching and their career. The participants talked about the manner in which the learning had stimulated deep self-reflective thinking, how it enabled them to understand teacher leadership and its importance in school revitalisation. It challenged and transformed their perceptions of their professional self image, the role of experienced teachers in emerging contemporary schools, their understandings of leadership and the role of teachers, their relationships with colleagues, principals and students.

The participants in this study readily acknowledged that the opportunity to learn and lead in a no blame environment, where protocols for professional conversation existed and where the principal worked with you and supported you (an

environment of safety), enabled them to experience and learn in ways that were previously not possible. Furthermore, the opportunity to experience leading, knowing that you were using materials that had been professionally developed and tested (IDEAS workshop material), you were not alone, and afterwards you could reflect on the experience with others (principals, ISMT members and other facilitators from other schools) who were participating in similar experiences, enabled growth, reflection and the development of more confidence to lead.

In this type of environment the IDEAS facilitators were prepared to undertake significant leadership roles (for example: delivering professional development workshops to the whole staff) and do things that they would not normally do. As a consequence of the existence of an environment where teachers could experience *Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*, those who would not normally experience this type of leadership were able to do so. Participants, in referring to their experiences prior to the adoption of the IDEAS program in the school, expressed the view that a safe environment did not exist and there was too much risk attached to leadership roles. It is worth remembering here that when an inexperienced leader learns to lead, he/she does so in public, in front of his/her peers. Learning to lead is unlike much other learning in that the stakes are much higher. When you are learning to lead, you are learning not only about leadership but also about yourself, and also allowing others to learn about you at the same time. In this study, the participants were learning to lead and simultaneously transforming from teachers to teacher leaders, assimilating a new role into their professional identities as well as reshaping how others within the school perceive them. Is it any wonder that many teachers shy away from leadership positions?

The support of other facilitators was important, for this enabled the facilitators to debrief, reflect together and encourage each other. One participant described it as *get [ting] my dose of courage*. The support from these external networks and the counsel from the principal enabled the wounds of leadership to heal. The participants, even those with middle management experience, had not had whole school leadership experiences before and the impact of taunts from oppositional or resistant staff were difficult to handle. The therapeutic nature of the support provided by the principal and the facilitators from other schools aided the learning and reflection process, and also assisted in the development of the confidence necessary to continue the journey.

The learning that occurred was also guided by a framework for leadership. The framework (parallel leadership) defined the relationship between the IDEAS facilitator and the principal, as well as allowing facilitators to explore the notions of leadership encompassed by the concept. It helped scaffold the thinking and reflection that resulted from their experiences. As one respondent said: *how can I become a leader if I don't understand what it is?* It emerged that most of the participants in this study had developed tacit understandings of leadership, based on notions of power and position and had little understandings of the paradigm of leadership that is embraced in explanations of teacher leadership especially “parallel leadership”(Crowther et al., 2001, p.19). Thus the conceptual framework of parallel leadership provided in the IDEAS program provided a template for reflection. While it may seem obvious after the event, it seems that the provision of a template for reflection proved to be an important enabler in the transition to teacher leader.

Lambert's (2003) view that "how we define leadership frames how we participate in it" (p. 22) resonates with experiences of participants in this study.

The experienced teachers in this study had accepted a leadership role in a school revitalisation program. Through their participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation program, the school community had accepted that organisational change was likely. The IDEAS facilitator as a leader in that process of organisational change was simultaneously experiencing change at the personal level while the environment in which he/she worked (the school) was also changing.

This substantive theory maintains that as a result of their *Experiencing Leading and Learning* in safety, the IDEAS facilitators made the transition from teachers to teacher leaders. In doing so they began to develop a broader and different range of what I labelled in this study as *capacities*. The capacities which were developed were of two broad types; organisational and individual. In Chapter 8, I briefly mention the organisational capacities that emerge, however as a detailed account of such capacities is beyond the scope of this study, I have chosen to limit the following description of the *Emerging Capacities* to those which relate to the individual capacities of the IDEAS facilitators who are the focus of this research. These capacities are now explored.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have separated the sub-core categories of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* and *Emerging Capacities* as it enabled me to better conceptualise the processural nature of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. However, it is timely to acknowledge that the two processes occur both simultaneously and

subsequently, for as one experiences learning and leading, one develops capacities, and as one develops capacities, one may be able to experience new types of learning and leading. Thus while the structure of this dissertation may separate the two, the essential interrelationship between the two should not be forgotten.

3.2.5 Emerging Capacities

The teachers who were the focus of this study had found what they were looking for. They had found a way to be “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) once again. They had developed as teacher leaders, their understanding of leadership had changed and their view of themselves as leaders had also changed, for now those who were once reluctant to identify themselves as leaders did so willingly. They also reported enhanced confidence, personally and professionally. They were more confident in their capacity to lead and were comfortable with taking on a leadership role. As a consequence, some even began considering applying for formal leadership roles. There was also an important positive impact on their perceptions of their teaching effectiveness, with participants reporting a belief that they were better teachers as a result of their experiences.

Through their experiences, the teachers in this study had developed enhanced confidence in self, leadership and pedagogy. Before their experiences as IDEAS facilitators, the teachers in this study were ready to grow and develop, and when they were provided with a safe environment where they could learn and lead over a period of time, new capacities for leadership and pedagogy and general confidence emerged. As their engagement with the IDEAS program extended over a minimum

of two years there was time to learn, to experience success in leadership roles, and develop the confidence to lead. The participants were provided with structures and opportunities to encourage and support reflection. They were also supplied with frameworks that enabled interrogation of leadership and pedagogy. With the support of the principals and fellow facilitators, along with the protocols and practices incorporated in the IDEAS program, the IDEAS facilitators were assured the safety necessary for the transformational changes that eventuated.

As the participants grew in both leadership and pedagogical confidence, they became more confident in themselves and began to view themselves in a different way. It became evident that the creation of environments, where teachers can *Experience Learning and Leading in Safety*, enabled teacher leaders to emerge. These teacher leaders were confident (in self, leadership and pedagogy) and they had new capacities to work with colleagues. They adopted a view of their work which incorporated beyond classroom issues, whole-school responsibilities and new relationships with principals, colleagues and students. In summary they had reconceptualised a new role for themselves (as teacher leaders) and had developed the confidence to undertake those roles.

3.3 The Core Category

According to Glaser (1978), “the goal of grounded theory is to generate a theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (p. 93). The developed theory is conceptual and its generation occurs around a core category (Glaser, 2004). Grounded theorists are constantly analysing

data looking for the emergence of the core category; “that which sums up the pattern of behaviour or substance of what is going on in the data; that which is the main concern or problem for people in the setting” (Glaser, 1978, p. 93). Glaser (1978) further elaborates about a core category, listing a number of criteria, including; it must be central, reoccur frequently in the data, relate meaningfully and easily to other categories, have clear and grabbing implication to formal theory and must be a dimension of the problem. Finally the core category must also have what Glaser refers to as “carrythrough” (p. 96), meaning it does not lead to dead ends.

The sub-core categories (*Becoming Ready, Sizing Up, Preparing to Commit, Experiencing Learning and Leading* and *Enhancing Capacities*) are unable to *stand alone* in explaining the behaviour of the teacher leaders at the centre of this study and rely on the core category (*Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*) to *link* them into a coherent theory. In the following section, I explain how the core category emerged and include some of my own thoughts at the time. This is then followed by a further discussion of the core category, especially in relation to the emergence of teacher leaders in IDEAS schools.

3.3.1 The Emergence of the Core Category

As I interviewed and analysed, the various sub-core categories of *Sizing Up* and *Preparing to Commit* emerged early. In listening to participants talk about their learning and leading experiences I was struck when one participant commented that: *it was if I have been searching my entire career for something that was not there. I*

struggled to understand the significance, if any, of the comment, however it was this comment that later enabled me to identify the core category.

I spent much time re-analysing the transcripts, sometimes re-coding some of the previous categories, always asking myself: What is it that was not there? I reflected on the sub-core categories that had already emerged, once again asking myself the same question. Why did school communities spend so much time *Sizing Up* the project? Why did prospective facilitators look for the endorsement of the principal before committing to the role? Were they too searching for something?

Eventually, when I least expected it, it came to me for it all started to make sense. The school communities, the prospective facilitators were ensuring that they were safe. I hypothesised that the school communities spent so much time in the *Sizing-Up* phase as they wanted to ensure that the project was not a waste of time and energy. Schools are places where there are many projects and initiatives and teachers and principals have little time to complete them. All too often these initiatives fail and are perceived as a waste of time. Principals and teachers do not want to be associated with initiatives that fail or are perceived to be useless: they want to feel safe from the repercussions of failure.

The need for safety also explained the prospective IDEAS facilitators' behaviour in the *Preparing to Commit* phase. The commitment of the principal to support the facilitators enabled them to feel safe. Later, I reflected on a comment from one facilitator who felt that the principal had not stood behind him and as a consequence he stepped aside from the facilitation role. I postulated that he had not

felt safe. I then reflected on the manner in which prospective facilitators interrogated the process as they imagined themselves in the facilitation role. In this phase they were interrogating the process looking for strategies and tools. I went back to the transcripts and noticed that the strategies and tools that interested the prospective facilitators were of the type that enabled people to work together in respectful ways.

But was there more to the core category? The more I thought about safety the more convinced I was that it was part of the core concept, however I reflected on what motivated these teachers to be interested in the facilitation role, even if safety could be ensured? These were busy people, however in the *Becoming Ready* phase they had expressed the desire to grow and develop, not necessarily as leaders. In Lambert's (2003) words, they "yearned to be professional and purposeful" (p. 4). I wondered if their yearning had led them to see the IDEAS facilitation role as a mechanism that would address this yearning. By undertaking this role they could address their own needs and contribute to the school revitalisation. Were they searching for a place to grow and develop in safety? As I reflected on this I was convinced that I was getting closer to the answer, however I needed to ask myself more questions. I followed Glaser's (2004) guide and asked myself two questions. Firstly: what is the main concern being faced by the participants? Secondly, I asked: what accounts for the continual resolving of this concern? I also thought about the facilitation role and reflected on the experiences of the facilitators? I realised that the participants in this study were growing and developing as leaders, even those who were not explicitly aware of it at the time, and they were doing so in full view of their colleagues.

It was clear that in the process of imagining (a category of the sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit*) the prospective facilitators were imagining themselves not only as facilitators, but also as *safe* or *unsafe*. Could they take on this role and retain their credibility, reputation, or would it all fall apart and leave them humiliated and alienated? It was at this time that I had a realisation. Something that I had known for many years became explicit. The participants had told me that professional environments in many schools are hostile. In the words of one participant: *they are potentially dangerous places in which to take on a role as a leader*. This, I realised, was especially relevant to beginning leaders. The core category was emerging. The need for safety could adequately explain the behaviour of the participants and it was also related to leadership.

The next sub-core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* was now emerging. Once again the importance of safety was evident and it emerged that this process could only occur when a suitable (safe) growth environment existed. Without exception the participants spoke excitedly about their learning experiences and their leadership experiences and it was clear that the two were related. They were learning about school revitalisation, pedagogy, leadership and it seemed; themselves. The issues were connected and the learning was simultaneous, experiential, relevant and continuous. The participants were *learning* and *leading* as well as *learning to lead*. While the learning in some cases may have not directly related to the leading, I realised that the participants experienced them together, and as I was aiming to understand the process from the perspective of the IDEAS facilitators, I have chosen not to separate the two.

Finally, the core category had emerged. From the perspective of the IDEAS facilitators, their main concern was, *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*.

For the participants in this study their yearning to be “purposeful and professional” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) had been satisfied through their experiences as IDEAS facilitators. It seemed that while most had not articulated an explicit leadership ambition, their experiences in *Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* had enabled them to once again feel “purposeful and professional” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). While this outcome alone would be worth celebrating, there are added bonuses, for these teachers were now proficient teacher leaders and had not only enhanced their own confidence as leaders, the experience enabled them to also perceive themselves as leaders.

I reflected back on the comment that started me thinking: *it was if I have been searching my entire career for something that was not there*. It dawned on me that maybe it was this was what was not there. Maybe the teachers in this study had been searching for a safe place to satisfy the yearnings; a safe place to become “purposeful and professional” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) once again. In *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* they had found what they were searching for, and I had found the core category. Furthermore it met Glaser’s (1978) characteristics of a core-category, as it was central, recurred frequently, related to the sub-core categories and was the participants’ main concern.

3.3.2 Detailing the Core Category: Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment

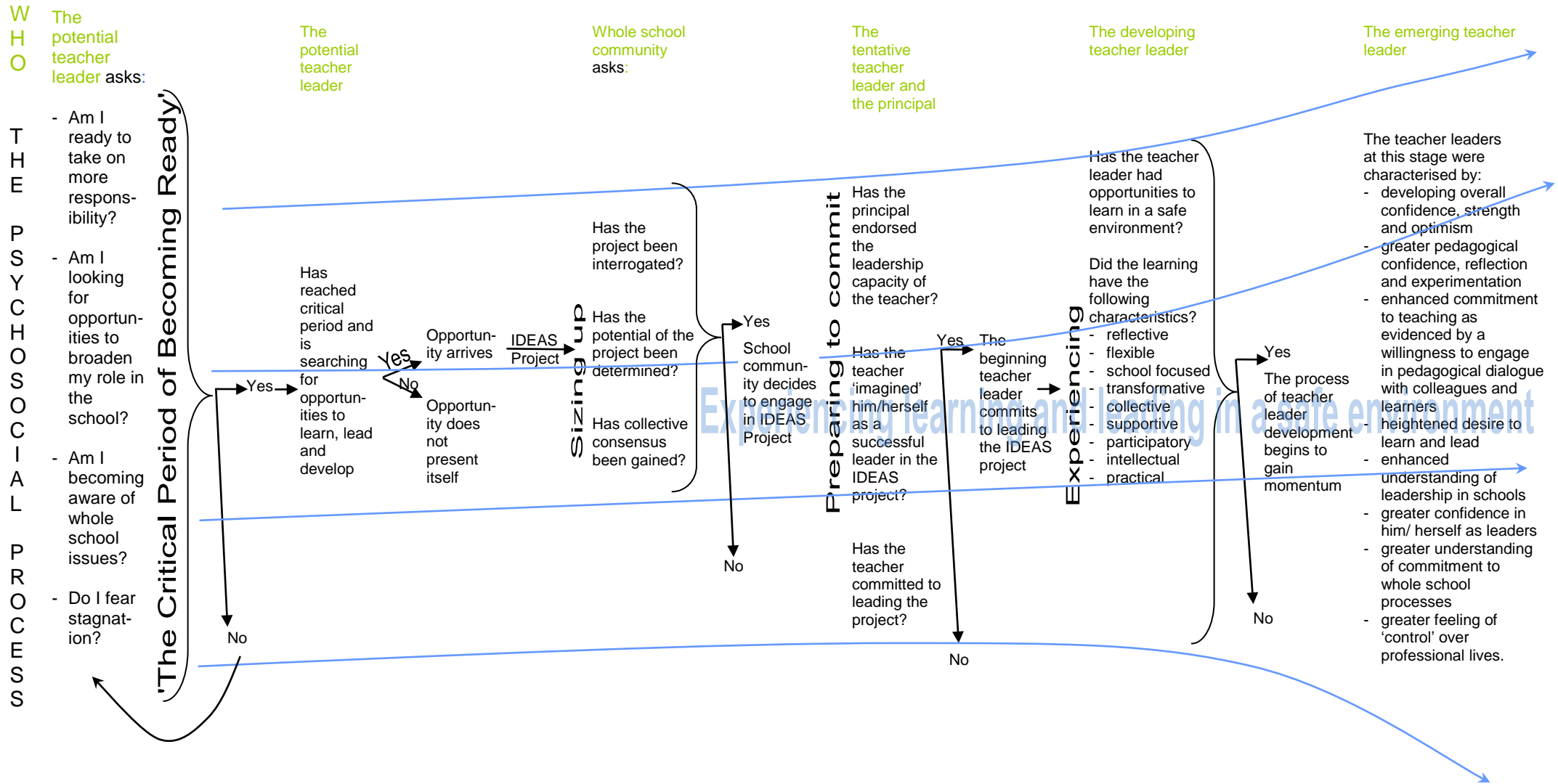
The psychosocial process described in this substantive theory is represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.2.

The teachers in this study perceived the professional environments in which they worked were potentially dangerous places to take on leadership roles. It emerged that this was their main concern. They were ready to grow and develop, to become teacher leaders and they recognised the IDEAS facilitation role as an opportunity to meet their needs, and for them it had come along at the right time (the critical period of their careers). However, at all stages of the psychosocial process that followed they needed to be sure that they were able to experience learning and leading in a safe environment. It subsequently emerged as the core category which united all the other categories (phases) in the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

In Figure 3.2 it the core category is represented in blue, is *central*, and *unites* all the other sub-core categories. The green lettering indicates those (sometimes the whole school community and other times, the individual IDEAS facilitator) participating in the psychosocial process at the various phases. The change in nomenclature in referring to the teacher leaders as *potential*, *tentative*, *developing* and *emerging* is representative of the processural nature of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* and is indicative of the increasing leadership confidence and construction of self as leader.

The figure also includes some key questions and concerns for the participants during the various phases as well as yes/no arrows which demonstrate critical junctures in the overall process. The arrows also indicate that the whole process can cease if the necessary conditions are not present, while the distance between the *bottom* and *top* blue lines is representative of the individual's increasing *teacher leadership confidence and construction of self as leader*.

FIGURE 3.2: Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment: A Grounded Theory of ‘Becoming a Teacher Leader’ in IDEAS Schools.



This substantive theory maintains that to ensure a safe place to experience learning and leading, the whole school community needs to engage in a process of decision making. If the decision making process culminates in the acceptance of the IDEAS program by the community, it is safe to proceed to the next step. In the diagram I have referred to this process as *Sizing Up*.

The next step often begins towards the end of the *Sizing Up* phase. Designated *Preparing to Commit*, it describes the process whereby the principal encourages participants to take on the role of IDEAS facilitator (a teacher leadership role). If the prospective facilitator feels that the principal will stand behind him/her and if he/she feels that the strategies in the IDEAS program provide them with some safety, they begin the process of *imagining themselves in a leadership role*. For many, this was the beginning of their journey as teacher leaders, for often it was the first time that the participants had explicitly imagined themselves as leaders. This substantive theory maintains that the act of imagining is a critical phase in *Becoming a Teacher Leader*, for to become a leader one must first begin to perceive oneself as a leader.

While the first two phases (sub-core categories) can have some degree of overlap there is no such overlap between *Preparing to Commit* and experiencing learning and leading, for if the prospective facilitator chooses not to accept the role as IDEAS facilitator, he/she does not experience learning and leading as part of the IDEAS program. For those who do commit to the IDEAS facilitation role, the experiences of leading and learning in a safe environment commence in earnest. Once again, the participant's main concern (the core category) of *Experiencing*

Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment needs to be re-iterated; for if the participants perceive that they are not safe, they usually withdraw from the IDEAS facilitation role. If however the safe environment is maintained, the participants are able to experience learning and leading in safety.

The nature of the learning and the learning environments are described in detail in Chapter 7. As they experience learning and leading, the participants develop greater confidence as leaders, deeper understanding of leadership and their own roles as teacher leaders. The experiences occur over an extended period (at least two years), during which time the facilitators experience leadership successes and sometimes failures. However in a safe environment they can reflect on, and learn from both. The safe environment enables participants to build confidence and reflect on their emerging new capacities. It is during this time that the facilitators develop a perception of themselves as leaders, along with the confidence to work in ways consistent with the role of teacher leader.

As the participants learn and experience more, they grow and develop as teacher leaders, they begin to think and act like teacher leaders and become less dependent on the maintenance of the safe environment. In the early stages of experiencing learning and leading, safety was paramount, for the confidence to lead was low and the perception of self as leader was an immature one. As more learning and leading occurred in the environment of safety, the confidence to lead grew and the perception of self as leader became embedded. Those who were once reluctant to identify themselves as teacher leaders had become confident teacher leaders.

In Figure 3.2 the phases (sub-core categories) of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* and *Enhancing Capacities* overlap, indicating that one is not distinct from the other. The *Enhancing Capacities* however, follows the *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, indicating that the capacities are as a consequence of the experience of learning and leading.

The substantive theory in this study maintains that teacher leadership development can be enhanced by an understanding of the psychosocial process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. By developing an understanding of the process from the participants' perspectives it has highlighted the primacy of the participant's need to feel safe, before experienced teachers can grow, develop and transform into teacher leaders. The study also highlighted:

- The importance of the principal in encouraging teachers to accept teacher leadership roles and in establishing and maintaining an environment(s) where teachers feel safe to experience learning and leading;
- Teacher leadership as a concept that is poorly understood by teachers. Teacher leadership can be learned, given enough time and the right environment. It can be conceptualised as a new perception of role that is the result of extended learning, reflection and transformation from teacher to teacher leader;
- Teacher readiness to lead; teachers are not always ready to develop as teacher leaders;
- Experienced teachers' perceptions; of their careers, the environments in which they work and the lack of opportunities for teacher leadership development;

- The needs of experienced teachers; who have a strong desire to grow and develop and remain professional and purposeful.

This study was conducted in schools which had chosen to participate in the IDEAS program. What became clear during this research is the importance of a *program* for leadership development. While I did not set out to investigate the manner in which the IDEAS program enhanced teacher leadership, as the theory emerged it became clear that there were a number of components that are integral to the IDEAS program that contributed to teacher leadership development. These included:

- The IDEAS program explicitly includes a framework for teacher leadership development; a framework that describes a relational construct of teacher leadership referred to as parallel leadership. The teachers in this study acknowledged the value of this framework in their development as leaders. Not only did this framework prove to be an important contributor to their understanding of teacher leadership; it also provided a framework for reflection and transformative thinking;
- The IDEAS program provides a professional learning process that is based on principles of adult learning and encourages the development of sustained communities of professional learning, without which the teachers in this study would probably not have become teacher leaders;
- The IDEAS program provides prospective teacher leaders with teacher leadership experiences that are necessary for the development of the necessary confidence to lead;

- The IDEAS program incorporates the protocols of *no blame* and *professional conversations* which can be used to enhance the safety of the learning environment.

Thus, while the IDEAS program was the initial catalyst for the development of teacher leaders and provided a process, concepts and protocols that were instrumental in the development of teacher leadership, this substantive theory has made explicit that *for experienced teachers in IDEAS schools, the establishment and maintenance of a safe environment in which teachers can learn and lead will enhance the development of teacher leadership.*

3.4 Summary

This chapter has detailed the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. In explaining the emergence of the core concept and the relationships between the core concept and the associated sub-core concepts, it has also demonstrated the manner in which the core concept of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* connects and unites the various sub-core concepts into a parsimonious substantive theory.

The detailing of the substantive theory of *Becoming Teacher Leader* sets the scene for a more detailed explanation of the various sub-core categories, their emergence and their importance. In the following chapters, the various sub-core categories are explained in detail.

CHAPTER 4-SIZING UP

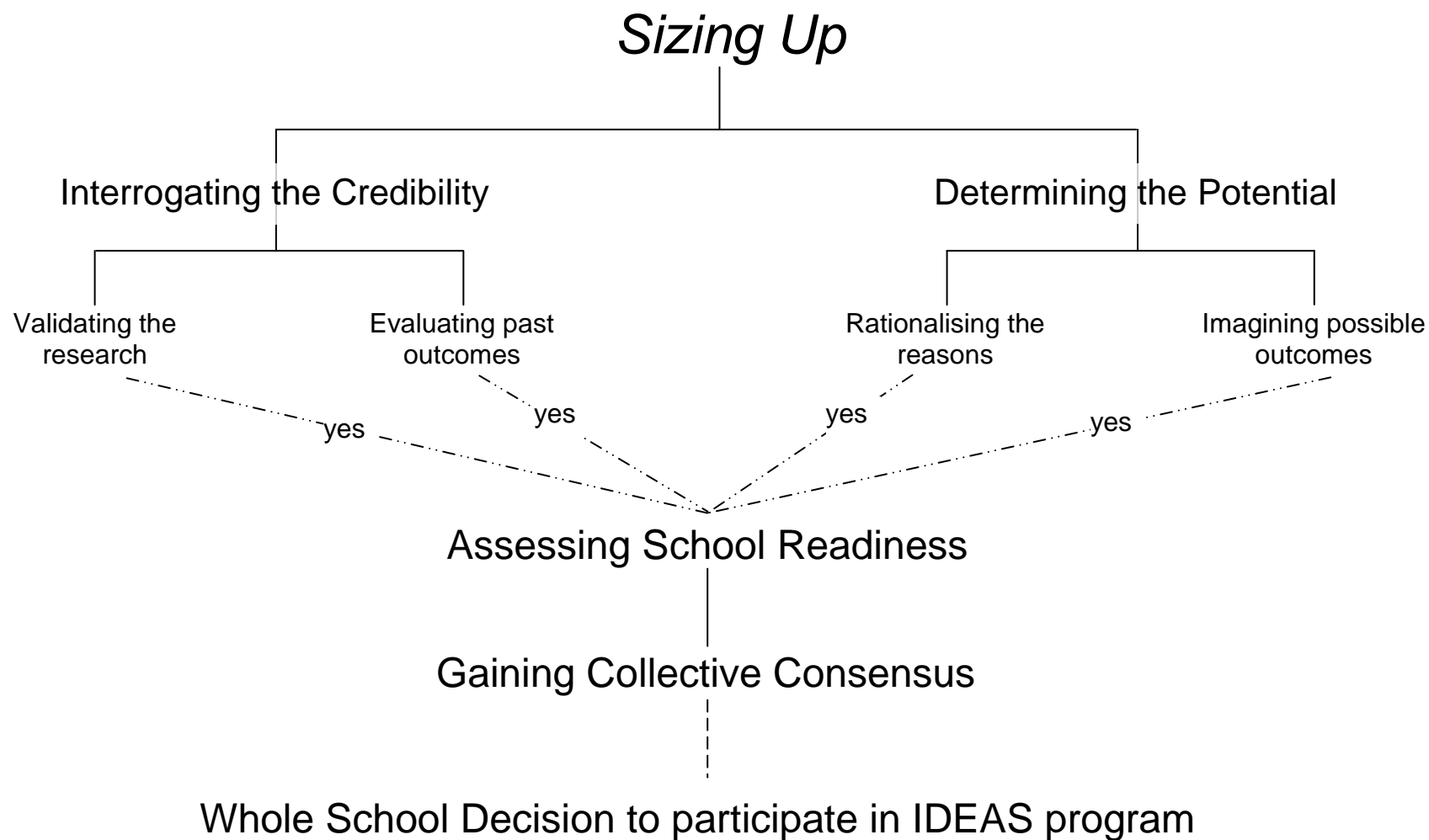
4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins to present the substantive grounded theory that has been developed as a consequence of this research study. In all there are four sub-core categories that interact and are connected by the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*. The first of the sub-core categories has been termed *Sizing Up*. It describes the process whereby the members of an individual school professional community make the decision to adopt the IDEAS program as a mechanism for school revitalisation. The sub-core category of *Sizing Up* is a process which consists of four categories which are sub-processes of the process of *Sizing Up* and are termed *phases*. The four phases are: *Interrogating the credibility*, *Determining the potential*, *Assessing school readiness*, and *Gaining collective consensus*.

The process of sizing-up begins with individual teachers and school professional communities engaging in two, often simultaneous sub-processes (phases); interrogating the credibility of the IDEAS program and determining the potential of the IDEAS program in the school. Once the professional community of the school is convinced that the IDEAS program has credibility and potential, the third phase of assessing school readiness begins. Assuming the school has deemed that it is ready to adopt the IDEAS program, the final phase of gaining collective consensus follows. Each of the four phases is represented in Figure 4.1 below and is detailed thereafter.

FIGURE 4.1: Sizing-up

The sub-core category of *Sizing Up* describes the process whereby school communities engage in a process of decision making, the goal of which is to determine the school preparedness to adopt IDEAS as a vehicle for revitalisation.



4.2 Interrogating the Credibility

The sub-process (phase) of interrogating the credibility consists of two further processes; *validating the research* and *evaluating past outcomes*. In both the processes of validating the research and evaluating past outcomes, the members of the school professional community engage in a search for evidence. Some of the evidence is of the theoretical type representing a variety of research-based, academic articles found in research journals, professional journals and university websites, while other evidence is more practical in nature (evaluating past outcomes) and comes from the stories from teachers in other schools where the IDEAS program has already been implemented.

4.2.1 Validating the Research

Most school communities began by validating the research, usually through a process of attending professional development activities. One respondent stated:

It started in 2002 when I heard [IDEAS Team member] talk at the [Name of city] Conference and I was particularly interested in what he had to say and the concept of what IDEAS could do.

Others did further reading, for example one school principal explained:

After going through the documentation that was on the website and looking also at the material from the University of Southern Queensland and having had researched it previously, I believe that it was a good strategy.

The two extracts above demonstrate the process of validating the research. Still others broadened the search, looking for further evidence that the process had credibility:

I was actually I think reading some of the ACEL [Australian Council of Educational Leaders] stuff on three dimensional pedagogy, so it must have been an article from one of you in there. And that's where I first heard about it. Then not long after that I sort of found out that [IDEAS Team member] was actually coming to WA to talk for a one day sort of basic [Professional Development] session, and that's when I went along and thought this is more than what we've been looking for. This is actually the real thing as to what we've been looking for.

The previous quote demonstrates how prospective participants searched for a number of sources (such as: professional development presentations, websites, and professional reading) before being prepared to accept the *credibility* of the program.

The teachers in this study, as well as the principals, wanted to make sure that the prospective school revitalisation program (IDEAS) was based on sound research and had professional and academic credibility. Therefore they took the time to read the various theoretical papers that form the basis of the IDEAS program. It was also interesting to note that many members of the school community, including some who did not necessarily support the prospect of the school engaging in the IDEAS program, also made the effort to ensure that any prospective program was supported by sound research. One IDEAS facilitator talked of a colleague who believed that the school did not need to engage in the IDEAS program. He spent a great deal of time

reading the research and questioning the basis of the evidence. Eventually he stated that:

While I do not think the school needs stuff like this, it seems that the program is sound, so I will stay out of your way if you decide to do it.

Initially I failed to recognise the significance of this statement, however later in the analysis stage, as the core category began to emerge, its relationship to the core-category property of safety became obvious. If a school adopts a program that is perceived by some to be *unsound* the implementation of that program may be difficult. In the statement above, the reference to: *I will stay out of your way* is telling, and indicative of the challenges associated with implementing a program that is perceived to be *unsound*.

Interrogating the credibility had a theoretical and practical dimension, thus as members of the school professional community were validating the research they were also interested in other, more practical evidence. Evaluating past outcomes was termed by one respondent as: *checking to see if the process had the runs on the board*. While the members of the school's professional community may be satisfied that the program has theoretical/research credibility, they were also interested in seeing if it actually worked in reality; for this evidence they turned to their colleagues.

4.2.2 Evaluating Past Outcomes

What also appeared to be important in this sub-process was the *source* of the evidence. While the theoretical and research-based evidence was important it also emerged that evidence from past successes was vital. This evidence came directly from schools and participating teachers and principals. Hearing other teachers discuss IDEAS and explain the manner in which it had made a difference in their school was critical. Thus it was not only the type of evidence (theoretical or otherwise) that was important; it was also the source of the evidence that was influential. The practical evidence of other teachers was highly valued by the prospective school practitioners, for example:

What I like about IDEAS is that there are so many school stories that are part of IDEAS that are shared....But by actually looking at what's happened in other schools, sharing some of those stories, having staff talking to people about, we went to this school and this was their situation and they went through IDEAS and, look, these are the things that have changed. Actually hearing those stories and looking at some of the material that's actually on the site and using that material, that's part of the reason why staff believe that there's a chance that this will work. Because there are plenty of people [teachers at other schools] out there saying, well, yes, it does work.

The previous excerpt demonstrates the manner in which the practical evidence from teachers and principals is necessary in the process of interrogating the credibility. On examination of the various transcripts it soon became evident that without the stories from teachers who had previously experienced the IDEAS

program in their schools, many schools would not have considered engaging in the program.

I soon realised that the members of the professional community needed to hear multiple past success stories, not from me or my University colleagues, but from their colleagues. This evaluation of the IDEAS program it seemed could not be done without hearing from their veteran IDEAS colleagues. The stories told by the veterans were authentic for they discussed the good and the bad, the joy and the despair. In the words of one participant who reflected on listening to an IDEAS veteran:

It was his warts and all version of events that made the teachers at our school sit up and listen. They asked him lots of questions and some he could not answer, but in the end when he assured us that it was worth it, everyone just seemed to accept it.

At the same time as teachers were interrogating the credibility they were also *determining the potential*. Thus while the program may have passed the interrogation phase during which the program's theoretical and practical credibility was determined, it seemed that school professional communities were also interested in determining how their particular school could benefit from engaging in the IDEAS program.

4.3 Determining the Potential

The category determining the potential of the process in the school is composed of two sub-categories: *rationalising the reasons* and *imagining possible outcomes*.

The distinction between rationalising the reasons and imagining the possible outcomes is based on the manner in which prospective participants viewed the potential of participation in IDEAS. Most expressed a desire to change perceived negative aspects of what already existed; this is expressed in rationalising the reasons. At the same time, they were articulating what could be; imagining the possibilities. In some cases the distinction between the two was not clear, however for most it was important that prospective participants could see the manner in which participation in the IDEAS process could not only address existing negatives, however also create new, future positives.

4.3.1 Rationalising the Reasons

Rationalising the reasons involves prospective schools, especially principals and teachers, in a process of assessing both internal imperatives and external imperatives for participation. It was important that prospective participants had time to determine and rationalise possible reasons for participation. In rationalising the reasons, one principal explained:

Parallel leadership was one, was a big one for me because this has been a very hierarchical school and [school name] as you're aware

has a large number of teachers who were reaching retirement age and I could see an enormous amount of expertise leaving the school with them, and the bulk of the staff here work relatively independently, so there was a lot of knowledge base that was actually in one person's head.

This extract demonstrates the manner in which prospective school communities rationalise what they believe participation in the IDEAS program can achieve in their school. In the previous excerpt, the respondent refers to leadership, teachers retiring, loss of knowledge and a desire to reduce the independent nature of how teachers work. Rationalising the reasons is a process whereby perceived negatives in the school are identified as reasons for participation in the IDEAS program. In analysing the transcripts, it soon became clear that it was important that prospective school communities could see the potential benefits of participating in the program:

It's very comfortable here, so you have that mothers' club; that metaphor was also very powerful, and there was another one. The overwork part was the donkey in the air. So they all fitted, you could see where they fitted here really well. So I was really keen that the expertise didn't get lost and we needed a mechanism to be able to do that.

In the previous excerpt, reference is made to a statement by a member of the USQ IDEAS Team who likened the culture of some schools to a *mother's club*, referring to the comfortable existence that some teachers seem to have in successful schools. The second reference to the *donkey in the air*, is a visual metaphorical

representation of teachers who are so overwhelmed with the quantity of their professional commitments that they feel that they are no longer in control of their professional lives. In the case above, both were identified as existing negatives that could be addressed through participation in the IDEAS program.

In the following statement a secondary school principal, lamenting over the lack of communication between various teaching areas, explained that he saw IDEAS as a vehicle for improving communication. He stated that:

I would have described [school name], I did describe [school name] sort of ten years ago as the perfect example of the Balkan States”

For other schools the imperative for engaging in IDEAS was external. One teacher explained:

Well it was an idea raised I think by the region that as our school was down in staff morale and a few curriculum issues and we needed. I think there were poor results from the annual survey that involved parents. So our school was encouraged to find something and our school also was in a bad way financially and the region was fantastic and they stepped in and we had to go find a program and IDEAS was suggested to us and we were able to do it because the region helped fund us which was extraordinary. So that is how we were able to achieve it.

While the impetus for school participation in IDEAS was sometimes a combination of external and internal reasons, it was important that prospective

participants were given the time to assess both internal and external imperatives, thus enabling them to justify, in terms of addressing negatives, any decision to engage.

The process of rationalising the reasons was closely related to imagining possible outcomes, as it was not only important to have a reason(s) for participation, based on what can be improved, however it was also important that prospective teachers and school communities have some conception of possible benefits that could arise as a consequence of participating in the IDEAS program.

4.3.2 Imagining Possible Outcomes

One teacher stated that she could see IDEAS as enabling the school to develop a sense of direction:

In fact it could underpin everything that we do here at [school name] and that really appealed to me. I like the idea of things having a direction that's a consistent direction that underpins everything that we do.

Another stated:

The buzz around all the people we spoke with there was that it could take the staff somewhere as a group and take the school somewhere and maybe unite the school.

Several schools saw IDEAS as a mechanism to enable greater control over their destiny. One principal stated:

I really like the idea that as a school we can become more self-determining. We could create something really exciting. It has made us think about the future in ways we had never thought about. This represents a new way of thinking about what we do, especially if we can work out how to do it.

The reference to *we could create something really exciting* demonstrates the difference between rationalising the reasons where the focus is more *reactive*, while the process of imaging possible outcomes is *proactive* in nature. While it was sometimes difficult to make the distinction between the two, the recognition of the two orientations (proactive and reactive) to determining the potential is important.

The sub-core category of *Sizing Up* is essentially a process whereby the IDEAS program and its potential to make a positive difference to the prospective participating school are assessed. As a consequence of the process of determining the potential, professional communities are able to rationalise the potential benefits of participation in the IDEAS program. For some schools, this whole process took many months, during which time the various participants engaged in an ongoing slow process of *Sizing Up* while for others the whole process was complete in a period of just a few weeks.

Once a rationale for participation existed, the professional community engaged in a process of assessing school readiness.

4.4 Assessing School Readiness

Closely linked to the processes of rationalising the reasons and imagining the outcomes is the process of *assessing school readiness*. This is when the school answered the question: Is the school ready to accept the challenge? All the respondents were keen to explain that, no matter what the research said, or how successful a program may have been at another school, it would only work if the staff were ready to give it a go. Many respondents talked about discussing school readiness with their principal, believing that he/she would, because of the nature of the principals' role, have a more accurate perception of school readiness. As part of the data collection process, I interviewed a number of principals who re-enforced the importance of ensuring that programs such as IDEAS are not imposed upon an unwilling staff. In the following extracts, the reflections of two school principals demonstrate the process of assessing school readiness and the importance of ensuring that their respective professional communities were ready to engage in the IDEAS program.

In the extract which follows, the principal makes reference to staff frustration. Later in the process of analysis I realised that without the staff acknowledgement that a problem existed it would probably have been difficult to engage the professional community in a program such as IDEAS. I also reflected on my previous experiences in other IDEAS schools. I had observed that where schools, usually as a result of a unilateral decision by the principal, made a decision to participate in the IDEAS program without assessing the readiness of the professional community, it almost invariably faltered, struggled or failed. In the extract below, (from a principal)

the recognition that *teachers were beginning to recognise that we had to do something* is indicative of readiness.

I was struck that we were too bogged in the past, it was a perfect school for 1988, hadn't moved, the staff had been here many 20 years plus, some newer than that, and the relationship between the students and the staff was appalling. It was a punitive reactionary culture and so I was looking for anything to help me change the culture. Many of the teachers were also beginning to recognise that we had to do something-their frustration was becoming evident.

The following excerpt is another example of a principal assessing school readiness. In this case the professional community was ready to *really have a look at itself*.

I came back to the staff and started to talk to the staff and there was a general sort of agreement that it was time for [School name] to just really have a look at itself over the next few years. And that was not me, that was general sort of opinion; we were comfortable.

It was usually the principal who engaged the whole staff in the process of assessing school readiness. If the assessment was that the school was ready, there was one more step before a final decision could be made. Gaining collective consensus is a whole school process and represents the final stage of the sub-core category of *Sizing Up*.

4.5 Gaining Collective Consensus

The following is taken from a school principal after attending a professional development session facilitated by a member of the USQ IDEAS Team.

I took as many staff as I could along to the information session that [IDEAS Team member] presented. I was sold on the program; however I was not willing to take it on until I had heard from those that came along with me. They were keen and so I asked them to make the recommendation to the remainder of the staff. They did a great job of outlining it to the rest of the staff-all I had to do in the end was ask for a show of hands. About two thirds of the staff indicated support so we were in.

In the previous extract the principal discusses the process of presenting the IDEAS process to the whole staff. The importance of gaining collective consensus can be seen in the statement: *I was not willing to take it on until I heard from those that came along with me.* The manner in which the principal asked others to present to the whole staff is also useful in the process of gaining collective consensus.

The next excerpt also demonstrates that before a decision could be made, it was important to subject the evidence to a process of collective interrogation and consensus. In this thesis it has been referred to as gaining collective consensus. Some prospective participants (see following quote) ensured that the most ardent critics had a chance to participate in such a process:

I took a team with me to the briefing, deliberately choosing people I thought would be blockers to that session and brought it back to the staff and talked

to them that I thought it would be a really good idea for [school name], and with some resistance they agreed to have a go.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has explained the sub-core category of *Sizing Up*. *Sizing Up* is a decision making process consisting of four categories (phases). The first two phases of interrogating the credibility and determining the potential usually occur simultaneously, after which the professional community engages in two further phases; assessing school readiness followed by gaining collective consensus.

The *Sizing Up* process involves the entire professional community and results in a decision by the professional community to adopt/not adopt IDEAS as a vehicle for school revitalisation. The teachers who are the focus of this study are active participants in this process, as was the principal, whose role in enabling the four phases to unfold was critical.

The importance of each of the phases of the sub-core category of *Sizing Up* became obvious only after the emergence of the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*. As this substantive theory places *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* as the *core concern* of the participants, the importance of each of the phases in the *Sizing Up* process can be seen to relate to the *safety* component of the core category. By interrogating the credibility of the program, the professional community is evaluating the quality of the program and ensuring that there is enough evidence to indicate that the program

can be useful. In essence, it enables a school community to answer the question: “Can this program deliver what is claimed?” Once the credibility has been determined the program’s potential is then determined. This involves the professional community looking at the program’s usefulness in terms of time and context enabling the school staff to answer the following: “Is this program the right one for this school, at this time?” Once credibility and potential have been determined, the professional community asks itself: “Are we ready to implement this program, should it be accepted?” Finally, through the process of gaining collective consensus, the level of support for the prospective program is determined.

All the schools that participated in this study engaged in a process similar to the above. From the perspective of the teacher who was later to accept the role as IDEAS facilitator in his/her school, each of the phases outlined in the sub-core category of *Sizing Up* has direct and recognisable relationship with the core category component of safety. For an IDEAS facilitator to be safe as he/she learns and leads the IDEAS program, the professional community which is to engage in the program must believe that the program is credible (interrogating the credibility), that it has potential (determining the potential), that they are ready to undertake it (assessing school readiness), and that there is sufficient support for the implementation of the program (gaining collective consensus). Only then is the process of *Sizing Up* complete and only then is it safe for the prospective IDEAS facilitator to begin the learning and leading associated with the program, especially the role of the IDEAS facilitator.

In most cases however, at this stage, the prospective IDEAS facilitator has not agreed to accept the IDEAS facilitation role in his/her school. The *Sizing Up* process involves the whole professional community and establishes that the IDEAS program will be used as the mechanism for school revitalisation. The process of *Sizing Up* establishes that it is safe to be associated with the program in that school at that time. The commitment by the participants in this study to accept the position as IDEAS facilitator tends to occur in the next process, represented by the sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit*.

CHAPTER 5-PREPARING TO COMMIT

5.1 Introduction

Preparing to Commit describes an important decision making process which concludes with a prospective IDEAS facilitator making a decision to accept or decline the IDEAS facilitation role; thereby committing or not committing to the role. This process is usually initiated by an approach from the principal and is an acknowledgement by him/her of the participant's existing leadership capacity, as well as the principal's belief in the individual's potential to develop further leadership capacity. As a consequence of the principal's endorsement, the prospective IDEAS facilitators firstly seek to ensure the principals' support and later interrogate the IDEAS program, imagining themselves in the IDEAS facilitation role in their schools. During the interrogation of the process, they are looking for strategies that may assist them as they lead the program, should they later choose to accept the position.

This sub-core category describes the process whereby teachers are identified, usually by principals, as potential leaders. They are asked to accept the leadership role (IDEAS facilitation role) and are encouraged to do so. The principal, in encouraging the individual to accept the IDEAS facilitation role, expresses confidence in their existing ability to lead as well as their potential to further develop leadership capacities. This expression of confidence appears to be critical in the early stages of teacher leadership development as it gives those who are ready (see the sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* detailed in Chapter 6) the confidence to begin

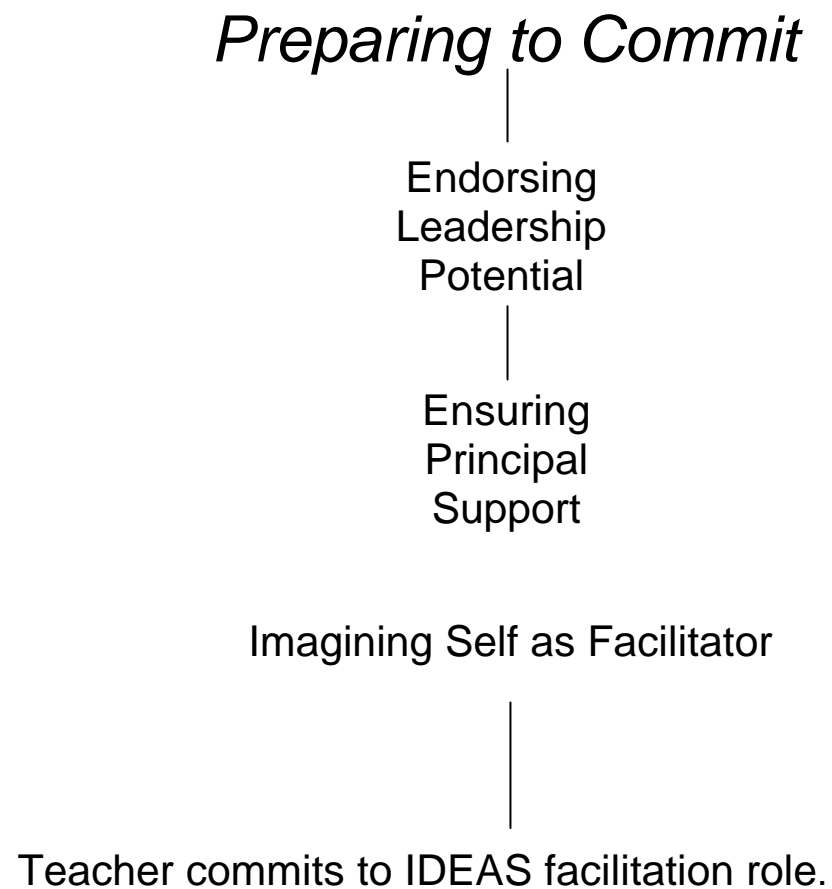
an ongoing process whereby they imagine themselves leading and eventually conceptualise themselves as leaders (see Chapter 8 for further details). As I listened to the IDEAS facilitators I realised the importance that participants placed on the principal's endorsement. Later, as I began to recognise the core concept, I realised that the support of the principal was an important part of enabling teachers to *feel safe*.

The sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit* consists of three distinct, and in most cases, processural phases. The first being endorsing leadership potential, the second being ensuring principal support, and the third imaging oneself as facilitator. In most cases, once the prospective IDEAS facilitator had received the principal's endorsement, he/she began to seek assurance that the principal would stand by them (ensuring principal support) should he/she accept the role. Once assured, the prospective IDEAS facilitators began a process of imagining themselves in the facilitation role. Those who are able to perceive themselves as successful in the role as IDEAS facilitator, and are able to manage the additional task of facilitation, (are provided with the time to do so) are those who make the decision to commit to becoming facilitators; a teacher leadership role. Those who are unable to perceive themselves as successful facilitators or were not interested, or did not have the time, made the decision to step back and not accept the IDEAS facilitation role.

The process is diagrammatically represented in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1: Preparing to Commit

The sub-core category of '*Preparing to Commit*' describes the process whereby prospective IDEAS facilitators make the decision to 'commit' / 'not commit' to the IDEAS facilitation role.



As I was developing this sub-core category, I wrote the following memo:

Memo:

Some principals spoke of teachers who had been asked to be IDEAS facilitators; however the teachers expressed reservation as they could not see themselves in such a role. I hypothesised that there may be many reasons why a teacher may not wish to accept such a role, including a burden of other work or commitments, not interested, or as identified by the participants in this study; they *did not feel ready*. When a teacher is not interested, or too busy, it is easy to understand why he/she may reject the opportunity to lead, however: “What did it mean when a teacher maintained that he/she was not ready?”

While I wondered what was meant by not feeling ready, I did not appreciate the significance of this until later, when I realised that by understanding why some are not ready, it may assist in understanding why others are ready. Thus it was during the emergence of the sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit* that I realised that it was necessary to understand what *Becoming Ready* to lead meant. This is explored in detail in the following chapter.

For those who were ready, the process of *Preparing to Commit* is usually initiated by the principal.

5.2 Endorsing Leadership Potential

In almost all cases, those who accepted the facilitation role were initially identified by the principal. In referring to the identification process, the respondents spoke of *being tapped on the shoulder*, something that later emerged to be a very important step in the process of teacher leadership development. It seemed that being identified by others as a leader (in this case by the principal) rather than self identifying was an important catalyst in the development of the teacher leader.

The principals whom I interviewed told me that they looked for teachers who were respected by other staff, were able to express themselves and had a reasonable rapport with others. In explaining the principal's rationale for his selection, one facilitator stated:

Basically it was a tap on the shoulder from the principal who sat me down and explained that there was a process that she was interested in looking at and interested in taking the school through and she thought that I'd be a suitable staff member to do it. She felt that I had the respect of the staff and she thought that I had good enough communication skills to be able to carry it out.

Another explained:

In the beginning of 2006 we had a new principal at [School name] Senior High School. Around about March he came and said that our school had been invited to be part of an IDEAS project; now he knew very little about it so therefore he invited me and two other staff to go along with him to an information session, which was being held in [Name of State], to find out if our school wanted to be involved. He said he was taking me and the other staff because he thought we had a reasonable rapport with the rest of the staff and maybe could win them over if there was something we wanted to change at our school.

IDEAS is a school revitalisation program that requires facilitators to work with the whole staff, including the principal, thus when identifying a potential

facilitator, the principal has indicated a willingness to work with the individual, as well as expressing confidence in his/her capacity to engage in the leadership/facilitation process. The reference above to *win[ning] them over* is indicative of the prospective facilitator's leadership capacities to which the principals referred.

On analysing these and other interviews, the principals it seemed were looking for teachers who were respected by other staff, good communicators, had rapport and were able to influence others. I realised that such characteristics are normally associated with leadership and it seemed that the identification of potential leadership was essentially recognition of existing leadership. In the words of one principal:

I asked [Name] to consider the role of IDEAS facilitator as she would be great for the job. She is a great teacher and a natural leader but she doesn't yet realise that she is a leader.

I reflected on this comment, and in the tradition of grounded theory I decided to re-interview a number of principals. I was interested in distinguishing leadership potential and existing leadership. I wondered if the category endorsing leadership potential should be re-named endorsing existing leadership. I also wondered about those who displayed leadership characteristics, yet did not know that they were leaders. I later came to realise that this was not an isolated phenomenon. It emerged that many teachers who demonstrated existing leadership capacity were either not aware of that capacity, or were reluctant to be described as leaders. In this early

stages of the process, being described as a leader did not sit comfortably with most of the IDEAS facilitators.

I re-interviewed three principals who confirmed that in endorsing potential leaders each had looked for staff who already had existing leadership characteristics. I wondered if I should rename the category, however I was later to understand that while those who were asked had existing leadership characteristics, the principals were concerned that their leadership qualities would not grow and expand, usually because of their existing role in the school. I then realised that the role of the IDEAS facilitator enabled those who displayed existing leadership qualities the potential to grow these capacities even further. The principals expressed a view that there were few genuine opportunities for leadership growth in many schools, and that the nature of the IDEAS facilitation role was an opportunity for such growth. I was now satisfied that endorsing potential leadership was appropriate, as the role of the IDEAS facilitator created an opportunity for those with leadership potential to develop, grow and realise that potential.

After interviewing many of the participants, it soon became clear that being tapped on the shoulder (being identified and asked to lead) was a very important step in the decision to accept the challenge of leadership. The excerpt below demonstrates that while many teachers were interested in facilitating the IDEAS program, for almost all those interviewed it was important to be asked.

While not all teacher leaders required the encouragement/endorsement of the principal, it appears that for most, knowing that the principal supports you and has

faith in you is a critical component in making the decision to commit. Later, as the core-category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* emerged, it became clear that the endorsement by the principal is a critical part of the search for safety. In the following excerpt, the participant makes it clear that she only became a co-facilitator of the IDEAS program after being approached by the principal.

The original idea of IDEAS was presented to staff at staff meeting and I thought this sounds like something I should have a look at and it sounded very positive. The decision was then made by the school to get involved and they called for an IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT) to be formed. I didn't initially respond to that and I think that was a decision I make because perhaps I already felt like I was doing a lot of other things and that maybe this was something that needed a slightly broader cohort of people to be involved in. I was then asked [by the principal] a couple of months after that to actually come and join the ISMT team on the basis that I had been elsewhere but also been here quite a while and I thought well okay, it's a really good opportunity, I was very interested in the program but hadn't initially responded.

In this next excerpt, the respondent discusses why he was approached and demonstrates the reasons for the principal's decision. Towards the end of this excerpt he makes reference to the challenges associated with the IDEAS facilitation role.

Okay, well I was invited by [Principal's name] to bring IDEAS into the school amongst the staff. [Principal's Name] was aware that I was interested in stretching myself a little bit, and she knew that I was quite unhappy with

the way the school was going at the time, that I was frustrated. I had been acting head of department for 14 months, and in that time I tried to improve our department and I think I did, certainly communication wise. And I really enjoyed that role, and she could tell that. So she knew I was probably one of the people in the school that was more open to change - and she'd been thinking about school renewal for quite a long time. When IDEAS came up, and she got some information on it, she thought I was the only choice to make among the teachers.

So I already had an appetite for change, and I was known around the school as someone who used to try things out. So she was quite delighted when I said yes, although at the time I did say, well it's a difficult thing isn't it?

Presenting to your peers - we've got 65 or 70 people here, and some of them who've been here for a long time. Some of them were quite resistant to change, and very critical.

While I could now understand how and why principals selected potential IDEAS facilitators, I still needed to understand the importance of being tapped on the shoulder. Why were most reluctant to take on this role without the principal actually asking them to do so? The previous excerpt gave me some clue; the teachers to whom I listened, talked of *their colleagues being critical, reluctant to change*, and regarded the prospect of conducting workshops with their peers as daunting.

As I interviewed more participants, many talked of the nature of the staff interactions with each other, especially at whole-school staff meetings. Often staff

meetings were described using words like: tense, aggressive or disrespectful. I realised that the teachers were in many cases fearful of their own peers. In the *Sizing Up* process (previous chapter) they had assured themselves that the IDEAS program was safe to be associated with, now they were again looking for safety, this time through ensuring support from their principal. The prospective IDEAS facilitators needed to know that, in the words of one facilitator, *if the going got tough*, they could rely on their principal's support.

5.3 Ensuring Principal Support

Being tapped on the shoulder seemed to be important for two reasons. First, it provided the teachers with acknowledgement and recognition that they were already leading. Second, it enabled the prospective facilitators and their respective principals to discuss their future working relationships. While the participants in this study were buoyed by the acknowledgment of their leadership capacities and potential, they still felt vulnerable and needed to ensure that the principal would support them if required. The next excerpt is typical of the sentiment of the teachers at this stage.

I was really sold on the program. It was just what this school needed and I was thrilled that [Principal's name] had asked me to be the facilitator; but at the same time I was really scared. I have never done anything like this before and we have some really nasty people on staff here. After talking with [Principal's name] I felt confident enough to give it a go. He assured me that he would not let them take their frustrations out on me. I was still scared but prepared to give it a go. You know I didn't sleep properly for ages. I had to talk myself through the fear.

In retrospect, it wasn't near as bad as I had imagined- I am so pleased that I didn't back out- I was so close at some stages. In the end I didn't end up leaning on [Principal's name] as much as I had anticipated, but I always knew he was there.

Knowing that that the principal's support was there was essential, for without it facilitators felt exposed, vulnerable and alone. The next excerpt is from an IDEAS facilitator who felt that the principal had not given him enough support. This facilitator later stepped aside from the facilitation role:

I felt that I'd been left alone to introduce IDEAS by myself and I hadn't really been supported. [Principal] agreed with that, and said something like, in that staff climate it was important that she took a backseat because she's a very strong principal and she was always looked on as someone who was top-down and said, right we are going to do this - making executive decisions. She was fully aware of that...I felt very lonely and vulnerable, and I feel that I took the brunt [from resistant staff] of the IDEAS issues and the jokes.

The above excerpt demonstrates the importance of principal support. The facilitator here is indicating that he felt alone and vulnerable due to the absence of explicit principal support. As I continued to analyse the data it became clear that participants were apprehensive about working with their colleagues. They did not feel safe in leading workshops with their peers. It appeared as if they had not yet developed the confidence or the experience to lead, and without clear and explicit

support from the principal it was unlikely that most would be prepared to agree to accept the IDEAS facilitation role.

In later interviews I broadened the search through a process of “site spreading” and “theoretical questioning” (Glaser, 1978, p. 179), asking a number of teacher leaders: “How important was it that the principal asked/encouraged you to lead this process?” In all, I asked six of the respondents, with five of those acknowledging that it was important and helped them make the decision to commit. In one case the respondent indicated that she felt confident to lead and did not look for endorsement from others, however one respondent acknowledged that he had not thought about the facilitator’s role until approached by the principal. In explaining this she explained that:

I had never perceived myself as a leader, however when the principal explained the process I could see that it interested me and that it was indeed a leadership role. I had only ever associated leadership with the work of a HOLA (Head of Learning Area) or deputy.

These interviews enabled me to appreciate the important role of the principal in developing teacher leaders. It seemed that many teachers need encouragement, or endorsement, to take on leadership roles and that further to this, some may also need assistance in developing an understanding of the processes and concepts of leadership. For many of the IDEAS facilitators, it seemed that endorsement enabled them to begin a process of imagining themselves in the role and in doing so, many began a process of evaluating their own readiness to lead.

5.4 Imagining Oneself as Facilitator

Once the principal had tapped the prospective IDEAS facilitator on the shoulder, and the prospective facilitator was comfortable that the principal would support him/her, each began a process of imagining themselves in the role of facilitating the IDEAS program in his/her school.

The acknowledgement and support of the principal was critical, as it seemed that most of the prospective facilitators needed this endorsement before they could imagine themselves in the role of facilitator. After the teacher's potential leadership capacity had been endorsed and the prospective facilitator had satisfied him/herself that the principal support was assured, the teachers engaged in a process of imagining themselves in the role of the facilitator. In doing so they began searching for strategies or protocols that they could use, if they were to finally make the decision to accept the IDEAS facilitation role.

By now, the core category was beginning to emerge, especially the need for safety. I therefore wondered if there are elements/features of the IDEAS program that could help the prospective facilitators feel safer. This prompted me to not only once again analyse the data looking for any such evidence, but to also use the process of "site spreading" and "theoretical questioning" (Glaser, 1978, p. 179), this time specifically focusing on whether any of the elements/features of the IDEAS program assisted the teachers in deciding to take on the role as facilitator.

There were repeated references to *Professional Conversations* as the prospective facilitators could see that these protocols had the potential to enhance the

quality of communication and teacher professionalism, thereby making it easier for the facilitators to work with colleagues and feel safer in doing so. This excerpt is typical of the comments made.

Firstly I think, at the time the professional conversations resonated pretty well because in [Name of state] we were going through a lot of upheaval in terms of outcomes based education and I'd been to a number of meetings from teachers all over the state. So there were teachers who didn't know each other put into a room to complete PD on the new courses of study of the school. Those meetings were particularly antagonistic, particularly towards the facilitators of the presentation who were basically doing their job, whether that was or what their motivations were.

But even so, the tone between people was not good in terms of the way they were conversing and I think it needed to be more professional. So it resonated with me on how we should actually conduct ourselves in conversations at that time. That's particularly important.

The previous excerpt demonstrates that the prospective IDEAS facilitators were aware that facilitating whole school discussions was a difficult task. It emerged that teachers at this stage were imagining themselves in the facilitation role. During these imaginings they specifically looked at strategies imbedded in the IDEAS program. It later became clear that they were searching for strategies to lead; strategies that they could use to help them feel safe, should they make the decision to accept the role as IDEAS facilitator. There is a clear relationship between the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* and the use

of the protocols included in the strategies of Professional Conversations (See Appendix F).

Appendix F has been developed from the work of Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith (1994) and demonstrates the differences between different types of conversation, ranging from *raw debate* at one end of the continuum to *dialogue* at the other. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) maintain that the preferred form of dialogue is Professional Conversation. Professional conversations, according to Mitchell and Sackney (2000) enable deep engagement with others' thoughts and feelings. Isaacs (1999) explains that professional conversations require participants to listen, respect and suspend judgement of others and that what results is an environment of trust and respect.

What is particularly important in this context is that the prospective IDEAS facilitators recognised the manner in which the strategy of professional conversations (included in the IDEAS program) contributed towards *trust and respect* and the use of such a strategy had the potential to make the daunting process of working with their colleagues safer to some degree.

Thus the act of imaging oneself as a leader proved to be a catalyst for a very different type of interrogation of the process. In the previous *Sizing Up* stage the interrogation focused on determining whether or not the IDEAS program was appropriate for the school and whether or not the school was ready. Thus the interrogation in the *Sizing Up* stage was a social process involving many participants. The resultant decision was an organisational commitment to participate/not

participate in the program. In contrast to the social and organisational nature of *Sizing Up*, the process of *Preparing to Commit* is, from the personal viewpoint of the prospective facilitators, a decision with much higher stakes, as it concerns individuals engaging in processes of decision making, and ultimately deciding to commit, or not commit, to the IDEAS facilitation role.

The interrogation that occurred in this phase has a different focus. Here it seems to be focused on developing an understanding of the process in relation to the consideration of self in the role of IDEAS facilitator, thus potential facilitators looked at the process and searched for tools or strategies that may be of use, particularly *strategies that would enable them to feel safe* if the decision was made to accept the facilitation role. What is important here is that for most of the participants interviewed, this type of interrogation would not have occurred until such time as the teacher leader began to imagine him/herself in the role of facilitator. For most of the participants in this study, the process of imagining themselves in the IDEAS facilitation role, and realising the leadership nature of the role, was the first time they had actually perceived of themselves in leadership terms.

5.5 Summary

The sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit* is a psychosocial process involving the principal and the prospective IDEAS facilitator(s). It is through the usually sequential phases of the principal endorsing leadership potential, the prospective facilitator ensuring principal support and the later phase whereby the

prospective facilitator imagines him/herself as a leader that the prospective IDEAS facilitator is able to commit/not commit to the facilitation role.

In developing an understanding of this sub-core category it also became clear that many prospective facilitators are daunted by the prospect of working with their colleagues, and while many may be ready to accept the challenges of leadership associated with the role, most needed some encouragement before they were able to imagine themselves in this type of leadership role. Furthermore, before committing to the IDEAS facilitation role (an explicit leadership role) they sought safety by ensuring explicit principal support and the use of strategies embedded in the IDEAS program.

Those who committed to the IDEAS facilitation role went on to the *Experiencing Learning and Leading* phase (described in detail in Chapter 7), however there were many who were tapped on the shoulder by the principal and responded by explaining that they were not ready for a leadership role. The next chapter explores the process of *Becoming Ready* and for those who accepted the role of IDEAS facilitator it gives an insight into their experiences prior to committing to be an IDEAS facilitator.

CHAPTER 6-BECOMING READY

6.1 Introduction

Becoming Ready describes the process whereby teachers become ready to develop as teacher leaders. The process appears to take place over an extended period of time and while it happens independently of IDEAS or any other initiative, it is an essential part of the teacher's biography. While I had been aware that teachers, like most workers have a desire to continually develop, what emerged in this research, through a process of retrospective biographical interviews (see Keltchermans, 1994) was the importance of understanding the participant's preceding growth and development in relation to future growth and development.

As I interviewed teacher after teacher, I began to realise the importance of what is happening in the life of the teacher affects the life of the school. While this was no surprise and numerous researchers (Huberman, 1993; Vandenberghe & Huberman, 1999) have elaborated on this in great detail, it was not until I reflected on the interviews that I realised that the teachers with whom I was working were a unique group. The process that I describe in this study is not something that can or will happen to many teachers. I realised that only those teachers who were *ready* at the time when IDEAS came to their school could experience the process described in this thesis. The process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* described in this thesis can only happen if and when teachers are ready, and if and when an opportunity to experience leadership (such as being an IDEAS facilitator) intersects with the life of the teacher, in his/her school.

Thus, while I was eager to understand the experiences of the teachers with whom I worked, I realised that in order to understand their experiences it was necessary to understand the process through which each came to be ready.

The participants in this study were all *experienced* teachers who were prepared to accept the challenge of facilitating the IDEAS program in their respective schools. They had been prepared to accept the facilitation role (as described in the sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit*) when the IDEAS program came to their school. However, I soon realised that while they may have been ready at the time that IDEAS came to their school, the process of *Becoming Ready* had been occurring for many years prior to the arrival of the IDEAS program. Several acknowledged that they would not have been prepared to commit as facilitators had a similar opportunity arisen a few years earlier.

It emerged that the IDEAS program enabled the teachers to develop, however I realised that readiness is not a static state and that for the teachers in this study there were times when they were ready and times when they were not. I was interested in understanding the process of teacher leadership development, the starting point of which is *Becoming Ready* to lead.

The process of *Becoming Ready* is therefore independent of the psychosocial process that is described in this study, however in order to understand the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* for those who are ready, it is critical to understand the *antecedent* process of *Becoming Ready*. In this study it emerged that participants

were *Becoming Ready* to experience growth and development; in this case leadership growth and development.

The nature of those with whom I was working needs to be acknowledged, as the participants in this study were experienced teachers who perceived themselves to be competent teachers. Furthermore, they were also regarded by their peers, principal and others as such. The participant with the least experience had taught for a period of seven years, while the other participants in this study had, on average, 15-30 years of experience.

The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* describes the process whereby an experienced teacher becomes ready to grow and develop as a teacher leader and is based on the experiences of those who participated in this study. As the developed theory is substantive it should not be generalised beyond the context of this study and it should not be assumed that all teachers necessarily progress through the same process, or that all teachers will, at some stage in their career, become ready to grow and develop as teacher leaders. Indeed many teachers may never become ready to accept a leadership role, when and if it is offered or arises.

Becoming Ready incorporates a period of uncertainty. The participants in this study made reference to a time of *confusion and anxiety*. The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* has two main categories; *becoming aware* and *searching*, each having further sub-categories and properties. What is also interesting about the process of *Becoming Ready* is that the participants consistently commented that they

were not aware of much of what they had been experiencing until after they had emerged. One said:

After I had been involved in IDEAS for a while, I realised what I had been missing all these years. For the first time in years, I was enjoying work again.

What emerged was that the process of *Becoming Ready* is a stage whereby one is not necessarily cognisant of what one is experiencing at the time, only to become aware of where one was, after one emerges. It could be described as a process whereby one doesn't know what one was missing until after it arrives.

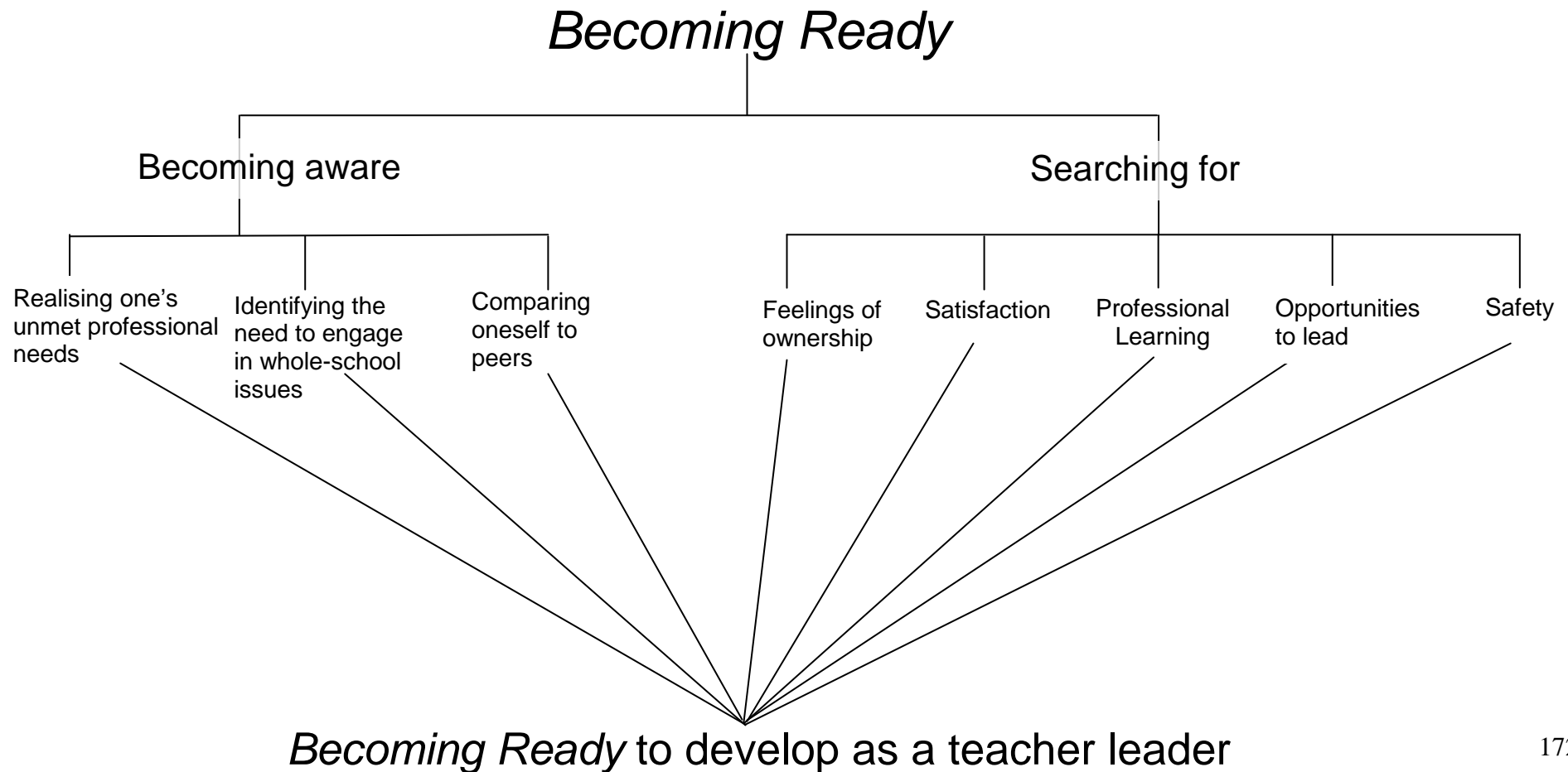
As I listened to the participants speak of their experiences I wrote the following memo:

MEMO:
I wondered if for some teachers, that which is missing may never arrive and because they never realised it was missing their experiences of confusion and anxiety may become normalised.

The participants in this study consistently referred to having been *lucky* that IDEAS came along, explaining, that their experiences had, in the words of one respondent, *reinvigorated/re-enthused* them. I wondered how many teachers remained in a state of confusion and anxiety, not aware of what they were experiencing. For the teachers in this study, the opportunity to participate in the IDEAS program, for the most part was serendipitous; their experience happened by chance, not design. Had this experience not presented itself, I wonder how many would still be languishing in what one respondent described as a *state of malaise*.

FIGURE 6.1: Becoming Ready

The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* is the more passive phase that precedes more active phases in the substantive grounded theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*. It describes the process whereby teachers become aware of their own professional needs, of whole school issues and their future. They begin searching for opportunities to learn, lead, be safe, experience satisfaction and feel ownership. Together these categories, sub-categories and properties encompass the process that describes the manner in which teachers *become ready* to develop as teacher leaders.



6.2 Becoming Aware

In the process of becoming aware, teachers begin to engage in three simultaneous processes of *realising their own unmet professional needs, identifying whole-school issues, and comparing themselves to their peers*. As they engaged in these processes they were also simultaneously *searching*, for what as one interviewee put it; “*something that was not there*”. The three sub-categories (sub-processes) of the category (process) of becoming aware are now explored.

6.2.1 Realising One’s Unmet Professional Needs

The experienced teachers in this study began to realise that their professional growth had stagnated. In the excerpt below the respondent acknowledges her lack of professional growth, recognising that she was in a *rut* as well as expressing a desire to:

[get] back in touch and reinvent how I deliver my program to the kids.

I think it is a little bit too easy that when you are teaching the same subject, at the same year level, time after time and you sort of become into that rut...so I needed something that would enable me to start getting back in touch and reinventing how I deliver my program to the kids.

The following excerpts from interviews reveal that the various respondents are becoming aware of their own *un-met professional development needs*. In this interview the respondent reflects on the past, acknowledging her previous lack of desire to seek professional development. This interview reveals two important issues;

that the professional development needs of the respondent have changed with time, and the respondent's interests have broadened beyond a *classroom only* focus.

I think I stagnated for a long time and wasn't overly interested in doing anything else except for going into my classroom and teaching. I didn't go out to find out things that were going on or anything beyond the classroom. So professional learning I think I do a lot more of now and encourage the staff to do a lot more professional learning

As I interviewed the participants, I asked them to reflect back on the type of professional learning that they had undertaken in the past. What emerged was interesting, in that they talked about the value of professional learning that related to the classroom. Particularly in the early stages of their careers, it appeared that the only learning that mattered, in terms of professional development, was that which could be used back in the classroom. As I delved deeper into the nature of the professional learning of the respondents, it soon became clear that regardless of stage of career, teachers regard learning that relates to the processes of teaching and learning as highly valuable. For the experienced teachers who were the participants in this study, while their desire to enhance classroom expertise did not appear to wane, there was a desire to learn beyond that which applied directly to the processes of teaching and learning. One respondent stated that:

As I have become more experienced as a teacher, I don't need to know as much about the 'how to teach' stuff. If you had asked me what I did need, I would have trouble telling you. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed the IDEAS stuff.

The above comment is typical of what the respondents told me. They realised that they desired professional learning and that while learning that was related to the process of teaching and learning remained valuable, as they became more experienced their professional learning needs expanded, but to what, they were not sure. As I listened to these competent experienced teachers identifying their needs to learn, I realised that they could not articulate what it was that they wanted to learn, and yet they were certain that it was not available.

6.2.2 Identifying the Need to Engage in Whole School Issues

Realising one's unmet professional needs was not happening in isolation, for simultaneously the participants in this study were identifying their need to engage in issues beyond their own classroom. The respondent below reveals that he was interested in *stretching* himself, expressing a desire to be involved in activities beyond the classroom.

[Principal's name] was aware that I was interested in stretching myself a little bit, and she knew that I was quite unhappy with the way the school was going at the time, that I was frustrated. I already had an appetite for change, and I was known around the school as someone who used to try things out.

The following two excerpts (two different respondents) demonstrate that many of the experienced teachers in this study appear to have a desire to participate in activities beyond the classroom.

I'd become very much conscious of the fact that I needed to do something more and that classroom teaching really wasn't enough.

As much as I enjoyed classroom teaching, I really wanted to be able to do something more so getting more immersed in the literature and reading through some of the materials [IDEAS materials], it started to coincide with my own interests to some extent.

I went back to the transcripts, especially those from principals who talked about the reasons why they encouraged particular teachers to step forward as facilitators. During my initial analysis, I was focused on understanding the manner in which the various principals had identified the leadership potential of the various facilitators. In doing so I failed to recognise that principals were only prepared to encourage teachers to accept the facilitation role if they were perceived by him/her to be highly competent teachers. I now realised that before one is encouraged to lead, one must be regarded in the professional community as a competent classroom practitioner. The participants in this study were experienced and competent teachers who were becoming increasingly aware, not only of their own emerging professional development needs, however were also beginning to broaden their interests and willingness to be involved with issues beyond their own classroom. I wondered if this process only began after teachers felt confident that they had mastered the challenges of the classroom and now were looking for further challenges.

As they began to identify the need to engage in beyond classroom issues, the respondents simultaneously engaged in a process whereby they appeared to become more conscious of other teachers, often engaging in a process of reflective comparison of themselves to others. The sub-category of *comparing one's self to peers* explores this in further detail.

6.2.3 Comparing One's Self to Peers

One of the sub-categories of *Becoming Aware* includes *comparing one's self to peers*. This is where the participants in this study engaged in a comparative self-reflective process, whereby they looked at their colleagues and reflected back on themselves. Initially I hypothesised that they did so in order to envisage what they might become (a glimpse into their future), however as I analysed more transcripts it became clear that the respondents were not identifying role models of what they might become, however were actually identifying what they *did not want to become*.

The teachers whom I interviewed did not want to become *stagnant, insular, bitter, or disengaged*, and saw the opportunity to facilitate the IDEAS program as a way of avoiding such a future. The interviews also reveal that the participants in this study were very aware of the damaging effects that such teachers have on the whole school.

In the later part of the excerpt that follows, the respondent expresses concern about the damage that *jaded* teachers can do, especially to students. His clear desire to avoid becoming a teacher of this type is evident. In the earlier section of the interview, he expresses concern that some teachers are subject focused, indicating concern about the fact that some teachers see the subject as more important than the student. He stated:

It's just that a lot of teachers can't see past their own subject - especially if they're the old mass subjects: English, Maths, Social Studies and Science. They [students] should have considerate, older, experienced teachers that aren't jaded. I'm not jaded - and when I am, I know I'll just have to go. Even if I have to clean toilets somewhere, I'll just have to get out because you end

up doing damage. You end up damaging your colleagues; you end up damaging the mood in the school; and you end up mainly damaging students.

Yet another comment below demonstrates concern about becoming *bitter and twisted*.

Well the type of person I am, I guess I am reflective and I don't accept sitting back and just stagnating, I've seen a number of teachers who have been brilliant teachers and I'll call it, whatever you may call it, have been crushed by the system or whatever and it turned out very bitter and twisted. I always resolved never to become like that in terms of, like get out of the system, or change, adapt, learn new things, that sort of thing.

Another expressed concern that some of her colleagues: *had not been enthusiastic about anything for a long time...and that [they] don't do anything outside the classroom.*

A lot of the times I have thought, you just don't get this [IDEAS] and I just think that's disappointing and there area a lot of people around here if they just took the time to listen to what it is was all about, could perhaps become enthusiastic about something that, you know, and maybe they hadn't been enthusiastic about anything for a long time. There's a lot of people who just teach their classes and don't do anything else outside the classroom.

Yet another refers to *dreading* what can happen to some teachers towards the end of their careers:

I'm not that far off from retirement and I suppose I dreaded what you see around sometimes and hear that towards the end of people's careers they kind of are there physically but not there mentally.

I was struck by the number of respondents who were concerned about becoming *bitter and twisted* or the like. Yet another referred to older teachers as *deadwood*. The earlier reference to the *system crushing them* was telling and typical of other comments where teachers lamented about the *lack of opportunity for career progression* and its impact on teachers. One respondent said:

I am a really good teacher, and I still love it, but it just doesn't give me the same satisfaction that it once did. I would have liked to become a HOD or even a principal, but I am not prepared to cart my family all around the state as that would be selfish, so I am just a teacher- still fairly happy, but I think I need more of a challenge now, actually I am not sure what I need.

The participants in this study engaged in a process of *comparative self-reflection*, in which they compared themselves to others. In doing so, they were beginning to think about their future and reflect on what they could become. The reflection however enabled them to identify what they did not wish to become, rather than conceptualise what they desired to become. In this process, it appears that the participants were beginning to think about their career future and were able to articulate what was undesirable, unfortunately however, they could not articulate what was desirable.

The process of becoming aware is composed of the three sub-processes of realising one's unmet professional needs, identifying the need to engage in whole

school issues, and comparing oneself to peers. Becoming aware, however, was only part of what was happening in the lives of these teachers, for at the same time, as they were becoming aware they were also searching.

6.3 Searching For

This category details the process/category of *searching for*. As I deepened my understanding of searching for, I also came to realise that, in the searching process, the participants seemed, for the most part, not to be aware of what it is that they are searching for. It appears that as they are becoming aware, they also begin the process of searching and that the two processes were inter-related, however the individual was not necessarily cognisant of either at the time. The participants seemed to be aware that they needed something and while they were not sure what it was, they were sure that it was not there.

As I interviewed teacher after teacher, I realised that the respondents were only able to articulate what they were searching for after they had found it. I came to this realisation after one respondent commented that *I have spent my whole career searching for something that was not there*. When I asked her to elaborate on that comment, she explained that her experience as an IDEAS facilitator enabled her to *understand what I have been missing all these years*.

I went back to the transcripts and found a comment from one teacher who explained:

I am just a teacher - still fairly happy, but I think I need more of a challenge now; actually I am not sure what I need.

His comment, particularly when he stated: *actually I am not sure what I need*, resonated with the comment from the other respondent when she stated: *[I now] understand what I have been missing all these years*. I looked at the other transcripts again and realised that the respondents could only now talk about what they had been searching for. It was only after they had experienced it that they could now describe what they had needed, yet they did not know at the time. Furthermore, although they were searching, they were not aware that they were searching at all. It was only later that they realised that they had been searching. Searching for occurred at the same time as they were becoming aware. Both processes happening in a state that one participant described as one of *confusion and anxiety*. As teacher after teacher reflected, they confirmed what I had suspected; that in the process of *Becoming Ready* they had engaged in the sub-process of becoming aware and searching for, all the time unaware that they were either becoming aware or searching for.

Thus the category searching for is not an active search for something that you have identified as a need, it is an extended period where one realises that something is missing from one's professional life, however cannot articulate what it is, and is not sure where to look, or if it even exists. I reflected on the words of Joni Mitchell's song; *Big Yellow Taxi* (1970) which stated: *you don't know what you've got till it's gone*, and realised that the process of searching was the opposite, for it appeared that teachers felt that *you don't know what you're missing until you've found it*.

For some, this period of confusion and anxiety caused them to question their career choice, as typified by one respondent who explained:

I did, I think it's about six years ago now, I strongly questioned whether I was going to stay in teaching. I completed a psychometric testing process and

over \$1000 of my own money for a two day course, which was excellent, in terms of being able to work out where I wanted to go with my career and I guess I kept that in mind.

I wondered what the respondents were searching for. Was it the same for all respondents? Eventually it emerged that the category of searching is composed of several sub-categories, including: *professional learning, leadership opportunities, satisfaction, safety and feeling ownership*, each of which is now explored.

6.3.1 Professional Learning

For the teachers whom I interviewed, it soon became clear that many were searching for opportunities to learn, to engage in discussions about school issues with their colleagues, or even think about professional issues at a higher level. The learning they were searching for could be formal or informal. Several of those interviewed were already undertaking some form of formal learning (such as undertaking post graduate studies). Others were not interested in formal study, however expressed a desire to know more about a range of issues, to discuss these issues with their colleagues and engage in more challenging analysis of educational issues.

Here one teacher identifies a lack of opportunity for teachers to learn from one another:

I think teachers don't get to discuss broader issues in education or whole school issues in education enough, and they don't do it professionally either.

He went on to refer to the nature of the conversations and gave an indication of why they do not help meet the teachers' needs, stating that:

A lot of discussions in schools are negative, whingeing about everything.

In discussing her experiences at the various IDEAS cluster meetings, one participant explained:

Well I found them really rewarding. It was probably a bit selfish in a way because I got to go to them with the group of people, this particular group of people and sometimes I found it difficult to come back to the school and tell people why it was so exciting for me to be able to go to that.

But IDEAS has certainly allowed us to have those conversations about what we do. The majority of us love teaching and love to talk about it. We've just had great conversations over the last two years about it.

The comments in the above excerpt are telling, in that the respondent talks of finding the professional learning *really rewarding*, while at the same time feeling selfish. The comment about feeling selfish is a comment that she later revealed made reference to her view that most teachers had not had opportunities to experience professional learning that was exciting, so would probably not relate to her experience. Her comments reinforced the view expressed by the other participants in this study. The participants in this study believed that they had few opportunities for meaningful professional learning; yet they readily expressed a strong desire to learn. The comments below typify their views:

One stated:

I just love learning, and I think that's the most important thing.

While another commented:

I think that's another thing that we should do more. We should have more PD days, more teacher contact with our colleagues to look at teaching and learning and how we can just improve their school.

The participants were not only becoming aware of their own need to learn, but were also actively searching for opportunities to learn, yet always aware of the dearth of such meaningful opportunities. The nature of the professional learning which the teachers reported was most useful is explored in detail in the sub-core process of *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, detailed in the following chapter.

While their experiences as IDEAS facilitators had provided them with meaningful professional learning, their search was not only confined to professional learning alone, for they also wanted to experience leadership.

6.3.2 Opportunities to Lead

In the process of *Becoming Ready*, the participants in this study were also looking for *opportunities to lead*, yet most acknowledged that they would not have articulated it in those terms at the time. As they reflected on their IDEAS experiences, they began to identify the manner in which the experience had impacted upon their aspirations, confidence and perceptions of leadership.

In the interview excerpt below, the respondent refers to himself as a leader:

I think through the IDEAS program and certainly within the ISMT, the staff

utilise me as I guess a reference point for what we're doing in the school as well, as a school leader in a way.

This respondent went on to acknowledge that it was through others perceiving him as a leader that he began to conceptualise himself as one, and while he accepted the facilitation role he did not do so with a view to leading, rather he did express an interest in learning about and working on whole school issues with his colleagues. Thus while the IDEAS facilitation role is a leadership role, this respondent, like most who accepted the role, did not view it such at the time.

I found that teachers were reluctant to identify themselves as leaders. It appears that the opportunity of being an IDEAS facilitator enabled them to conceptualise their actions as leadership actions, often for the first time. Many stated that they had never perceived themselves as leaders, or even aspired to formal leadership positions. The quotes which follow demonstrate how the respondents in this study most often described what is termed *teacher leadership*. In their words, they described their actions as:

just seeing a job that needs doing and getting on with it; being professional; or, just being part of a team.

When I asked the principals to describe why they had encouraged these particular teachers to take on the role of IDEAS facilitator, the response always made reference to their existing leadership. It appeared that while their respective principals and peers described them as *leaders*, the actual teachers in question perceived themselves as teachers, in the words of one respondent: *just doing what teachers should do.*

After an interview with one principal, I wrote the following memo:

Memo:

Could it be that developing teacher leaders act as teacher leaders and look for opportunities to lead, however still perceive themselves as professional or just doing what a teacher should do? It seems that all too often, others perceive a teacher as a leader before the individual teacher does so. I also wondered if the leadership experience encapsulated in the IDEAS facilitation role, enabled teachers to reconceptualise themselves as leaders.

In reflecting back on their experiences, many of the respondents commented that their perceptions of leadership had changed and that while they now were able to view themselves in leadership terms, in the past they had not done so.

For some, this re-conceptualisation of themselves as leaders enabled them to pursue career paths previously unimagined:

I think it's challenged me to aspire to being in a promotional position in the school and certainly given me some skills, or I feel very confident in my role next year as a head of department of science and dealing with staff and the importance of communicating with staff and developing relationships with staff.

For others, the realisation that leadership is not confined to positional authority enabled them to reconceptualise their role in the school:

Through IDEAS I could see that it was possible to have that kind of role and be a leader and to be quite empowering, and yet not to have that position of authority, like a head of department or a senior manager or all those sorts of things. You could still build a role for yourself where you were very involved in decision-making and a part of things outside of your classroom without actually having to have a job title.

In relation to the process of searching for opportunities to lead, it was again interesting to observe the IDEAS facilitators' apparent lack of awareness of their own leadership. In accepting the role of IDEAS facilitator most did not recognise that they were taking on a leadership role. In the early stages of IDEAS facilitation experience, almost all were reluctant to identify themselves as leaders, however after a period of time, most became comfortable accepting the leadership dimension of their role. What is particularly important in the category of searching for is, once again, the respondents could only articulate their conscious or unconscious desire to lead after they had experienced it. Before the opportunity to lead arose, most had not consciously searched for leadership experience.

6.3.3 Searching for Safety

As the teachers in this study became ready they were seeking consciously and unconsciously to learn, to lead, to become engaged in whole school issues, including decision making processes in the school.

In this excerpt the respondent reflects on the difficulties she encountered in her role as the IDEAS facilitator. Comments of this nature were prevalent in all the interviews. So too was reference to some of the IDEAS *concepts and strategies*. In the next excerpt reference is made to the manner in which the *no blame* (explained earlier in Chapter 2) approach helped set the scene.

We've had an incredibly hard time with the staff and the blockers with regard to this process and it still continues to this day. The IDEAS processes however are able to let us deal with that. The 'no blame' approach has been

really useful here as it helps set the tone for the workshops. It is still hard though and some of the comments that people make can hurt.

The respondents often made reference to the nature of the school staff meetings. The excerpt which follows was taken from an IDEAS facilitator, who talked about being a little nervous when he accepted the position as an IDEAS facilitator. He went on to explain that before he accepted the position that he sought assurance from the principal that he would be *supported* at all times.

Before IDEAS our school staff meetings were horrendous. It was an all out brawl basically where people would scream over everyone else and nothing was ever achieved.

In discussing her role as the IDEAS facilitator, one respondent explained of her disillusionment and disappointment at a comment from one of her colleagues. Comments such as the one in the next excerpt were all too common and enabled me to understand the *courage* associated with facilitating IDEAS in some schools. It was therefore no surprise when the participants made reference to; ensuring principal support, making sure that the IDEAS program could stand up under scrutiny, and making use of strategies such as no blame and professional conversations.

Staff that have been incredibly cynical, have made personal attacks like 'you're just doing this for your CV'.

The participants, in many cases, had made a courageous decision in accepting the role and it was obvious that they needed some protection or safety as they went about their role. The process of searching for safety is part of the process of *Becoming Ready* and later emerged as a component of the core category for this

whole study. I postulated that those who are ready may, without some mechanism to ensure safety, avoid possible leadership opportunities. I wondered if many teachers become ready to lead, however do not continue on to become leaders because they do not feel safe to do so.

For the participants, the importance of safety was paramount at all times, even before commencement of the facilitation role. One participant reflected:

Taking on this IDEAS facilitation role was very challenging for me. I got to the stage where I would have done anything for a change but while I needed a change I said to [principal's name] that I was not prepared to be 'hung out to dry'. We have got a group of teachers at our school who crucify anything new and anyone associated with it. I have watched them do it for years and this school has suffered, but I am sensing a change. A few of them have left now and the new principal seems to have a couple on side. This is the best chance we have had in years to make some changes here. I would never have taken on this role in the past.

The excerpt above is typical of what others said. These experienced teachers wanted to learn and lead and while they were ready to take on the role, they only did so when they felt that it was *safe* to do so.

6.3.4 Feelings of Ownership

The participants in this study wanted to have some *input* into school decision making processes. The extracts below are taken from a range of respondents and demonstrate their strong desire for some feelings of ownership. The respondents

made it clear that teachers are reluctant to accept imposed projects. They prefer to participate in the decision making process and do not support top down approaches. There was a strong desire for ownership of the process. There was very strong support for the IDEAS program as a mechanism for revitalisation, as it was voluntary and enabled the active participation of the whole professional community. I soon realised that school communities which participated in this study were fed up with externally imposed programs and that there was a strong desire for the professional community to feel some degree of ownership over the destiny of the school. The respondents in this study strongly reinforced this view as demonstrated in the comments below.

Here one respondent refers to the manner in which many externally imposed projects affect teacher participation and subsequent commitment:

That's what's so important about IDEAS because it's not imposed from admin. It's not like many of the other things that we've had come through where something is faxed or emailed from District Office and then [the Principal] has to put it out to us and it's got to be enacted and that's just how it is. Of course, teachers don't have to – they can pay lip service to it but when they shut the door they can do whatever they like, and do. Whereas the IDEAS processes really get them involved from the beginning in identifying what it is they want to change and how they can go about changing it. There's much more commitment and motivation to actually make those changes. I think that was important.

Here another respondent discusses the importance of teacher participation and also comments that all too often many decisions are made without any input from the teachers.

In fact, there's only [Name] the principal, obviously on the team and [Name], the deputy, joined this year, and [Name], whom you know, is the head of the arts. But the others are all classroom teachers and they're not usually represented in any decision-making groups, so it's quite a different group of people.

I really think that it was 'teachers are the key' in this program because so many times it comes from top level down, changes in policies and procedures without any input from the teachers who are actually in the classroom.

In the conversational excerpt below, the respondent comments on the importance of ownership.

Respondent: I think the one thing that struck me with it was that it was staff driven. It wasn't something is being foisted on us by the government or admin – it was a staff driven body and I remember our very first meeting of the people who put up interest to be on the team and the room was crowded. It was staff from all walks, like the young, the old. It wasn't just the senior members of the staff who said oh yeah, let's do something with this.

Researcher: Is that important?

Respondent: I think so. I think ownership of something. Like we are very big on giving the kids ownership of school rules and decision making within the school, so we encourage the student leadership et cetera. Well I think it

should be the same for staff too. Let's encourage, okay not dismiss someone, because they are only a first year teacher, what would they know. Well dig a little deep and yeah they do know. Especially if they haven't come straight to teaching, if they have had life experience, well let's find out what part of their life experience we can tap into... this is really ours; it belongs to us and we have all produced it. It's not something that has been handed down to us, and that's the important thing. It's that ownership that you really want to develop, and IDEAS has helped us do that.

The respondent above expressed her pleasant surprise when she stated that when the school asked for expressions of interest: *the room was crowded.*

Once again, I realised that the IDEAS program had, for many teachers, been an opportunity to be involved in decision making, to feel some sense of ownership of the decisions that affected their futures and determined the destiny of the school. This was something that had not been common in these schools and it emerged that it was part of what they were searching for.

6.3.5 Satisfaction

Earlier in this chapter in the discussion of becoming aware I discussed the participants' unmet professional learning needs. In this discussion it became clear that the professional learning needs of experienced teachers differed from those of beginning teachers. While the experienced teachers were becoming aware of their emerging learning needs, they also lamented over *waning* satisfaction with their classroom teaching. While they were becoming aware of issues beyond the classroom and were searching for opportunities to have more input into decision

making processes, their desire to continue to experience satisfaction from their classroom teaching was still strong. It appeared that the professional learning needs of beginning teachers needed to focus on classroom practice (issues of a pedagogical nature), while the professional learning needs of the experienced participants in this study needed to include a broader range of learning opportunities, as well as including those of a pedagogical nature. Their desire to experience satisfaction from their classroom work is demonstrated in the following excerpt.

I was at the stage of not feeling stale but just needed a bit of a boost in a class room teaching side of things. I knew that my out of class activities were being taken care of with the roles that I was playing within the school but in the class room I felt that I was stagnating.

Yet another (see excerpt below) refers to her own teaching and uses language such as: *missing something; feeling burned; needing energy; and, needing a boost.* These themes were also common in the other transcripts. These teachers, who were all competent, highly respected, experienced teachers, were referring to a time when, in the words of one respondent: *I became numb to the excitement of teaching.*

Another commented:

Yeah it is contagious I think. If it's something that you're looking for in your teaching at the time then it can be extremely contagious and it was becoming clear as I was listening to younger staff that that was what I was missing. That little bits and pieces of theirs. If I could take something from each of them and put it into my own teaching.....I don't think knowledge, I think it was just the energy at that stage. I think I was feeling burned. It sounds clichéd, I just needed something to boost me back into it.

The teachers in this study recognised that they had, at some point in the process of *Becoming Ready*, become aware of their need to reinvigorate their classroom practice. They wanted to once again experience satisfaction from their teaching. It was not so much that their skills had deteriorated, for there was clear acknowledgement from the teachers themselves, their peers and their principals that the teachers whom I interviewed were successful and well regarded teachers. What emerged here was a situation where, maybe due to heightened expectation of self, sensory fatigue or some other factor(s), *what once had satisfied, no longer did so*. They referred to the early stages of their careers when what was once a highly satisfying experience, had become in the words of one respondent: *normalised*.

Another commented:

Early in my teaching career if a kid told me that they enjoyed the lesson, I got so excited - it would keep me going for weeks, but today I know more kids enjoy my lessons, but I don't think that's a big deal because that is what is meant to happen.

Maybe they were victims of their own heightened expectations, or maybe they needed to engage in new challenges. Whatever the case, the respondents had realised that their satisfaction had waned. What emerged was a real paradox; for it seemed that as teachers became more experienced, and arguably more effective, they talked of feeling less satisfied.

6.4 Summary

When I commenced researching the participants in this study, I did not expect that I would be exploring their professional lives prior to the commencement of

IDEAS. However, as the primary data gathering method was through the use of “retrospective biographical interviews” (Kelchtermans, 1994, p. 100) and, that it was my desire to develop an understanding from their perspectives, I soon realised that their experiences prior to IDEAS were important. I naively believed that what I was researching began when the participants first became involved in the IDEAS program. However for the participants, their experiences in the IDEAS program were just part of their ongoing professional experience. What I had assumed was the start of the journey, was for the participants just another point in their ongoing journey for which there were as many individual starting points as there were participants.

When I first began interviewing the participants, I wondered why almost without exception, they continued to make reference to their professional lives before IDEAS, when to me, at that time, the questions that I asked did not require this information. Fortunately I came to understand that what precedes one’s biography shapes what happens now and in the future, and possibly more importantly, the respondents were going to tell me about their past, even though I hadn’t specifically asked to hear their stories. I realised that they wanted to, and in some cases, needed to reflect on what preceded before they, or I could make sense of what emerged. As I reflected on the interviews and repeatedly analysed the transcripts, I realised that an understanding of where the teachers had come from (*Becoming Ready*) was as critical as an understanding of where they were going.

Confusion and, anxiety; needing a boost; being worried about becoming bitter and twisted; wanting to be involved in beyond classroom issues: These were the phrases and words that typified the process referred to in this study as *Becoming Ready*. It is a phase whereby the experienced teachers in this study began to become

aware of, and interested in, contributing to issues beyond the classroom. In doing so they began to search for more opportunities to learn, to lead, to experience satisfaction from their teaching, to feel safe and enhance their feelings of ownership of decisions that affected the school. They began to develop an image of what they do not want to become; adamant that they did not want to become: *bitter and twisted; deadwood*; or the like. They became interested in pursuing leadership positions, however were reluctant to identify themselves as leaders. They became aware that they needed something more from their work, however were not able to articulate what it was. While they were simultaneously searching for and becoming aware, they were not always cognisant that they were doing so. They tended to become aware of their experiences only after they were over, and as such, it seemed to be a retrospective realisation of events. The retrospective realisation of where they had been was typified by one participant's comment made in relation to her renewed interest in teaching. She stated:

I've just realised that I have spent the last fifteen years in a fog. Only now do I understand why I have been so disheartened by the very same job that once gave me enormous joy.

While *Becoming Ready* encompasses many processes, it has been used in this thesis to represent the participants' experiences as they become ready for their own future as teacher leaders. For the participants in this study, their experiences as IDEAS facilitators helped shape their future. The next chapter explores the manner in which this appears to have occurred.

CHAPTER 7- EXPERIENCING LEARNING AND LEADING

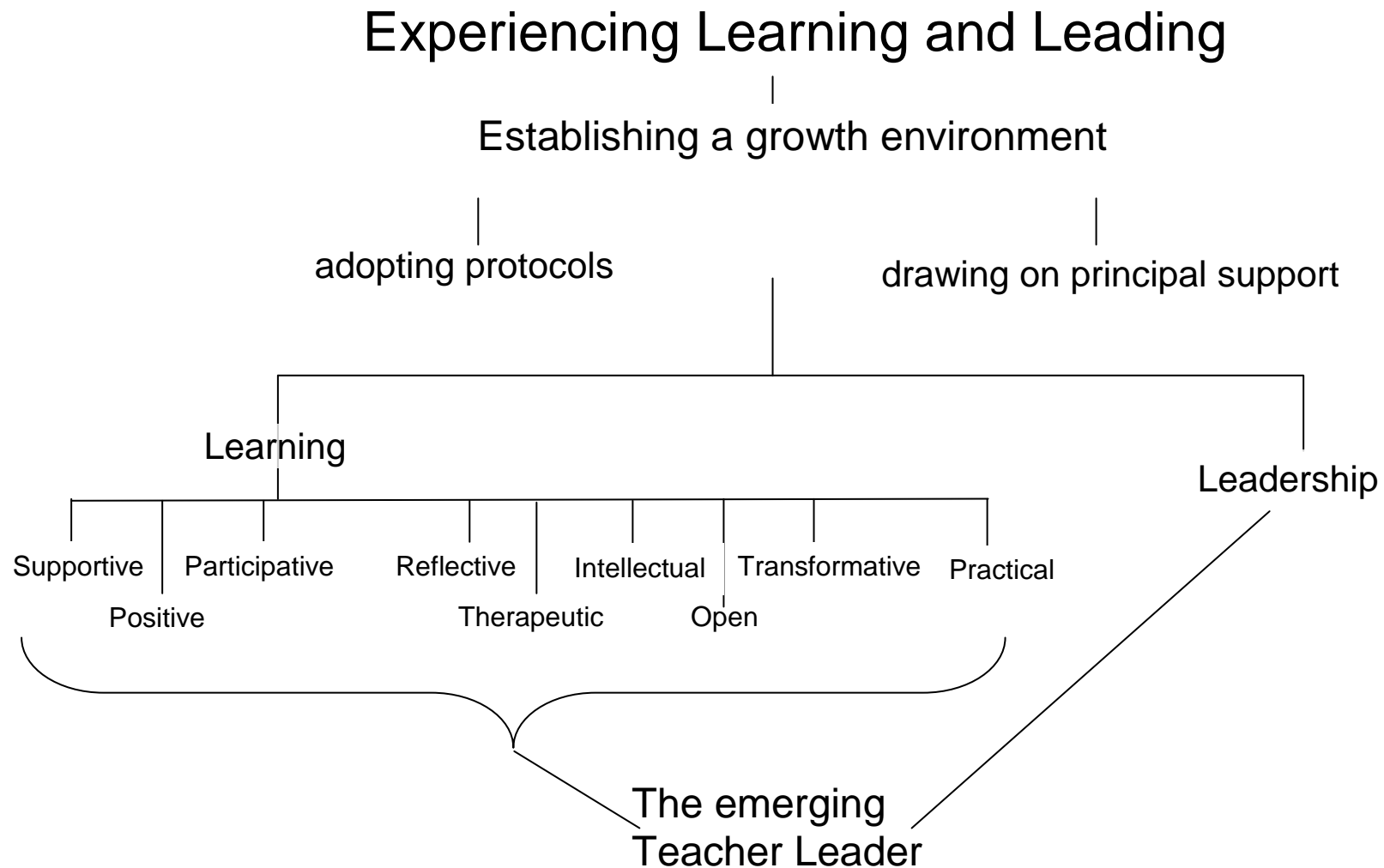
7.1 Introduction

This sub-core category describes the process whereby the IDEAS facilitators undergo growth and development as a consequence of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* in environments that are safe and supportive. In this study the safe and supportive environments have been termed *growth environments*.

The sub-core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* consists of three categories, *establishing a growth environment*, *learning*, and *leading*. For the participants, the three categories occur simultaneously, over an extended period of time (usually about two years).

FIGURE 7.1: Experiencing Learning and Leading

The sub-core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* details the learning and leading experiences of the IDEAS facilitators, making explicit the various properties of the learning experiences and the nature of the leadership experiences.



7.2 Establishing a Growth Environment

The category of establishing a growth environment consists of two sub-categories; *adopting protocols* and *drawing on principal support*. Both are necessary for the establishment of an environment where teacher growth and development can occur. Both relate to the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* especially in that they contribute towards the creation of a safe environment, where the very special type of learning and development which is detailed in chapter 8 can occur.

Where the principal supported the IDEAS facilitator, endorsed the IDEAS principles and protocols, especially the adoption of a *no blame* approach to the process, as well as the use of strategies for communication such as professional conversations, it created a safer environment for the IDEAS facilitators and not surprisingly, more teachers were willing to engage in and benefit from, the IDEAS program. Establishing a growth environment involves the establishment of an environment where people (in this case the IDEAS facilitators) can grow, develop and learn, because they feel safe to do so.

7.3 Adopting Protocols

In the following interview, a senior district school consultant reflects on what he has observed in relation to the nature of the conversations in IDEAS schools. The strategy of using professional conversations (see Appendix F) enables staff to converse in respectful ways and allows more members of the group to have their

voices heard. It became clear that to enable teachers to grow, it is important to establish the necessary environment; what I have termed a growth environment.

The professional conversations. So many of them have said that this has given them a new way, a vehicle by which they can get staff conversing with each other. It's that thing of taking a theory and then making it practical. So that certainly to me is something that I've always seen as a key element and link, something common amongst all the people talking. In some cases it's been, oh how does everyone talk if there's some really loud-mouthed people in the staff, or you don't get anything from anybody. Another where a school was in great difficulty and they just took it upon themselves to have open and honest chats. And in another school where they're performing very well, but there was a hierarchy depending on how long you'd been there. So the younger teachers really didn't have a voice within anything, and every time the ISMTs have said, well this process has given us another way in which we can get everybody's voice heard and sharing.

Many teachers had identified that the nature of conversations in their schools were such that teachers felt uneasy or threatened when they contributed; many felt that their voices were not heard. The previous interview excerpt is also an example of the sub-category of adopting protocols. The use of professional conversations is one of the strategies used in the IDEAS process and adopts a series of protocols that guide conversations, in order to create environments where all participants feel comfortable to contribute.

Here the relationship with the core category property of safety can be seen, for establishing a growth environment, where teachers can learn and lead, requires that the environment is safe. The strategy of using professional conversations with its embedded protocols for dialogue is a mechanism that helps create a safe environment. It enables teachers to learn from each other, for in many cases, those who would once not contribute to conversations, now do so and there is less domination from the more assertive members of staff. A growth environment is one where it is safe to contribute.

Yet another respondent refers to professional conversations, acknowledging that the strategy enabled the staff to discuss whole school issues and that teachers had a mechanism to be heard. They no longer, had to, as one respondent put it: *retire to their bunkers*. The strategy of using professional conversations enables a broader and different type of participation in discussion, as people feel safer to contribute.

[We are] now more receptive and looking whole school because when you're voices aren't being heard the first thing they do is they retire to their bunker.

7.4 Ensuring Principal Support

The next excerpt comes from a teacher who is discussing the role of the principal. It demonstrates the manner in which the relationship between the principal and teachers can impact teacher perceptions. It became apparent that, when teachers worked together in a *blame-free* environment, and felt supported and acknowledged by their principal, they felt safer to work with each other and with the principal. This interview demonstrates the importance that teachers attach to the working

relationship with the principal, and is typical of the comments made by respondents. Thus, the inclusion of *principal support* as a sub-category of establishing a growth environment.

[The principal says], *I've just come in here to see how things are going, you know, and he'd sit down and there'd be, oh how's your maths, I can help you with this maths. So all of that to staff really said that we're in it together and that in a place like this where we had had previous principals come in and say our results aren't good, what you are going to do about them, showed really no leadership. This guy came in and it was the same sort of scenario but hey, let's not blame, let's find out where our data is and let's use our data. Now let's all help here and see what we can do.*

In the next comment, the respondent is referring to the principal and discusses the importance of being recognised, as well as the principal being interested in the individual. The importance of establishing a growth environment was reinforced throughout the interviews, and it became clear that the participants in this study valued the support, the recognition and the interest of both principals and colleagues. One respondent explained:

Because people like to be recognised for their efforts, they like to know that you're interested in them and I think that's a pretty important part of the game.

When a growth environment is established and maintained, teachers can experience learning and leading without fear. In this study, the strategy of using professional conversation protocols along with the adoption of the no blame

principle, proved to be important steps in the establishment of environments where teachers can grow and develop. Furthermore, when both the principal and other teachers demonstrate an interest in the professional growth of their colleagues, it greatly enhances the willingness of participants to actively seek, and engage in, a range of learning and leading experiences.

The IDEAS facilitators also work as part of a team of people (usually professional colleagues) known as the IDEAS School Management Team (ISMT). Many of the facilitators in this study were co-facilitators along with other members of the ISMT. Knowing that you were *not alone* was important, and for the participants in this study it was not only reassuring, it also contributed to the establishment of a safe environment, conducive to growth. The excerpt below demonstrates how the IDEAS facilitators value the support and reassurance gained from being part of a team. The reference to feeling *exposed* is also worth noting and demonstrates that this IDEAS facilitator did not yet feel confident to lead his colleagues and re-enforces the importance of safety.

I am a Head of Department, but I had never run a workshop or work with the whole staff before. It was a bit daunting; however knowing that the workshops are there and they have been tested in other schools was great. I really enjoyed the process and couldn't wait to do the next one.

It was great having the other ISMT members there as well. I didn't feel so exposed and knew that I could call on them if necessary.

The substantive theory developed in this study asserts that the establishment of an environment where the IDEAS facilitators can experience learning and leading

in safety enables the development of teacher leadership. While experiencing learning and leading in such an environment is essential to the development of teacher leaders, I came to realise that it was the unique, complex and interdependent nature of the learning and leading experiences that I needed to understand.

7.5 Learning

The respondents in this study constantly made reference to the learning which they experienced during their time as IDEAS facilitators. In the previous chapter the sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* discussed the process of searching for professional learning opportunities. During that process the prospective teacher leaders (the IDEAS facilitators) acknowledged their desire to learn, not sure of what it was they wished to learn or why.

Before exploring the participant's perceptions of their IDEAS learning experiences, it is useful to consider the different types of learning experiences which are incorporated into the IDEAS program.

IDEAS is not only a school revitalisation program, however it is a school revitalisation program which has professional learning as a central process. At the school level the IDEAS professional learning program is an extended process, lasting over a period of at least two years. The workshops which are part of the program are able to be contextualised, are related to each other and the process of school revitalisation. The IDEAS program requires the school's professional community to participate in a number of activities and workshops. The workshops are facilitated by

the IDEAS facilitators who are the focus of this study. In facilitating the IDEAS program at the school level, the facilitators are experiencing learning and leading simultaneously. The learning experiences of the IDEAS facilitators are worthy of consideration here, as in leading and learning simultaneously, not only are the IDEAS facilitators preparing for workshops and ensuring they understand the associated content and learning processes, they are also preparing for a leadership experience. For the IDEAS facilitators, the leadership experience in the form of workshop delivery to their colleagues represented something which the respondents in this study regarded as a potentially *risky* (unsafe) experience.

The IDEAS facilitators and their respective principals also attend external workshops facilitated by the USQ IDEAS Team. Throughout the program the IDEAS facilitators attend a minimum of five day-long workshops. At these workshops, the facilitators and the principals learnt together, reflected together and planned together. In comparison to the times when the IDEAS facilitators delivered workshops to their respective school communities, the risks were less here, however the opportunity for the IDEAS facilitators and the principals to develop an understanding of each other and establish constructive working relationships, enabled a different type of *mutualistic* learning experience to occur. These USQ facilitated workshops were gatherings of IDEAS facilitators and principals where the facilitators learned from other facilitators and from the participating principals.

In addition to the USQ facilitated workshops, the participating schools engaged in a series of interschool network meetings (or cluster meetings). These meetings, between facilitators and principals from the various participating schools,

proved to be not only an important source of further learning, but also much needed support. The IDEAS program encourages this cluster support and all schools which participated in this study were part of an IDEAS cluster group.

As I listened to respondent after respondent talk excitedly about their learning I realised that for many, the type of professional learning that they had experienced in their role as an IDEAS facilitator was different from most other learning experiences. Many referred to it as a special type of learning.

I reflected on the type of professional learning that teachers usually experience. The respondents talked of their most common learning experiences, referring to learning through processes of formalised professional development. They usually referred to workshops where an external expert delivers information about a new systemic requirement, program or curriculum initiative. The respondents in this study referred to that type of professional learning as useful, however commented that the externally imposed nature of the learning, often associated with an imposed systemic change, meant that teachers usually learn enough in order to *comply*. The comment below typifies the nature of the comments about many prior professional learning experiences.

The department are always making us go along to workshops about new ways to assess or structure the curriculum or whatever. A lot of people find them frustrating. I do too, but I always pay attention so that when I come back to school I can make the necessary cosmetic changes to what I do, and then everyone thinks I have complied and they leave me alone.

I remember one time a few years ago, I just changed the front cover on my work program, made a few minor changes inside and just carried on doing what I had always done. The principal at the time kept telling me what a wonderful job I had done.

The respondents commented on the type of discussions that occurred after a typical professional development session, stating that they tended to reflect on *what* they learnt (an apparent content focus), however when the respondents talked about the professional learning which they had experienced in facilitating the IDEAS program, it struck me that the reflections tended to be related to their experiences, rather than limited by reference to content. I soon realised that while they valued the content of what they learnt, it was the nature of the learning experience that was most important to them. What was it about their learning experience(s) that prompted them to speak with such passion and enthusiasm, especially in relation to the manner in which the learning had affected them?

A senior district consultant who worked with many of the IDEAS facilitators, referred to their enthusiasm. The excerpt below refers to the type of learning that occurred at a cluster meeting, a meeting where IDEAS facilitators from different schools meet in order to learn from each other. His reference to *enthusiasm, appreciation of each other, having a common language and wanting to share*, enabled me to look deeper into the transcripts and search for the features or properties of the learning experience.

I've seen so many of them enthused. For example, I have an agenda and it goes out the window because they want to talk about where they're at. And

the others involved in the process also want to listen to others more intently, and talk about it. I love the concept that, after probably 18 months, the primary-secondary divide went away. They could appreciate each other not based on, you're a secondary school, I'm a primary school, I'm bigger and smaller et cetera. But the process itself keeps a common language which allows people to talk on a more equal level.

They wanted to share with others. Had you tried this particular activity? Had you tried that? Had you modified it to your own needs? Yes we know we're taking it slowly, but we feel that we can get there.

The category of learning has many properties and it soon became clear that it was the particular type of learning that was critical to the process of experiencing. In the following section, I explore the various properties of the learning experiences and include quotes which demonstrate the various properties of this category. Some of the included quotes make reference to more than one characteristic (property) of the learning experience.

7.5.1 The Learning Experiences are Supportive

In the following excerpt the respondent (a senior district consultant) is explaining that in the process of learning from each other (when schools get together at cluster meetings or workshops) they are able to support and reinvigorate each other, thus demonstrating the property of learning as being supportive.

[If they did not meet on a regular basis] their ability to go back to their work place and keep the process going would be hampered. They feel that it's a bit of a reinvigoration, it's a bit of a - somebody else who understand their issues and their needs, who is willing to give them a hand at times, who just speaks their language. I think that's important. There are some more driven people who can succeed without it. But as a group you do need that support, and we see it amongst principals for example because sometimes they've got no one to talk to within their own school about a particular issue. And that's why they do need to meet on a regular basis.

7.5.2 The Learning Experiences are Participative

Both the IDEAS facilitators and the members of the school staff enjoyed the active participation. The following comment is typical of what the respondents stated. One IDEAS facilitator commented:

I guess what I've found most rewarding is the professional conversations that we've allowed the staff to now have, we've given the time to them, we've shown them skills about active listening and having those skilful discussions. Almost everyone seemed to enjoy those workshops. They were reluctant to get involved at first, but now there is no stopping them. They are always asking when the next workshop will be held.

It was nice to actually see teachers really participating in the workshops.

7.5.3 The Learning Experiences Encourage Reflection

The learning experiences encourage the participants to *reflect* and think about their teaching. There were numerous similar comments from many of the respondents who discussed the importance of self-reflection and shared professional reflection. The following excerpt (from one of the IDEAS facilitators) was included as it demonstrated that for many, the reflection process included reflection related to working with students. Thus while being reflective, the reflection was focused on the teaching process, in this instance, relationships with students:

...and it makes me ask questions about myself as a teacher. It makes me also have those conversations with the kids, you know when I say I want you to be respectful and tell me how I show you that I respect you.

The quote which follows, from another IDEAS facilitator, also demonstrates the reflective nature of the learning experience, however it also demonstrates the importance of celebrating successes and building on that success. *Success breeds success*, is one of the key principles that underpin the IDEAS program. It encourages teachers to reflect on their successful practices and examine why they are successful. I realised that all too often, reflection has a negative connotation and requires people to examine and reflect on what went wrong, why didn't it work, or how it can be improved next time. Respondents also reported that in the IDEAS program the *success orientated* nature of the reflective process was inspiring and actually encouraged reflection. In discussing reflection one respondent stated:

I've never been asked to think about why something actually worked. People are using material from 20 years ago and wondering why it's not going to work. Unless you ask those questions, you just carry on and keep

going and continue on your own path. With IDEAS, I think it's made everyone look at themselves and celebrate their teaching successes but also question what they can do better.

7.5.4 The Learning Experiences are Intellectual and Transformative

In this quote the importance of the *intellectual* nature of the learning is revealed as is the *transformative* nature of the learning.

I've enjoyed working with our ISMT. That's become a real team. I've enjoyed seeing other people develop their own understandings so that we – it was interesting seeing them transform when they first come on board and the ISMT, they just think this is, Ideas is about let's put forwards a list of things that we can do.

But personally, other than the time management issue, I found it really interesting, I've often said to my wife that I really enjoy doing the IDEAS type of stuff, the type of thinking and planning and strategic sort of planning that you do, I enjoy that.

7.5.5 The Learning Experiences are Intellectual and Practical in Nature

The importance of the *higher order thinking* and strategic thinking (a more intellectual type of thinking) in the learning process is evident. For the participants, the *practical* nature of the learning was also important, as the learning was applicable

to school issues such as pedagogy or the school's vision statement. The importance of the practical property of learning became evident very early in the process of interviewing respondents. It emerged that the respondents valued learning that related to what they do and can be readily applied.

I guess there's the type of strategic thinking you're doing is higher order in that you are planning for processes in the school which are influenced by many, many factors, in terms of the type of personalities you've got as staff, the way that they're going to perceive change in the school, whether it's ideas or any other change process.

Also you are thinking higher order in terms of how sort of unique pedagogies that teachers have may link up and have a common thread towards the school vision. So yeah, there is that sort of specific nature of ideas thinking.

The property labelled practical, extended to the manner in which the University academics involved with the IDEAS program interacted with the teachers and delivered the learning. It was clear that the teachers valued the manner in which the academic research was translated into language that teachers can use.

One respondent commented:

I guess I have to say that I just think the way that the USQ Team work in schools and the way that you share that practical knowledge is the difference between some other university projects I've been involved in. I've been involved in a few; the literacy one which has been very positive but it was much more academic and so you had to sift through the academia to see how does it apply. IDEAS isn't like that. IDEAS is –you guys have worked in

schools too. You know what the reality is. It is accessible to a lot of people very quickly. There is that wealth of research and academic knowledge behind it and so when people have become familiar with the process on the job, you can go back and do that research.

7.5.6 The Learning Experiences are Positive

In the extract below the respondent makes reference to the importance of the *positive* learning environment; where the fellow participants are relaxed, optimistic, and positive. The participants referred to the positive nature of the learning experience, commenting that it enabled them to be ready and receptive to learning. An important aspect of this environment is the reference to being *away from your normal work environment*. It refers to the fact that both time and space are made for professional learning. This excerpt refers to the USQ facilitated external workshops for facilitators and principals.

It was an opportunity for, well for starters, everyone was pretty optimistic, pretty positive, basically you're relaxed in the sense that you're away from your normal work environment, so it's a change. So people are feeling positive, so I think that helps.

7.5.7 The Learning Experiences are Open

The excerpt below refers to the USQ facilitated workshops. The respondent talks of the nature of the conversations that can be held when you are with a group of

people whom you *trust* and who are motivated to learn. This quote demonstrates the importance of learning with others who are motivated, however the reference to: *a cohort of people that allowed for people to discuss broader issues* is of particular relevance, as it indicates that the nature of the learning is not restrictive and issues that need to be discussed are able to be discussed.

The people there are generally people that are motivated as well, so you're with that cohort of people and that allowed for people to discuss broader issues.

Well yes, it certainly has. Our IDEAS meetings are professional conversations, they're discussions, they're up for anyone who wants to be involved, well the whole staff are involved and anyone who wants to have a say has a say, and that's gone on to our other meetings.

The open property of the learning, in terms of what can be discussed and who can participate in the discussions, is evident in the previous excerpt. The participants believed that this was very important and it was greatly valued by the IDEAS facilitators as well as the principals.

7.5.8 The Learning Experiences are Therapeutic

When the participants in this study were developing into leaders, they valued the support of, and appreciated hearing from, their colleagues who were experiencing similar challenges at the same time. It appeared to be an opportunity to share what one respondent called *war stories*, and enabled some healing to occur. The reference (see conversational excerpt below) to being *renewed and not alone*, demonstrates the

importance of this therapeutic experience. One IDEAS facilitator referred to the cluster meetings as a place where *I get my dose of courage*. The therapeutic experience is where the IDEAS facilitators develop the necessary confidence to continue the tough processes of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

Well it stimulated me. It stimulated me, it renewed me. I was able to keep going. Yes, I think it has. I feel I am not alone in things. Even if I am by myself here I know that there is another school suffering the same things. It is not just our school.

On [traditional] PD days I talk to people, that tends to be curriculum based. You don't often get a chance just to talk about well how's life in school? How are you surviving being an IDEAS facilitator? Find out yeah, that they are going through the same problems, whether it is [School name], whether it is [School name], whether – even you know, talking to people from [Name of another IDEAS school], that was brilliant.

The experience of learning has many properties and demonstrates that the nature of the learning is important to the participants. The learning however occurred concurrently with the experience of leading, and it emerged that the two are intimately connected. To understand the totality of participants' experiences it is necessary to also understand the experience of leading.

7.6 Leadership

The excerpt below demonstrates the manner in which the leadership experiences enabled the individual IDEAS facilitators to perceive themselves as leaders. It also allowed others within the school to become familiar with the facilitators in a leadership role. The reference to being *offered the position* is consistent with the process outlined in the sub-core category of *Preparing to Commit* detailed earlier in Chapter 5.

It is important here to recognise that the IDEAS program has *legitimated* the teacher leadership role (see Chapter 4-*Sizing Up*) for the IDEAS facilitators, thus enabling the participants and others, to perceive the IDEAS facilitators as leaders. In earlier interviews this respondent referred to the principal as someone who was prepared to *stand behind him* thus demonstrating that he felt safe to adopt the IDEAS facilitation role.

I feel that I've been given the opportunity to be a school leader by the principal, certainly by being offered the position and she has given me a lot of free reign in terms of what we do as well. So that has been a credit to her.

I think through the IDEAS process and certainly within the ISMT, the staff utilise me as I guess a reference point for what we're doing in the school as well, as a school leader in a way. Often staff will come up to me and say, what do you think about this, do you think, you know, I can't think of specific examples but yeah. I guess a sounding board, a reference point. Sort of like a connection between admin and the staff, a link.

I wrote the following memo at the time.

MEMO

The legitimisation of the leadership role of the facilitator seems to be very important as it enables the facilitator to view him/herself as a leader, especially when others regard you as a leader.

Earlier in this study I observed that most of the facilitators were reluctant to accept that their actions and behaviours could be described in leadership terms, however most were now becoming comfortable with acknowledging themselves as leaders.

How important is the recognition and acceptance of *oneself as leader* in the development of leadership? How important is it that others treat you as, and accept you as, leader in developing your own perception of self as leader? How important is the legitimisation of the facilitation role as a leadership role in enabling these to occur?

In the conversational excerpt below, a deputy principal in an IDEAS school discusses the manner in which the school's participation in the IDEAS program has changed the willingness of teachers to adopt leadership roles. Her comments such as: *waiting to be heard; a lot of talent...just tucked away; didn't feel that it was appreciated; [not enough] responsibility or ownership; and someone would come in over the top and change it on them* refer to the absence of opportunities for teacher leadership prior to the IDEAS program.

Researcher: *So what have you seen emerge from IDEAS in this school that might have surprised you?*

Respondent: *The fact that there were many people waiting to be heard, that there was a hell of a lot of talent out there and they just tucked it away and put it in the top drawer because they didn't feel that it was appreciated, they didn't feel that they were given enough responsibility or ownership of things*

that they think they had ownership but then someone would come in over the top and change it on them and so that's probably the thing that surprised me most was the depth of talent that is there.

As I analysed this transcript (previous excerpt), I referred back to my observational notes that I had recorded (about this same school) almost two years earlier. Soon after this school began IDEAS, I had written the following note.

Observational note:

The principal at this school has only been here for a period of about six months, however he appears very perceptive and has expressed his view that the school needs something like IDEAS as the staff were tired and were feeling helpless. The kids had changed, the community had changed but they [the staff] weren't sure what to do.

There has been a strong endorsement by the principal and the school leadership team for the IDEAS program. In particular the commitment to the principle of *no blame* was strong. When the principal talked about the IDEAS program at the staff meeting I could almost see a sense of disbelief on the faces of the staff. They were being encouraged to participate and would not be blamed if things didn't go to plan. Judging by the looks on their faces, this was something new.

Prospective teacher leaders can only experience leadership if opportunities are created for them to do so. In the schools in this study, the principals used IDEAS as a mechanism to create leadership opportunities for prospective teacher leaders. Furthermore, where a growth environment existed, and teachers felt safe to experience leadership, many accepted the challenge. It is consistent with what I heard time and time again; that in most schools, most of the time, the opportunities to experience leadership in a safe environment do not exist.

The participants in this study were able to experience something that it seems many teachers in many schools cannot experience, that is learning and leading in a safe environment. In doing so it emerged that they were also *learning to lead* and in doing so, *building an image* of themselves as leaders.

The important role of the principal can be seen here. In the excerpt below the respondent talks about how the principal created opportunities for leadership. The excerpt also demonstrates the importance of *trust* as the principal enables teachers to run with their own initiatives. The trust however seems to stem from the capacity of the principal to connect initiatives with each other, to plant seeds and let others take the lead. Thus while the principal is able to let the developing teacher leader run with his/her initiatives, the initiatives are not unrelated, and it seems are compatible with the principal's strategic intention.

What is important here is that the principal has created opportunity. He has actively constructed space and an initiative that enables the developing teacher leader to experience leadership.

It was a credit to our principal that he was prepared to let people run with their own initiatives, but somehow he is able to do that without them running all over the place. He can always explain how things are related and he is pretty good at planting the seed-you know, coming up with ideas but letting others take the lead.

I asked a senior educational consultant, who had extensive knowledge of the IDEAS program, and had also worked with, and observed many of the IDEAS facilitators enhance their leadership capacities. He stated:

I think IDEAS – like any leadership program too, like I have been to other leadership programs and they have not stayed in my mind as much as IDEAS has, IDEAS has more of a framework to follow.

Becoming is a process of change, it is emergent, and one becomes something new. The participants referred to this process as requiring continuous self-reflection. The IDEAS program includes a number of propositions and theories about leadership (outlined in Chapter 2). As I listened to the participants, I realised that these propositions help scaffold the self-reflective learning process for they enable developing teacher leaders to engage in reflective processes that enable them to learn about their own *Emerging Capacities* as leaders and to reflect on their *Emerging Capacities* against a set of theories, propositions and criteria.

I wondered how many prospective teacher leaders fail to develop as teacher leaders because of lack of a growth enhancing environment, absence of safety and absence of a leadership framework that can enable them to engage in self-reflective processes. It was now clear to me that for IDEAS facilitators to develop into teacher leaders the existence of a safe environment *on its own* was not sufficient.

Many more participants commented on the manner in which the IDEAS concepts and theories of leadership helped them in conceptualising themselves as leaders. As one said: *...if you don't know what a leader is, how can you think of yourself as one.* I realised how important this leadership framework was to the developing teacher leaders. Most, it seemed, had never interrogated what leadership was. Most had developed tacit understandings of leadership that were associated with position, authority and status. The organisational and relational nature of the IDEAS

perspective of leadership was a revelation to most. Another respondent commented that: *When I was trained as teacher I never made any connection between teaching and leadership.*

For most of the participants it emerged that the process of self-reflection was enhanced through participative experiences, in that many respondents made reference to the importance of the IDEAS workshops. In these whole day workshops the IDEAS facilitators (developing teacher leaders) came together. The excerpt below demonstrates the importance that they placed on the experiences of *listening to other[s]* who were also experiencing the process of becoming. The reference to *unpacking* is also important as it refers to the reflection that occurs later.

I thought then when we would have the regular forums and meetings, I felt that they were really valuable - like listening to other people's journeys. And just hearing different ways people went about different things or different aspects. I felt that that was valuable, but until you actually unpacked your own, and saw what it actually exposed, it was a different thing.

7.7 Summary

The sub-core process of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* details the manner in which teachers learn. In particular, it describes the conditions under which the developing teacher leaders learn, and the type of learning necessary to become a teacher leader. Importantly, it also demonstrates the relationship between learning and leadership.

The learning described in this study occurs in the safety of what I have referred to as a growth environment. Both the support of the principal and the establishment of protocols are important in creating an environment where participants feel safe, and are able to learn. The learning is active, participatory, supportive, transformative, therapeutic and practical. It enables participants to engage in high level learning (it is intellectual in nature) and it stimulates reflection. The learning is relevant, the participants referred to it as practical, it was not stifled by academic jargon, and through its emphasis on pedagogy and whole school revitalisation, was related to those issues which are central to the work of a teacher. The nature of the reflection is important, for as can be seen in the included excerpts, the developing teacher leaders began to reflect on issues including their own changing and emerging needs, the changing and emerging roles of teachers and the needs of students in schools.

The concepts and principles, embedded in the IDEAS program, provide a scaffold for the learning, including an explicit conceptual framework for teacher leadership. The learning is also experiential in that it provides participants with opportunities to experience leadership.

The experiences of leading occur in an established environment for growth, where the principal has made clear his/her support for the program and role of the facilitator. This legitimisation of the role of the facilitator, along with the adoption of protocols that enable respectful professional conversations, sets the scene for the facilitators to be successful when experiencing leadership opportunities. For emerging teacher leaders the opportunity to experience success in leadership roles

proved to be essential in developing the participant's confidence and willingness to persist.

The combined learning and leading experiences enabled teachers to enter what appeared to be a period of transition. They began to talk differently about teaching, learning, relationships with students and what teachers should do. They began to incorporate a view of leadership into their role as teachers, no longer reticent to recognise their own capacities to lead. They became more confident to accept emerging leadership roles. They spoke with a level of excitement about their work. It appeared that they were in the process of professional growth and development and were becoming teacher leaders. They were developing what I have referred to as *Enhanced Capacities* as teacher leaders.

CHAPTER 8-ENHANCING CAPACITY

8.1 Introduction

When teachers experience learning and leading in safe environments, they grow, develop and they change. This chapter explores those changes. In doing so however it recognises that the changes (described in this chapter) did not occur *after* the process of *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, however were *simultaneous to*, and *a consequence of*, that described in Chapter 7. Thus the separation of the psychosocial processes of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* and what has been referred to in this chapter as *Enhancing Capacities* is an artificial separation, done only to enable me to better understand and conceptualise each of the sub-core categories (*Experiencing Leading and Learning* and *Enhancing Capacities*) and their associated categories and properties.

8.2 Enhancing Capacities

The participants in this study spoke excitedly about their development, describing their changes in terms of *self* (how I have changed) and also in *organisational* terms (the manner in which the professional culture of the school has changed).

Through the process of constant comparison, I realised that both the individual teachers and the school as a whole, had enhanced capacities. I realised that as the individual teachers experienced learning and leading in safe environments,

both the individual teachers and the professional community of which the teachers are a part, were in the process of enhancing their respective capacities. While the impact on the organisational (whole school) capacity was interesting, it was beyond the scope of this research.

It later emerged that while the participants in this study had developed greater *confidence* in themselves as teachers and as leaders, they had also reconceptualised the manner in which they viewed themselves and their role as teachers. Thus the teachers in this study had not only developed new skills/attributes (capacities) that were potentially beneficial to themselves and the whole school, they had *reconceptualised* their view of themselves and their roles in the school. It was this dual transformation that enabled them to contribute in different and powerful ways to the whole school. In this sub-core category, I have referred to this process as *reconceptualising professional responsibilities*.

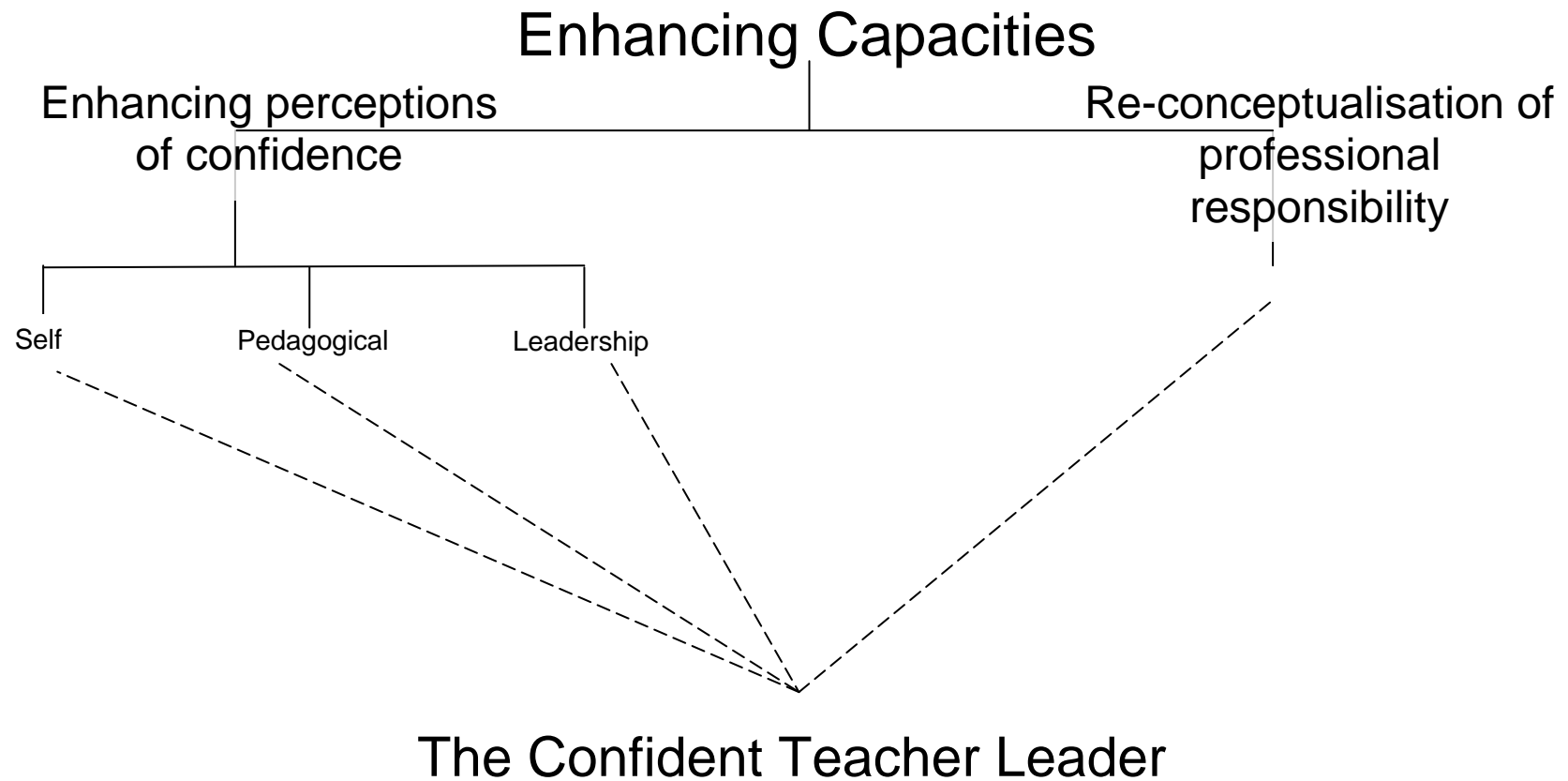
What emerges from the process of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* are enhanced capacities, thus the process of emergence can be described as *Enhancing Capacity*. In keeping with Owens' (2001) assertion that in growth enhancing environments "we are always in the process of becoming" (p. 75) and in the tradition of grounded theory, I have chosen to express this sub-core category using the verb (enhancing rather than enhanced), as the latter implies an end to the process. Moreover, the teachers in this study talked in terms of continuing enhancement of capacity, rather than something that was complete.

The sub-core category of *Enhancing Capacity* has two categories; *enhancing perceptions of confidence* and *reconceptualising professional responsibilities*.

The former category has three properties; *self*, *pedagogical* and *leadership*, each referring to the type of confidence that was developed. The second category of *reconceptualising professional responsibilities* refers to the emergent view of the teacher leaders' perceptions of role. This substantive theory maintains that the participating teachers reconceptualise their roles to that of teacher leaders, and also develop the confidence to adopt teacher leadership roles in their schools, and in doing so become teacher leaders.

FIGURE 8.1: Enhancing Capacities

The sub-core category of *Enhancing Capacities* describes the process whereby teachers transform their image of themselves and their role in the school, emerging as teacher leaders with high levels of leadership confidence. They identify themselves as teacher leaders, and adopt roles consistent with those of a teacher leader.



8.2.1 Enhancing Perceptions of Confidence-Self

The participants willingly talked of becoming more confident, more courageous, and stronger. As they described these qualities it was clear that each could be readily applied to their work in schools and beyond. The important connection between the teacher's personal and professional lives was evident here. In referring to the confidence, they used terms like strength and courage. In doing so however, they were not exclusively confining their comments to their professional lives; they were also referring to themselves and how they had changed.

The extract below demonstrates how the perceptions of one teacher had changed:

I got my strength, courage up, I can't think – was able to become positive through it and it gave me the – courage is not the right word but I was able to keep persevering and I stopped letting people get me down...

The excerpt below gives an insight into how another teacher perceived the development that she experienced:

Personally it's helped me to network a lot more and I mean I suppose that's professionally as well but I just think I've grown a lot in the last 18 months personally, just my capacity to work with people and converse with people.

The above excerpts reveal that the respondents believe that their capacities have been enhanced, in the latter case, enhanced capacity to work with others and a more optimistic outlook on the future, while the previous excerpt refers to *perseverance* and *becoming positive*.

Yet another talked of being a lot more positive in her outlook:

Yeah- a lot more optimistic. I think a little while ago if someone had have said you know, you are going to be merging and this could be happening and it would have been, oh doom and gloom. But I think too that has probably been another good thing of working in the facilitator team. I have talked to people that have gone through mergers and closures and seen them survive and I think, well worse things can happen.

It is worth noting here that the previous excerpt is taken from a teacher who was working in a school that was soon to be closed, thus the significance of the optimistic outlook cannot be underestimated.

In the next excerpt the teacher refers to gaining a *sense of satisfaction* and a *shift in attitude*. The reference to: *I'd really felt that I have had enough* demonstrates her dissatisfaction with teaching prior to the IDEAS experience.

Being involved in this we're actually looking at some things that could make a difference in our school and it might be a better place. So I think IDEAS probably has been quite significant in those shifts in my attitude because I'd really felt that I'd had enough - I am finally getting a sense of satisfaction from at least some of my work.

Like many of the respondents, she (same respondent as above) later refers to *enhanced confidence* (see following excerpt). The reference to *passion* is also indicative of comments from many of the respondents. While very few used the word

passion, many talked of their work in terms of increased interest, enjoyment, engagement, motivation and the like.

Definitely and if people ever knew that I was saying this they would laugh at me. I am not a confident person. I am fine if I can hide behind a role, like in my acting, I can take on a role and run with it but I will stand at staff meetings and blush. But, I think if you get the passion and I don't want it to sound corny but it is, it is a passion for it.

The enhancing perceptions of confidence extends beyond the professional self and extends to the personal self, demonstrating two properties. The nature of these capacities is such that it is reasonable to believe that the feelings of confidence, optimism and courage would have an impact *beyond the professional life* of the teacher. While this study recognises the importance of the interrelationship between the personal self and the professional self, the exploration of the personal self is beyond the bounds of this study, and thus has not been included in the diagrammatic representation of the process.

8.2.2 Enhancing Perceptions of Confidence - Pedagogical

The participants believed that their IDEAS experience had enabled them to become better teachers. Typically they referred to being more reflective about teaching, about greater enjoyment, enthusiasm.

[Before IDEAS] I just taught in auto, and rarely gave thought to what the students were learning, or more to the point - were not doing. IDEAS has made me think before I teach-yeah I am a better teacher as a result.

They were quick to acknowledge the impact of the experience, not only on their enthusiasm, however their perceptions of their teaching effectiveness.

It's renewed my enthusiasm to teach tremendously. I really believe in it very strongly and I'll repeat what I said before, it's been the best three years of my teaching because I actually think I am teaching.

When I asked the respondent above to elaborate on the comment: *I actually think that I am teaching*, she explained, saying:

Well for a long time I taught and did not care what the kids learnt. I blamed them for not learning and didn't consider that it might be me. I now try different things and the kids are responding-they are more enthused, I think they are learning.

In this previous excerpt it is worth noting the change in the thinking of the teacher, from one who blamed the students, to one who was prepared to look at herself and make changes to her teaching.

In the next extract, the reference to *licence to experiment* demonstrates what appears to be emerging pedagogical confidence.

The good bits were that I've always been a person who is a bit left of centre. I always try new things. So it gave me licence to experiment.

After reflecting on this statement I hypothesised in a memo to myself:

Memo:

As a result of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*, have the participants developed greater pedagogical confidence? Are they more conscious of their actions as teachers?

In another interview the respondent revealed that he and many of his colleagues now regularly discussed teaching and learning with students.

In all my years of teaching I have never thought to ask the students about what they like or dislike, or whether they are learning or not. Being involved in IDEAS has made me realise that it is OK to talk with students about learning. I suppose I was a little scared to ask them as they might have told me something that I did not want to hear-I suppose I trust them more. I know that I am now more confident to deal with whatever they might say...when I finally did ask them, they were great. It wasn't all positive but the kids were really trying to work with me to make learning better-I felt great afterwards.

Another commented:

So yes, my teaching has changed and it's a lot more relevant and interactive and involving the students in some of the decision making rather than me making every decision that we do in the classroom.

The participants consistently reported greater perceptions of pedagogical competence as a result of their IDEAS experience. I also asked the participating principals who confirmed that the participants were willing to share practice, reflect individually and collectively about pedagogy and they were more confident to try

different approaches. All commented on the preparedness of the participants to engage students in conversations about pedagogy. One commented:

I think when you go to the other ISMT meetings, because we all have a common language, that's easy to go in there. But then that's maybe the facilitator who has set that up. But at least we all have a common language. When we meet together for cluster meetings, I must say they've got better and better as they've gone on. The most recent one, we had all the schools here whereas previously we've only had five at them and we had nine at the last one. That was really good and the conversation just flowed and it was always about on-task and what we were talking about...[the thinking] Yes, higher order I guess you could say. Not low level, a more higher order and talking about strategies for implementation whereas before you used to just say, what are you doing? and I think "sophistication", is probably a good word, the language is more sophisticated.

Many respondents also referred to a *common language*. The participants explained that the common language emerged from the IDEAS framework as well as the workshops and cluster meetings that are part of the IDEAS program.

I wrote the following three part memo:

Does the common language about pedagogy emerge when teachers work in environments of trust and respect, and adopt a common framework (in this case IDEAS) that enables them to focus the conversations on pedagogy?

Does the enhanced sophistication of the pedagogical discussions develop as a result from the emerging environment of trust and respect and the existence of a framework to discuss pedagogy?

Does the emerging sophistication of the discussions enable teachers to develop greater pedagogical capacities, for example; willingness to try new strategies, willingness to engage in pedagogical conversations with students and colleagues, willingness to reflect on practice?

As I considered these questions further, I finally concluded that the above process was fluid and interconnected and what mattered was not the order of events, but that the experience of learning and leading in safety seems to have enabled these processes to occur and that, as a consequence, *teachers believed that their pedagogical competence had improved*. They also believed that the experience of learning and leading in safety had improved their leadership capacities.

8.2.3 Enhancing Perceptions of Confidence - Leadership

Participants also reflected on their development as leaders. For some it assisted them in beginning to perceive themselves as leaders (see first excerpt) while for others, (see second excerpt; a different respondent from the first) their confidence in their leadership capacity was enhanced.

One respondent stated:

It was good for me. It has made me stronger. It makes me feel more of a leader in a way. Yeah I feel more definite, you know, I probably am acting more like a leader because I have got more of a direction now.

Yet another commented:

It has given me more confidence I think. To direct people in a democratic way. Sometimes in the past I might have bull dozed people out of desperation to get things done. Probably a fear of not getting things done and my approach was probably wrong and I have improved my approaches.

The previous excerpt is from a teacher who is reflecting on her leadership. It is her perception that she has developed a greater understanding of the process of leading and is also experiencing more success in doing so. The next excerpt demonstrates that the participant is realising that in order to develop leadership capacities, it is important that prospective leaders need to *experience* leadership.

But thinking, it doesn't matter [if they get it right] at the end of the day, it's more important that they actually are involved and have a go at things and developing that sort of leadership base amongst ourselves and other people- that was quite a significant shift and I'm much more aware of that now.

The participants were demonstrating an emerging understanding of *how* leadership develops as well as an emerging understanding of the *nature* of the leadership role.

The participants (see next excerpt) also developed an understanding of their role in whole school issues, and demonstrated a willingness to contribute to resolving issues beyond their subject area/year level, and beyond their classroom. Such work is usually considered the domain of school leaders. Many of the teachers talked about an emerging realisation of the importance of thinking about, and contributing to, whole school (beyond classroom) issues. Also in the following excerpt, the emerging confidence of the respondent is evident as demonstrated when she makes reference to: *having a belief in what you do and not being overly swayed by other people's negative stories*. This apparent confidence was a theme that was common in all the transcripts, and it related to their experiences of leading.

Well, the people who have got involved in IDEAS are even more willing to look outside of their faculty and say, this is how we'd like the school to be, this is about our school, this is not about advancing Science or English or whatever, in the school – raising our profile – this is about our school.

So IDEAS has helped me to think, no, we actually do have to take some responsibility for the way things are. It's not just about the children and the social climate – yes, it is about that, but we have a role to play in this as well. So I guess I'd be having conversations about things like that, too, about the importance in having a belief in what you do and not being too overly swayed by other people's negative stories.

Like many of the respondents, the teacher in this excerpt refers to: *motivating others, reading more, becoming more strategic and thinking about action.*

She states:

IDEAS has made me really a lot more, reflect on my practice, read a lot more about what it is to motivate change in others. It's made me more strategic about how I deal with – instead of having a knee-jerk response to a problem I have to think of it in terms of the frame work and IDEAS was a really good framework that made me think.

What emerges conceptually from the analyses and constant comparison processes is that the sub-core process of enhancing capacity includes enhancing leadership capacity. Thus, as teachers are enhancing their capacities of self and pedagogy, so too are they enhancing their leadership capacities. In this case the

experiences of learning and leading in safe environments are enabling teachers to perceive themselves as leaders, become aware of their changing role, reconceptualise the boundaries of their work beyond the classroom, consider the development of other colleagues, and develop confidence in being a leader. The place of the IDEAS framework for leadership and the relationship to reflection is also acknowledged. The emerging re-conceptualisation of professional responsibilities is explored in detail in the following section.

8.3 Re-conceptualising Professional Responsibilities

As the teachers grew and developed, they became more confident in themselves as leaders. They began to conceptualise themselves in roles beyond the classroom; they reframed relationships with colleagues, students and principals; they redefined their responsibilities in the school; and they re-ignited their passion for teaching. The growth and development had enabled the participants to *believe* and *accept* that they were teacher leaders. They had transformed from teachers into teacher leaders, and in doing so had satisfied their yearning to once again be “professional and purposeful” (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). They were now different from what they were. In becoming teacher leaders their perceptions of their role as professionals had changed and this became evident in their actions. The teacher leaders in this study had developed enhanced capacities to work with each other and their colleagues, and the effects were manifested in both individual and whole school benefits.

In a school community the influence of an effective teacher leader can be significant. Sometimes a single teacher leader can profoundly affect the culture of the school; however when a school community is impacted by several teacher leaders who have developed new capacities and developed new perceptions of their roles, the impact is likely to be significant. In most of the schools which participated in this study there was more than one IDEAS facilitator, thus most of the schools in this study were impacted by the emergence of several teacher leaders. Furthermore, the teacher leaders had developed close and productive working relationships with their respective principals, thus the potential for the principal, in unison with a number of teacher leaders, to impact whole school culture was significant.

While the complex interdependence between culture and leadership is acknowledged, and that like Schein (1985) I accept that culture impacts leadership and vice versa, this study focuses on the journey of the IDEAS facilitators, thus the lens through which I focus concentrates on the capacities of the IDEAS facilitators as they develop into teacher leaders. In doing so I adopt the position, like Fullan (2001) and Day (1999, 2004), that schools cannot change unless the individuals within (in this case, the IDEAS facilitators) change. Thus, while I acknowledge that whole school cultural changes are evident in the excerpts below, it is the changes in the perceptions and actions of the individual teacher leaders that remain the focus of this study.

When reflecting on the IDEAS related whole-school changes, the respondent in the following excerpt referred to enhanced relationships between staff and staff as well as between staff and students, greater levels of respect, willingness of staff to

help each other, and enhanced belief in the students. Later in the interview she refers to the impact of *no blame*. When teachers in schools engage in the IDEAS program they are encouraged to adopt a *no blame* approach to addressing issues. This teacher, like many of the others who were interviewed, refers to the manner in which the adoption by teachers of the no blame principle assisted in the development of a school culture which allowed teachers to work collectively to support each other, and the students as they focused on addressing the challenges of teaching, rather than blaming students for not learning. What emerges here is typical of the changes in the way the teacher leaders viewed their work and were able to work. The emerging culture is one where teachers are more willing to support each other; more likely to work together and are less willing to blame each other; where they adopt a greater collective focus on improving teaching and learning approaches; and they demonstrate a greater respect for each other and the students who they teach.

I think the school's unrecognisable, the physical buildings are the same. We've done, I think the thing that's changed so much is we now like one another as a staff and we actually like the kids that we teach and we know they're different but we're able to actually start making a difference with the programs that we offer those kids and you've now got staff who used to always count down to the holidays, absolutely enjoy their time at school and in a state secondary system that doesn't always happen. The other thing is you can come to the staff room now and you have a laugh about some of the problems and people are willing to help. I can remember three years ago at staff meetings people would say I've got a problem with such and such and someone would pipe up well I don't have a problem with them and that was

really soul destroying to the person that had put the problem up. Now you go into the staff room and we've got a lot of young teachers and we've got older ones like me. It doesn't matter which person comes into the staff room these days, if there's a problem people will first see that the person's okay and then they'll say have you tried this or have you tried that or don't worry about it, you know it's just their stage today. So people are really, really supportive and there's no blame, that whole thing of no blame.

Well I just think that concept of no blame has been absolutely staggering here. We have very difficult students and there used to be a them and us mentality. Now we accept the fact that yes, they are difficult to teach but they've got a right to be taught the best they possibly can and yeah, some days mightn't be successful, some days might be absolute disasters, but that's just a step on the journey. It doesn't mean that you're unsuccessful and we can go into the staff room and actually help one another.

I think we are better teachers, I think so, yes, I think we are. The other thing I think that made an enormous difference here was getting to understand who our kids were because there was always the blame game of it's not our fault these kids can't learn, these kids can't read, these kids can't write, these kids come from a background where they don't value education so what can we do. Now, yeah we do have different kids, they are at different levels, but we're trying to use teaching methods and class set ups that actually are appropriate for those kids and we are seeing progress with them and they would have to be the nicest type of kids you could ever meet in a classroom.

The teachers referred to in the excerpt above had reframed their professional responsibilities; they had adopted a role which extended beyond their own classroom, incorporating collective responsibility for colleagues and students into their perceptions of their role. Furthermore in adopting a no blame approach to working with colleagues and students, they have adopted a role that develops *trust* and *respect* among colleagues and with students.

I was excited that I was beginning to understand the manner in which participation in the IDEAS process contributed to enhancing capacities of schools and individuals, however I needed to ask more questions. I went back to my notes, my transcriptions and re-interviewed some of the principals. I soon realised that the teachers and the schools had enhanced capacities to cope with the challenges that they faced on a day to day basis. It seemed that this was because the IDEAS facilitators, to whom the following comment refers, were beginning to act like teacher leaders.

I asked one of the principals to reflect on the changes to the school and teachers that he had noticed over the past few years. His comment (below) helped me gain an insight into the capacities that were developing:

I think it's impacted not so much as revitalising the school that it's impacted in being able to cope with the new changes that are happening in the department in [name of state]. These people [IDEAS facilitators] think and act differently. I am amazed at their willingness to 'get on with things'. A few

years ago, they would have avoided the issue, said it was someone else's job. Their willingness to accept responsibility has made my job a lot easier.

When I asked another principal to reflect on this issue, he referred to the capacity of IDEAS people to: *work through problems*, stating:

They've been won over quite whole-heartedly to the process. And that's a very important element. I think IDEAS, people put it up as a program. That does it a disservice, and also takes it away from what it is, which is an actual process of working your way through problems. It has really enhanced their confidence. They have become quite sophisticated at working with others to get past barriers and staying optimistic.

Another respondent made reference to the common language, commenting on the manner in which it assisted in the resolution of issues.

But the process itself keeps a common language which allows people to talk on a more equal level. When we are using the same language we have a better chance of resolving issues.

A picture of schools that perceived they were better at coping, communicating and problem solving began to emerge. The excerpt below makes reference to communication and decision making.

So many of them have said that this has given them a new way, a vehicle by which they can get staff conversing with each other. They are more confident that they've found a way to get some sort of consensual understanding of where the staff are at. And the staff have felt empowered at times to say, no

slow down, or no we don't want to go this way. And that's extremely important, because you can't go forward if you're always in the dark.

It seemed that the creation of environments where teachers can experience learning and leading in safety, enables teacher leaders to develop and grow. These teacher leaders were confident (in self, leadership and pedagogy) and they had new capacities to work with colleagues. They adopted a view of their work that incorporated beyond classroom issues, whole-school responsibilities and new relationships with principals, colleagues and students. In summary they had reconceptualised a new role for themselves (as teacher leaders) and had developed the confidence to undertake that role.

The IDEAS facilitators were now happy to *identify their actions as leadership actions* and were also prepared to, although reluctantly, *to refer to themselves as teacher leaders*. In doing so however they were quick to add that they were only now comfortable to accept they were teacher leaders because they had finally redefined what leadership was, and recognised that part of their prior reluctance to identify as leaders was due to their previous understandings of how leaders acted and were perceived.

The following excerpt typifies how the participants in this study expressed a frustration that it had not occurred earlier.

[Prior to IDEAS] I was so confused about leadership, I didn't know what it was and I could not see any connection with my work as a teacher. I now

think differently and understand the connections, but I don't understand why I had to wait so many years for this opportunity.

Despite the frustration, as they talked, the respondents all referred to the changes that had occurred, making reference to the past and feelings of helplessness and frustration. It soon emerged that processes of communication, problem solving and decision making were almost non-existent, haphazard or inconsistent in many schools, thus teachers and whole school communities believed that they had lost the capacity to have any say in where they (individual teachers) or their schools were going. Through engagement with the IDEAS program, it seemed that the IDEAS facilitators had become teacher leaders, and the schools in which they worked had developed ways to communicate more effectively and make decisions.

8.4 Summary

Enhancing Capacities is a process whereby individuals and whole schools, change. The individual participants grew in their confidence, professionally and personally. They reported that their pedagogical competence had also grown and they had developed a view of themselves as leaders, as well as the confidence to lead. Those who had once been reluctant to identify themselves as leaders were now comfortable doing so, and viewed leadership as an integral part of their role as teachers.

As a consequence of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* they reported different perceptions of themselves in terms of

confidence, passion for their work, how they taught, and what it meant to be a teacher. They had deepened their understanding of leadership and developed the confidence to lead. They viewed their work in terms of classroom and whole school responsibilities. They had moved from a view of teaching which was primarily individual, to one that was more collective. They had reconceptualised their relationships with students, colleagues and school administration, and they had developed a confidence and passion for their work.

When these teacher leaders worked together they were remarkable, they were able to tackle problems and deal with issues that were once beyond them. For what was once an insurmountable problem, was now seen as an exciting challenge. They were able to work with a greater range of people, in more productive ways, and in doing so, were able to form productive relationships and create environments characterised by trust and respect. Their optimistic attitude was contagious, as was their capacity to lead others in complex problem solving and deep thinking. The IDEAS facilitators who began this journey as confused and anxious teachers had evolved in their thinking and actions and had become teacher leaders.

CHAPTER 9-LITERATURE COMPARISON

9.1 Introduction

In an orthodox grounded theory study, the literature comparison occurs after the development of the substantive theory. According to Glaser (1992) this prevents the researcher forcing the data into pre-determined categories. In grounded theory studies, the emergent theory establishes the relevance of the literature to be included in the review (Glaser, 1998). Accordingly, the literature review that follows will situate the emergent theory in the extant literature. While this is not an extensive review, it represents the areas that have earned their way into the review as a consequence of the relevance to the substantive theory (Glaser, 1998). Because the literature comparison occurs after the development of the substantive theory, the researcher can delimit the scope of the literature comparison, thus enabling a more informed comparison (Glaser, 2001). Guthrie (2000) maintains that a complete literature comparison is neither desirable nor feasible.

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is a psychosocial process (Glaser, 1978, 1990, 1992) of career construction (Savickas, 2002, 2005). The participants in this study developed a new career self-concept (Super, 1953, 1984, 1990). They were experienced teachers who were at a stage of their careers when they were looking for opportunities to grow and develop, as well as contributing to the school beyond the classroom. They were looking, according to Lambert (2003), for opportunities to satisfy their need to feel “professional and

purposeful” (p. 4). At the same time, however they feared that they may end their careers as disengaged teachers.

When given the opportunity to become facilitators of the IDEAS program in their schools, they found the experiences in the role met their dual needs to contribute to the school beyond the classroom, as well as meeting their own unmet needs for growth and development. The participants in this study learnt, led and learnt to lead, and they did so with other like facilitators and the principals from the various participating schools. In their time as IDEAS facilitators they experienced transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991). They developed a confidence in their own leadership and in doing so they constructed images of themselves (Savickas, 2002, 2005) as teacher leaders. This process occurred over a period of several years, during which time the participants developed a broader and different range of skills, along with the self-efficacy related to those skills. As a consequence they were able to adopt and enact teacher leadership roles in their schools.

The substantive theory presented in this thesis maintains that in *Becoming a Teacher Leader*, each participant also had to shape his/her own image of what it means to be a teacher leader. While the construct of teacher leadership (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Murphy, 2005) is widely accepted, the role of the teacher leader remains ambiguous (Ainscow & Southworth, 1996; Datnow & Castellano, 2002). In *Becoming a Teacher Leader*, each individual had to craft a role (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) for him/herself which was unique to self, context and time. The lack of clarity associated with the role of teacher leader (Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002), the changed pattern of relationships between the emerging

teacher leader, his/her colleagues and principal (Crowther et al., 2002) challenged the norm of egalitarianism (Little, 1995) that exists in many schools. Not surprisingly, it emerged that for teachers to make the transition to teacher leaders, they needed a safe environment to do so (Edmonson, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). They needed an environment where they could learn and lead, safe from the taunts and challenges of their peers. The behaviour of their peers was of great concern to the participants in this study. This safe environment however, could not be away from the school, for the learning and leading were experiential (Lieberman & Miller, 2004) and required the participants to learn to become leaders, while leading their peers in their own school environment. Their experiences were highly visible to the very peers whom they feared. The safe environment which was central for the transformational change which occurred was primarily achieved through the actions of the principal (Crowther et al., 2002; Crowther & Olsen, 1997; Murphy, 2005). In addition, some of the protocols embedded in the IDEAS program also assisted in the creation of the safe environment.

The safe environment was paramount, for it was within this environment that the teachers could learn and lead, and engage in the processes of transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) and career construction (Savickas, 2002, 2005). The safe environment in which this learning and transformation took place needed to be free from ridicule, humiliation or sanction. The IDEAS facilitators needed to experience psychological safety (Edmonson, 2002) before they could learn and grow as teacher leaders. In the safe environment, the IDEAS facilitators could experience leadership and begin to construct an image of themselves as leaders. The IDEAS program,

particularly through the construct of parallel leadership (Crowther et al., 2002), provided the participants with a framework for conceptualising teacher leadership.

The literature comparison which follows begins by examining the literature on the career phases (Huberman, 1993) of teachers and is useful as it deepens the understanding of how teachers' needs change throughout their careers. It is included for its relationship to the sub-core category of *Becoming Ready*. This is followed by a brief exploration of what motivates teachers (Owens, 2001) to pursue growth and development (Maslow, 1954). The literature on teacher leadership is then explored, and in doing so addresses role ambiguity, changing relationships, the role of the principal and the need for safety, especially psychological safety. Also covered in this review is the relationship between professional growth, learning and leadership. The type of learning that is experienced is also explored, especially the manner in which the learning enables perspective transformation. Finally the construct of career construction (Savickas, 2002, 2005), especially as it relates to the construction of a new and different career self-concept, is explored along with the associated literature on role-breadth self-efficacy (Parker, 1998), role transition (Griffin & Neale, 2006), and role crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Throughout the literature comparison, I make reference, where appropriate, to the relationship and relevance of the literature to the core-category and sub-core categories of the substantive theory.

9.2 The Career Phases of Teachers

The participants in this research were experienced teachers, most of whom had taught for at least 20 years. As I listened to the participants, they reflected on their professional lives. As they did so, I was able to appreciate that experienced teachers have different needs from beginning teachers. The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* emerged early in the process, and enabled me to understand the importance of *career phase* in the lives of teachers, and in the development of teacher leadership.

As in any workplace, the individuals who compose the organisation are far from an homogenous group, thus the following discussion of Huberman's (1993) description of general trends in the professional life-cycle of teachers recognises that in the description of a general trend, an individual's personal and unique story can be lost. Notwithstanding, its relevance to the substantive theory is conceptually useful and assists one in gaining an understanding of those factors, which may affect teachers during the various phases of their careers.

Beginning with why teachers chose the career of teaching, Huberman (1993), in a sample of Swiss secondary teachers, identified three main reasons; pleasure derived from contact with young people and their achievement; as a way of earning a living and acquiring financial independence; and as a means of maintaining involvement with and passion for a particular subject. Once engaged in teaching as a career, expectations and reality intersect and a range of psychosocial factors affect teachers' perceptions of their work in different ways. Huberman (1993) describes the first two to three years of teaching as career entry and cites previous studies by Field

(1979), Fuller (1969) and Watts (1979) in describing this as a phase of survival and discovery. Those who remain after the career entry phase usually enter a period of stabilisation characterised by increased self-confidence and pedagogical mastery. It is usually in this phase that the individual commits to becoming a teacher. This stage is followed by the experimentation and diversification phase, typified according to Sikes (1985, cited in Huberman, 1993, p. 7) as a period in which teachers desire to heighten their impact in the classroom. Huberman (1993) states that they are “more willing to confront the aberrations of the system” (p. 7). He also states that this is the period in which they are most highly motivated and dynamic. He cites Prick (1986) who claims that: “motivation also translated into heightened personal ambitions; the quest for more authority, responsibility, prestige” (Huberman, 1993, p. 7).

Many then enter a period characterised by a period of self-doubt and questioning the value of being a teacher. Haman and Ratman (1984) cited in Huberman (1993) state: “they do their job, nothing more, nothing less...the sacred fire which once lit their work, gradually becomes a smoulder” (p. 8). According to Huberman (1993) this stage generally tends to occur somewhere between the ages of 35-50 years, or about the 15th year of teaching. This re-assessment stage coincides with the mid-career stage, also described by London and Stumpf (1982) in their model of career stages. While London and Stumpf’s model was not specifically related to teachers, it is consistent with Huberman’s findings in relation to the existence of broad and general trends of stages that change with age and time in the workplace. According to London and Stumpf (1982), the mid-career phase can be broken down into three phases; growth, maintenance and decline. While this is a diverse phase and lasts many years, there are some common themes that exist

between Huberman's re-assessment phase and the mid-career phase described by London and Stumpf (1982), with themes such as, evaluating goals, needing change, fearing risk of change, crisis and disengagement, indicative of the similarity.

Following the re-assessment phase, Huberman (1993) refers to a period when many teachers experienced a sense of "serenity and relational distance" (p. 9), being a time he describes more of a "state of mind" (p. 9). According to Huberman (1993) it generally occurs around 45-55 years of age. For many, this is a period when overall ambitions decline with a subsequent effect on professional investment. For many, the period of serenity gives way to a period Huberman describes as "conservatism and complaints" (p. 10). Drawing on the work of Peterson (1964) and Prick (1986) he explains that this tends to be most common in teachers aged between 50-60 years. Huberman (1993) explains that the conservatism so common in this group is typified by increased rigidity and resistance to innovation, stating that "there is less a quest for what one doesn't have and more a protection of what one does have"(p. 11). The final stage, described as disengagement by both Huberman (1993) and London and Stumpf (1982), is a stage when teachers begin to let go. Huberman (1993) states that "one detaches oneself progressively, without regrets from professional commitments and one takes more time for oneself" (p. 11). London and Stumpf (1982) refer to a period when self-concept becomes less dependent upon career and one learns to accept a reduced role, and look for new interests and sources of self-improvement.

While there are many theories explaining the developmental nature of careers, in particular the working phase of one's career, there is broad agreement, although differing in specific detail, that acknowledges age-related and experience-

related changes. The recognition of these various stages is a useful conceptual framework when looking at the careers of individuals in organisations.

Super (1990) however reminds us that an individual's career path is not always a linear one and that when an individual changes jobs or when workplace circumstances change, it is possible for an individual to move to a different stage. For example; a teacher at one school may be experiencing a phase of re-assessment, becoming progressively disengaged and beginning to plateau. He/she may change schools and find the new environment or the new position, invigorating and exciting. The new challenge may enable him/her to re-ignite the passion, once again becoming motivated and dynamic. Thus the career trajectory of a teacher does not have to follow the archetypal pattern described by Huberman (1993). Teachers can remain invigorated or be re-invigorated and can spend their lives as highly professional, highly committed, satisfied and effective professionals.

The extant literature is consistent with experiences of the participants in this study. In particular the process of *Becoming Ready* demonstrates the manner in which the more experienced teachers reach a phase when their aspirations are heightened, they are more willing to "confront the aberrations of the system" (Huberman, 1993, p. 7) and a period when they are most highly motivated and confident. The participants' genuine fear of becoming what they described as *bitter and twisted* demonstrates that in the schools in which this research occurred there was awareness of the general trend in age related career phases, in particular a recognition that the "sacred fire" (Haman & Ratman, 1984 as cited in Huberman, 1993, p. 8) can be extinguished with time.

The participants in this study were able to articulate a strong view that their experiences as IDEAS facilitators were able to *re-ignite the fire* that was in danger of becoming a slowly cooling ember. What was telling was the view typified by the comment that: *I have been searching my entire career for something that was not there*; seemingly a reference to the lack of opportunity or structures that cater for the needs of teachers who fear the pathway to disengagement. While this comment comes from a participant who it seems was crying out for a chance to grow and develop, it also highlights the lack of opportunity for such development. I wondered, how many teachers in schools throughout the world are left to languish, plateau and move quietly into what Farber (1999) referred to as “inconsequentiality” (p. 161).

As the participants in this study were experienced teachers who maintained a strong desire to grow and develop, an understanding of what motivated them was essential.

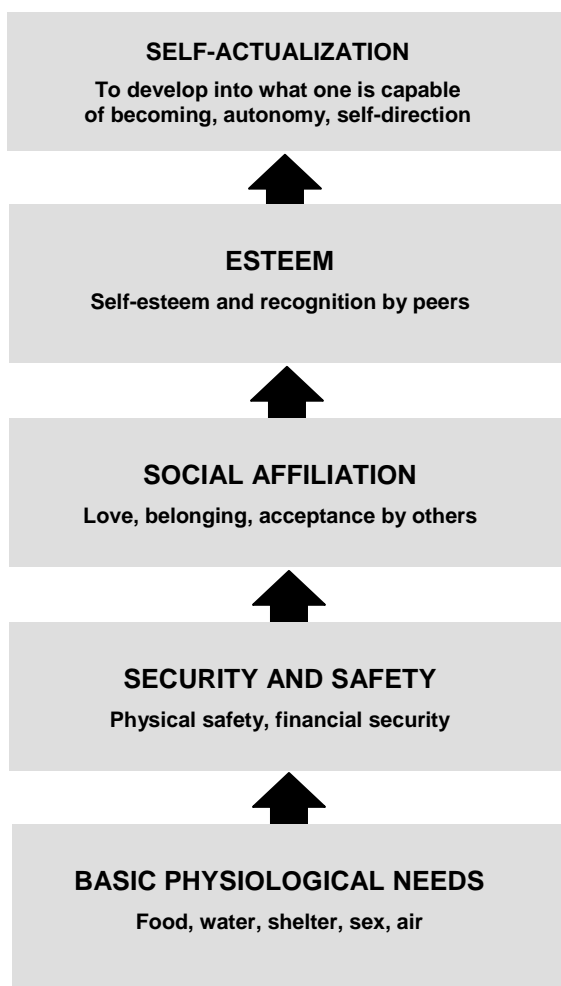
9.3 Understanding Motivation

“The highest reward for a person’s toil is not what is received for it, but what he/she becomes by it”. (Anonymous, cited in Leithwood, Menzies, Jantzi & Leithwood, 1999, p. 85)

Hamacheck (1987), in a humanistic perspective on motivation, identifies the personal need to constantly grow and develop, cultivating personal self-esteem, searching to understand our needs, wants, desires and feelings as strong motivators. Hence, according to Owens (2001), “one is always in the process of becoming” (p. 352).

According to Herr et al. (2004), Abraham Maslow (1954) developed one of the most powerful, widely accepted and enduring theories of human motivation. Maslow (1954) identified that people strive for an ultimate goal which he termed “self-actualisation” (cited in Owens, 2001, p. 353). Owens (2001) explains of Maslow’s theory that he used this term to describe the attainment of “self-fulfilment” (p. 353), the time when an individual perceives that one has become everything one can be and wants to be. While acknowledging that most people never achieve this level, especially through work alone, Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs, with self actualisation at the top and basic psychological needs at the base. The needs, he argued, unfold as motivators, from the base to the apex, with the higher need becoming a motivator only when the lower level pre-potent need has been met.

FIGURE 9.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs



Maslow, 1954; taken from Owens, 2001, p. 353.

Owens (2001) explains of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy, that the lower needs are termed "deficiency needs" (p. 354) as when they are deficient they are motivators, while the higher-order needs are known as "growth needs" (p. 354). As one moves up the hierarchy, the nature of the motivators change from the "extrinsic" (p. 354) lower needs, to the "intrinsic" (p. 354) higher needs. Owens (2001) explains that growth needs are never fully met as "responding to growth leads to increased growth" and thus "the cycle of personal growth is seemingly endless" (p. 354).

In relation to creating working environments that encourage personal growth, Owens' (2001) observation of Maslow's theory acknowledges its great potential. Owens states:

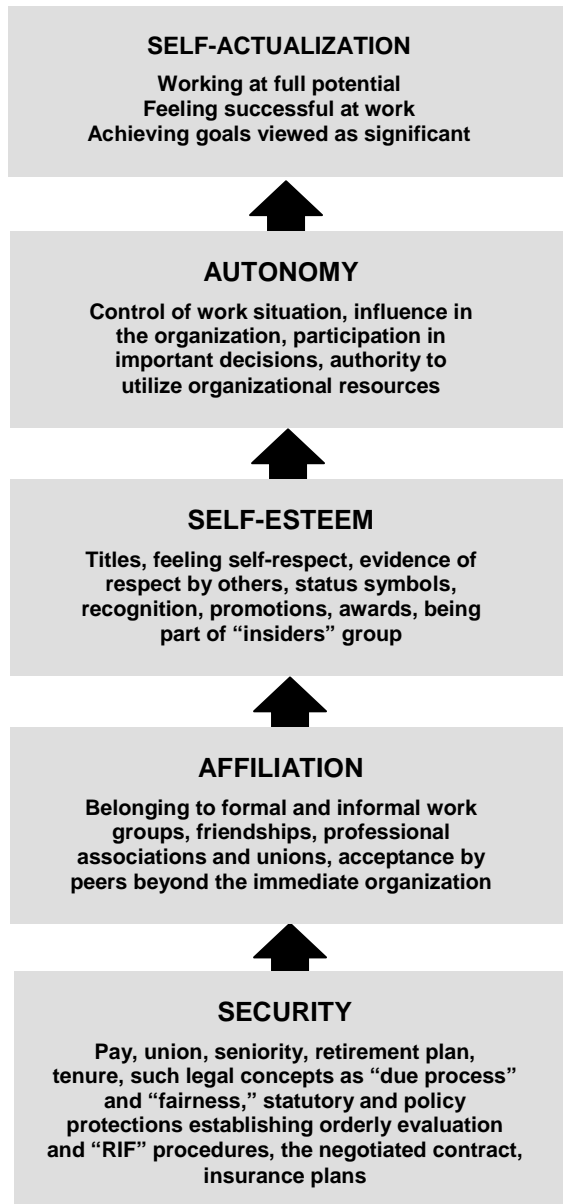
The hierarchy-of-needs motivation envisions the realistic possibility of generating enormous psychic energy within and among teachers and principals, and seeing that energy expand and increase over time: first by meeting their deficiency needs and, second, by encouraging their growth and development needs. This is the essence of creating growth-enhancing environments in schools as an organisational approach to motivating participants. (pp. 354-355)

In further investigations into motivation, Lyman Porter (1961) adapted Maslow's concept by adding a new level called autonomy. According to Owens (2001), this refers to:

the individual's need to participate in making decisions that affect him or her, to exert influence in controlling the work situation, to have a voice in setting

job-related goals, and to have authority to make decisions and latitude to work independently. (p. 356)

FIGURE 9.2: A Hierarchy of Work Motivation



Based on Porter's (1961) model; taken from Owens, 2001, p. 355.

If we are to examine both Maslow's and Porter's models, specifically with the work of the teacher in mind, it is reasonable to conclude that teachers must be afforded particular opportunities if they are to ascend the hierarchy. If for example

the principal does not permit participation in decision making or influence in the organisation (see Figure: 9.2 - Autonomy level) then the teacher's needs cannot be met. Thus, the capacity of the principal to create what Owens (2001) has referred to as "growth enhancing environments" (p. 352) cannot be underestimated.

When considering what motivates teachers, it is first essential to develop an understanding of where teachers are with respect to Maslow's hierarchy. Here, the work of Sergiovanni and Carver (1973) is useful, as one cannot motivate teachers by focusing on needs that have already been attained. Conversely, it is a waste of time and effort to target higher-level needs, if the lower pre-potent needs have not been met. Sergiovanni and Carver (1973) concluded that teachers are generally deficient in esteem, autonomy and self-actualisation needs; the higher order needs. However while this was the case in the seventies, it seems that not a lot has changed. More recently, Mulford (2003), in an investigation of *The Role of School Leadership in Attracting and Retaining Teachers in Australia*, found that school leadership directly and indirectly affects teacher satisfaction, recruitment and retention. He refers to nurturing professional development programs, transparency, participative decision making processes, respect and trust amongst others and articulates the important role of school leaders in the establishing cultures where teacher efficacy can flourish.

While Mulford has not attempted to replicate the earlier work of Sergiovanni and Carver, it appears that while times may have changed, the needs of teachers to grow and develop and participate in decision making, and gain more autonomy have not. Ingersoll (2003) maintains that teachers have too little autonomy in relation to school based decisions and that administrators and external agencies (for example:

Governments and Educational Authorities) retain considerable power to influence how teachers work. Pearson and Moomaw (2005) agree and note the link between lack of autonomy, dissatisfaction, stress and burnout.

Pearson and Moomaw (2005), in writing about teacher motivation and growth, noted that, for teachers, intrinsic motivators are stronger than extrinsic and that if teachers do not have access to opportunities for personal growth they are more likely to leave the profession. Their 2005 research also highlighted that teachers continue to lack the very autonomy, referred to in 1973 by Sergiovanni and Carver.

The participants in this study expressed a need to grow and develop and contribute to whole school issues; a need consistent with Porter's description of the autonomy level. Their experiences also indicate support for Sergiovanni and Carver's (1973) finding that teachers are generally deficient in levels of self-esteem and autonomy. Closer examination of the type of activities associated with Porter's self esteem and autonomy levels indicates their general alignment with the type of *beyond classroom activities* that constitute the work of a teacher leader. When the participants in this study expressed a desire to grow, their motivations were consistent with Hamacheck's (1987) humanistic perspective of motivation and Owens' (2001) view of continuous growth and development.

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* maintains that the participants in this study did not expressly seek to become teacher leaders. They did however, seek to grow and develop. In seeking to simultaneously contribute to the school and satisfy their own needs for professional growth and development, they

accepted the role as IDEAS facilitator in their schools. Through their experiences as facilitators of the IDEAS program, the participants also became teacher leaders. In becoming teacher leaders, the participants experienced an extended process of learning and leading, the nature of which is now explored, especially the manner in which they relate to each other and the process of the growth and development of teacher leaders.

9.4 Leadership, Learning and Teacher Development

When the participants in this study began their IDEAS facilitation role, they began to satisfy their need to grow and develop, and in doing so were participating in a professional development process. While the importance of teacher growth and development is widely accepted, the relationship between teacher growth and development and emergence of teacher leaders appears to be less widely researched. This was confirmed in the review of the extant literature which found this to be the case. As this relationship is central to the substantive theory presented in this thesis, what follows is an overview that focuses on the main features of, and the relationships between, learning, leading and teacher development.

This substantive theory posits that, through the processes of learning and leading in a safe environment, the participants in this study are able to develop the skills and confidence to perform new roles in the school, including those generally associated with teacher leaders. The substantive theory maintains that leadership, learning, teacher development and the evolution of self cannot be separated and that

they are intertwined processes. It agrees with Kelchtermans' (1999) definition of professional development, which states that:

Teachers evolve throughout their careers; in their actions in the class with their pupils; in their relationships with principals, colleagues and parents; in their thinking about themselves, their teaching and their role as teachers. We call this 'professional development': a lifelong learning and developmental process resulting from the interactions between teachers and their professional environment. (p. 183)

Kelchtermans' (1999) statements about professional development as being a "lifelong learning and developmental process" and reference to "their thinking about themselves" and "their role as teachers" (p. 183) are consistent with the substantive theory that emerged in this study. Day (1999) maintains that teacher professional development and career development for teachers are interrelated; a position shared by Nias (1996) who reminds us that you cannot separate the teacher from the person and that professional development is located in the professional and personal life of the individual. The lifelong and developmental nature of the learning is important and consistent with the process described as *becoming* in this study.

Teacher professional development is important, as "teachers cannot create and sustain conditions for the productive development of children if those conditions do not exist for teachers" (Sarason, 1990, p. xiv). This substantive theory recognises the relationship between teacher professional development, teacher leadership and productive outcomes for students acknowledging that "teacher leadership thrives on

meaningful professional development, including leadership development”

(Katzemeyer & Moller, 2001, p. 37).

According to Lambert (2003):

Learning and leading are deeply intertwined, and we need to regard each other as worthy of attention, caring, and involvement if we are to learn together. Indeed leadership can be understood as reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community. Reciprocity helps us build relationships of mutual regard, thereby enabling us to become co-learners. And as co-learners we are also co-teachers, engaging each other through our teaching and learning approaches. Adults, as well as children learn through the processes of inquiry, participation, meaning and knowledge construction. (p. 2)

She maintains “applying constructivist principles for teaching to the realm of leadership”...stating that to develop prospective teacher leaders:

we must bear in mind the learner’s views, challenge their beliefs, engage them in assessments that take into account the complexities of the broader context (for example: leading beyond the classroom), and construct meaning and knowledge through reflection and dialogue...[and that] leadership is the cumulative process of learning through which we achieve the purposes of school. (Lambert, 2003, pp. 2-3)

Lambert (2003) believes that professional learning should be mutual and interactive and contribute to the professional growth of all participants. She further asserts that “effective learning occurs in communities that direct their energies

toward something greater than ourselves and believe that all humans are capable of leadership” (p. 3). Her vision of leadership is based on the following assumptions:

Everyone has the right, responsibility and capability to be a leader, the adult learning environment in the school and the district is the most critical factor in evoking acts of leadership; within adult learning environments opportunities for skilful participation top the list of priorities; how we define leadership frames how people will participate in it; educators yearn to be purposeful, professional human beings, and leadership is an essential aspect of professional life; educators are purposeful, and leadership realises purpose. (Lambert, 2003, p. 4)

This substantive theory developed in this study agrees that leadership can be learned and developed. Additionally, it supports the view that if teachers are ready (see *Becoming Ready*) and provided with a well designed, long-term structured program (in this case the IDEAS program) which incorporates a conceptual framework (in this case the construct of parallel leadership) of leadership and enables participants to experience learning and leading in a safe environment, then the participants will begin to act like and perceive themselves as teacher leaders.

Like Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), this substantive theory maintains that “Leaders are not born; they grow and develop in knowledge, skills and attributes that make them great leaders” (p. 38). This position is shared by Crowther et al. (2002, 2008), Lambert (2003), and Murphy (2005) who also recognise the importance of the developmental process.

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* maintains that the participants in this study did not expressly seek to become teacher leaders; they did however seek to grow and develop. It is consistent with Lambert's (2003, p. 4) view that "educators yearn to be purposeful, professional human beings". In seeking to simultaneously meet the needs of the school and satisfy their own need (to become purposeful and professional human beings) for professional growth, and through their experiences as facilitators of the IDEAS program, the participants have enhanced and developed their leadership capacities.

Murphy (2005) also reminds us of the need for a trusting environment, "especially the freedom to try out ideas in a safe environment" (p. 148). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) maintain that: "Like other skills, leadership skills are fragile until the teacher leader practices them, gets feedback, and develops competence by using them. A hostile school environment can be an obstacle or even prevent this growth and development" (p. 53). The participants explained that becoming a teacher leader can be, in the words of one, *a lonely and dangerous journey*. All too often teachers feel that they should intuitively know how to lead. While it seems that some teachers are able to make transition to leadership with apparent ease, many of those who step forward to lead do so without adequate time to develop, to become competent or confident enough to lead. In her work with teacher leaders, Little (1996) concluded that often we ask teachers to assume leadership roles without any preparation or coaching. She further reminds us, that it is not surprising that many quickly retreat from such roles back to the relative safety of the classroom.

We already know that the egalitarian nature of many school cultures (Murphy, 2005) makes many teachers, even competent teacher leaders, reluctant to identify as leaders. As well, many do not to ask for help in developing as leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). These two negatives have the capacity to magnify their relative impacts with many teachers not recognising the need for leadership development while at the same time working in environments that do not provide opportunity for such.

The substantive theory emerging from this study maintains that teacher leadership will emerge to a greater level in environments where the *leadership dimension* (in the IDEAS program this is achieved through the concept of parallel leadership) of teachers' work is made explicit and opportunities are provided for teachers to experience and develop leadership capacities. Murphy (2005), in discussing the preparation of teacher leaders, explains the need for interested parties to give thoughtful development for teacher leadership and cites Fessler and Ungaretti (1994, p. 213) who state that existing arrangements leave teachers "ill equipped" (p. 213) to exercise leadership outside the classroom and "even the most accomplished teachers have little preparation for experience in roles outside the classroom" (p. 252). While there is general acknowledgement of the many potential difficulties faced by developing teacher leaders, Reeves (2008) reminds us that "leadership practices can be taught and learned" (p. 14).

While the substantive theory in this study maintains that leadership can be learned, it is not the type of learning that you gain from a book. The learning

environment, the process of learning, and the nature of learning are distinctive and explored in the following section.

9.4.1 Learning to be a Teacher Leader: A Special Type of Learning

Facilitators in IDEAS schools participated in long-term (at least two years) processes of professional development within their school and beyond. Within the school they worked as part of a team (ISMT) and with the principal, engaging in a range of processes including complex problem solving, data collection, developing and implementing processes of professional development for colleagues. Beyond the school, they participated in a series of university (USQ) facilitated, structured workshops. These workshops were interactive, supportive, and intellectual and were designed to encourage learning and deep reflection on that learning (Crowther et al., 2001). Another important characteristic of these workshops was the opportunity for the facilitator to experience the learning alongside the principal, who is also a workshop participant; experiencing learning alongside the facilitator. On a less formal basis facilitators are encouraged to establish and maintain support networks. The participants in this study were all members of a local IDEAS cluster which met several times during the year.

The IDEAS program maintains that professional learning is central to school revitalisation (Crowther et al., 2001a). Because the professional learning is continuous, connected and holistic it represents what Anders, Hoffman and Duffy (2000) refer to as an effective professional development process. Effective professional development should be “part of a thoughtful plan which employs

frequent opportunities for learning, is long term in nature” (Anders et al., p. 730) and has high levels of principal support including principal participation (Samuels, 1981). It should be context sensitive and include *job embedded learning opportunities* (Murphy, 2005), and enable teachers to relate their learning to classroom practice (Manning, 1995). Prospective teacher leaders need to be given opportunities to learn, develop and practice leadership in order to develop competence and confidence. According to Swanson (2000), “teacher leaders must be given opportunities to apply what they learn in meaningful ways” (p. 2). These characteristics of effective professional development programs are features of the IDEAS program and were important in shaping the experiences of the IDEAS facilitators.

The supportive networks are also important. Murphy’s (2005) discussion of professional development for teacher leadership acknowledges the importance of networks beyond the school. The participants in this study were part of local IDEAS cluster groups. This study has confirmed that the participants regarded those cluster groups as learning environments which were safe and stimulating.

Professionals, Lieberman & Miller (2004) maintain, “learn by actually doing work and reflecting on it” (p. 21). They learn:

on the job, through experience and practice...teacher leaders learn what they need to know in the process of performing the work. The concept of learning in practice is now viewed as foundational to teacher leadership; it rests on the idea that learning is more social, collaborative and context-dependent than previously thought. (Lieberman & Miller, 2004, p. 21)

Lave and Wenger (1991) developed a social learning theory that incorporated the contextual nature of learning and refer to three interrelated processes; learning, meaning and identity. In 1996 Lave, cited in Lieberman and Miller (2004) elaborated further on the social learning theory explaining that learning is:

social and collective... and comes about by social participation. They [teachers] learn through practice (learning as doing), through meaning (learning as intentional); through community (learning as participating and being with others); and through identity (learning as changing who we are). (p. 23)

Lave and Wenger (1991), state of identity construction, that it is the manner in which newcomers understand:

how masters of their trade talk, walk, work and generally conduct their lives; how people who are not part of the community of practice interact with it; what other newcomers are doing; what newcomers need to learn to become full practitioners; increasing understanding of how, when and about what old-timers collaborate, collude, and collide and what they enjoy, dislike, respect and admire. (p. 98)

In this study, prospective teacher leaders learned with, interacted with and worked with other teacher leaders, prospective teacher leaders and principals, thus having ample opportunity to *learn from the masters* and begin to imagine new roles for themselves. The Southwest Center for Teaching Quality, as cited in Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) maintain that “quality programs for teacher development

recognise a continuum of teacher growth and challenge participants to imagine larger roles for themselves as professionals” (p. 151).

Lambert (2003) states that when real learning occurs, teachers perceive of themselves differently. The perspective of learning advocated by Lambert resonates well with Mezirow’s (1991) concept of “transformative learning” (p. 1) and Swanson’s (2000) assertion that “Real Learning occurs when one’s current paradigms are challenged” (p. 19).

The substantive theory developed in this study posits that teacher leadership development is a process of transformation that results from critical reflection. Additionally, the substantive theory supports the view that, the participants, through a collaborative process of critical reflection, progressively came to construct a view of leadership as integral to their expanded view of their role as a teacher.

9.4.2 Transformative Learning and Constructivism

Steffe and Gale (1995) refer to the various forms of constructivism, including for example: radical, social, physical, evolutionary and postmodern, while Jonassen (1998) refers to the concepts of individual and personal constructivism. Personal constructivism, according to Jonassen (1998) is where individuals construct their own cognitive structures as they interpret experiences in various situations, while social constructivism includes learning from others. While constructivism recognises the role that society plays in the construction of knowledge and acknowledges that knowledge can be constructed through joint construction with other learners (social

constructivism), in this study “constructivism is based on the assumption that meaning exists within, in that learners build from experience and construct their own knowledge and meaning as opposed to relying on external enlightenment” (Jonassen, 1998, p. 282).

Lambert (2003) maintains:

Applying constructivist principles for teaching to the realm of leadership ...stating that to develop prospective teacher leaders we must bear in mind the learner’s views, challenge their beliefs, engage them in assessments that take into account the complexities of the broader context (e.g., leading beyond the classroom), and construct meaning and knowledge through reflection and dialogue...[and that] leadership is the cumulative process of learning through which we achieve the purposes of school. (pp. 2-3)

Learning may be defined as the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation and action. Mezirow (1991) says:

What we perceive and fail to perceive and what we think and fail to think are powerfully influenced by habits of expectation that constitute our frame of reference, that is, a set of assumptions that structure the way we interpret our experiences. (p. 1)

Mezirow (1991) explains that we make meaning (make sense or interpret an experience) through the use of meaning schemes and meaning perspectives. Furthermore, he says that meaning schemes are a set of related and habitual expectations that provide us with implicit rules for interpreting, while meaning

perspectives relate to the structure of our assumptions. Both schemes and perspectives selectively order and delimit what we learn. In explaining the manner in which meaning schemes and meaning perspectives affect what we do and do not perceive, comprehend and remember, Mezirow draws on the work of Goleman (1985) and states: “we trade of perception and cognition for the relief from anxiety generated when the experience does not comfortably fit with these meaning structures” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 4).

In further discussions on meaning making and reflection, Mezirow refers to critical reflection and explains:

Whereas reflection involves the assessment of the assumptions implicit in beliefs, including beliefs about how to solve problems, there is a special class of assumptions with which reflection has to deal that are quite different from these procedural considerations. While all reflection involves an element of critique, the term critical reflection will be reserved to challenging the validity of the presuppositions in prior learning...Critical reflection addresses the question of the justification for the very premises on which problems are posed or defined in the first place...becoming critically aware of our own presuppositions involves challenging our established and habitual patterns of expectation, the meaning perspectives with which we have made sense out of our encounters with the world, others, and ourselves. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12)

Mezirow (1991) argues that such critical reflection can result in “perspective transformation” (p. 14). Adults, he explains, often experience such transformations as a result of “an externally imposed disorientating dilemma such as a divorce, death

of a loved one or change in job status” (p. 13). It may however occur through a process of learning, especially those learning experiences that precipitate critical reflection, so called “trigger events” (p. 14). “Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about our world” (p. 14). The substantive theory developed in this thesis maintains that as teachers transition from teachers to teacher leaders, their views of who they are and how they work, change. They undergo a “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 14), and construct the world and their place in that world, differently from before. Mezirow’s (1991) description of “transformative learning” (p. 1) provides an explanation of the cognitive changes experienced by the participants in this study and is consistent with the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

When teachers become teacher leaders, there is more than a change in cognition, as teacher leaders perform different tasks from teachers and need to develop the confidence to perform such tasks. Developing confidence to perform a range of new tasks requires that one feels safe to learn, to make mistakes and reflect on the mistakes and the learning.

9.5 The Importance of Safety to Prospective Teacher Leaders

The journey from teacher to teacher leader is not a simple one. What makes it more complex is that most of the participants in this study were becoming teacher leaders without being explicitly aware of it at the time.

Once teachers have become teacher leaders many find themselves in the role of teacher leader only to realise that they have taken on extra responsibilities without shedding any of the traditional classroom responsibilities (Smylie et al., 2002).

Tensions can result when the teacher leader or his/her colleagues believe that the leadership responsibilities interfere with the individuals classroom responsibilities. Smylie et al. (2002) refers to “role overload, stress, role ambiguity and role conflict for teacher leaders as they [attempt] to balance their new school-level responsibilities with their classroom responsibilities” (p. 166). Smylie (1996, p. 548) asks: “Are they instructors of students or leaders of teachers?”

Beyond the potential for “role overload” there is the potential for role ambiguity and role conflict. A major challenge for teacher leaders appears to be the absence of a clear description of what a teacher leader does; a defined work role. Smylie and Denny (1990) reported that peer teachers are not clear about what teacher leaders do. The relationships between teacher leaders, other teachers, and school administrators can be very unclear. Datnow and Castellano (2002, p. 204) describe it as “a netherworld that [is] neither that of the administrator or the teacher”.

Ainscow and Southworth (1996) describe being a teacher leader as:

a no man’s land between their colleagues in the staff room and the senior management team. In acting in the interests of the whole school they may, on one hand, be seen as agents of authority, whilst on the other hand, they are wanting to be perceived as acting on behalf of the staff. (p. 243)

Little (1998) makes reference to individual teacher leaders being left to “carve out identities” (p. 92) on a case by case basis. This was consistent with what was

observed in this study and is discussed later in this literature comparison, particularly in association with Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) explanation of "role crafting" (p. 179). To complicate the process of *becoming* even more, Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) maintain that "Teachers are socialised to be followers, not leaders" (p. 3) and in most schools there are cultures of egalitarianism, which according to Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) are inconsistent with teacher leadership. Little (1995) maintains that the norms of equality in the teaching profession discourage prospective teacher leaders, while Smylie (1992) reported that the violation of these norms is associated with "collegial disfavour and sanction" (p. 56).

Thus, the road to becoming a teacher leader is a potentially dangerous one. Prospective teacher leaders need to be protected from work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, collegial disfavour, alienation and sanction. Further to this, the participants in this study were concerned about the possibility of being associated with failure. If the program failed to deliver what was expected of it, the IDEAS facilitators feared being blamed. There was also the personal dimension; could they stand up to the scrutiny of, and possible negative comments from, their peers? Would their friendships with their peers suffer? While the experienced teachers in this study had a strong desire to grow and develop, they potentially had much to lose in the process of becoming teacher leaders, thus it is not surprising to find that *safety* was a key component of the core category.

9.5.1 The Role of the Principal

The safety that the participants sought throughout this study was largely the result of the actions of the principal. This finding is consistent with that of researchers such as Frost and Durant (2003) who state that principals “have both the power and the strategic position to create internal structures and conditions that are conducive to teacher leadership” (p. 179). Moller and Katzenmeyer (1996) further reinforce the central role of the principal in maintaining that principals’ leadership is crucial for the development of teacher leadership. They state that “the principal is the most important person to affect the willingness of the school community to accept teacher leadership” (p. 12). Little (1988) also maintains that principals should provide both space and authority such that teacher leaders can engage in leadership work.

The principals in this study were highly supportive of the IDEAS facilitators. They learned with them at workshops and supported the facilitators as they conducted the workshops. The model of parallel leadership encompassed in the IDEAS program provided legitimacy for the relationship between the principal and the teacher leader, as well as legitimising the role of teacher leadership in the participating schools. From the very beginning, at the *Sizing Up* stage, the whole school community was familiar with the model of parallel leadership, thus any likely confusion about the legitimacy of the role or how the teacher leader and the principal would work together was made clear and the role of ambiguity, so often associated with teacher leadership roles, was avoided.

The schools in which this study was undertaken had voluntarily agreed to participate in the IDEAS school revitalisation program. Thus, the teachers were aware that the nature of their roles and their relationships between teachers, students and school leaders could change. In agreeing to take part in the IDEAS program, the teachers at the various schools were aware that IDEAS facilitators had a legitimate role and that many changes were likely to occur. In making this explicit early in the process, the issues associated with challenges to the egalitarian culture were reduced. What also emerged as important in this study was the pace at which teacher leadership was introduced to the school community. IDEAS is a program that lasts at least two years, during which time school communities learn together and are agentic in the emergence of new cultures and ways of working. The gradual emergence of teacher leaders proved to be important as it takes some time before the norms of isolation can be replaced by the norms of collaboration common in schools where teacher leadership is the norm (Bolman & Deal, 1994). The introduction of teacher leadership in many schools challenges old models of hierarchical leadership and the norms of egalitarianism, thus it is useful to give teachers time to embed the new ways of working that are integrated in the concept of teacher leadership.

The role of the principal in choosing the right person to tap on the shoulder cannot be underestimated. Because teacher leaders are afforded their position as leaders based on their own mastery of classroom teaching (Little, 1988) and “one cannot be an effective teacher leader if one is not first an accomplished teacher” (Odell, 1997, p. 122), it was imperative that only those who were widely regarded as competent teachers were encouraged to pursue teacher leadership roles. In the *Preparing to Commit* phase of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* school principals

approached and encouraged particular teachers to accept the role of IDEAS facilitator. They selected the individual teachers based on their current and future leadership capacities. In all but one case the participants in this study said that they would not have stepped forward without this endorsement by the principal.

Many were surprised that the principal had asked them and were even more surprised that the principal spoke of them in *leadership terms*. While being regarded as a competent teacher is a pre-requisite for teacher leadership, many teachers do not seem to *self identify* their own present leadership qualities or potential leadership capacity. In this study the importance of the principal in identifying and encouraging potential teacher leaders was critical. All but one needed this encouragement despite being ready to grow and develop. The principal's capacity to identify those teachers who will be successful in the role of teacher leader is a major contributor to the participant's (the IDEAS facilitator's) perception of safety. In this study there were many reasons why the participants felt safe, among them being that they had been chosen for a challenge for which they were ready. The principal's endorsement of them seemed to be important in helping the prospective teacher leaders believe that they could succeed, and is supported by the readiness of the respondents to explain that most would not have considered taking on the role without this endorsement.

Murphy (2005) reminds us that potential teacher leaders have other characteristics, including a willingness to learn, a willingness to work with others and being well regarded by other faculty. Thus apart from the prospective teacher leader's classroom competence, the principal is also required to consider a broader range of issues when selecting and encouraging prospective teacher leaders. In my

experience with IDEAS schools over the past nine years, I have seen a number of IDEAS facilitators who were unsuccessful in their attempts to lead the IDEAS program in their school. While the particular reasons for their lack of success varied, and often there appeared to be many possible contributing factors, all too often it seemed that the principal had encouraged an individual who was not well supported by the staff. In such cases it appears that becoming a teacher leader is almost an impossible task.

Teachers do not become teacher leaders simply as a result of the existence of a safe environment, they need to experience learning and leading in a safe environment before they can develop the confidence to lead and experience the necessary perspective transformation. Furthermore they need to learn to lead through leading, and they need to experience *skill development*, safe in the knowledge that they can learn from their mistakes.

Earlier in this literature comparison the important relationship between learning and leading was addressed; however the further discussion of the importance of safety should be made with reference to the “nature of the learning and leading experiences”.

As I interviewed the participants in this study I quickly became aware of their concerns in relation to their colleagues. They made reference to some of their peers describing them as *highly aggressive, threatening, and difficult to work with*. Many mentioned the highly unprofessional behaviour of teachers at staff meetings and the unwillingness of some teachers to communicate in respectful ways. I quickly came to

realise that the participants in this study were fearful of their colleagues. As I began to understand the manner in which teachers become teacher leaders I began to appreciate the essential link between learning and leading, and that learning to become a teacher leader is a very special type of experience. Earlier in this study I wrote:

Learning to lead is unlike much other learning in that the stakes are much higher. When you are learning to lead you are learning not only about leadership but also about yourself and also allowing others to learn about you at the same time. In this study the participants were learning to lead and simultaneously transforming from teachers to teacher leaders, assimilating a new role into their professional identities as well as reshaping how others within the school perceive them.

The participants talked about the manner in which the learning had stimulated deep self reflective thinking, how it enabled them to understand teacher leadership and its importance in school revitalisation. It challenged and transformed their perceptions of their professional self image, the role of experienced teachers in emerging contemporary schools, their understandings of leadership, the role of teachers, their relationships with colleagues, principals and students.

It is worth remembering here that when an inexperienced leader learns to lead, he/she often does so in public.

The participants in this study were keen to grow and develop and they were ready to experience leading and learning; however as was evident in the sub-core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading* they would only do so if they felt safe. They wanted to feel safe from the taunts and comments from their peers, from possible public humiliation, from what could best be described as a bullying behaviour. They sought and gained the principal's reassurance that they would not be left alone. They wanted reassurance that the principal would be present when the IDEAS facilitators conducted whole school workshops, that the principal would reinforce to the whole staff the reason for the workshops, and that the principal

would participate in the workshops. Once again the role of the principal was essential in the establishment and maintenance of a safe environment.

The establishment of a safe environment was also made easier by the existence of some of the protocols that are essential components of the IDEAS program. In particular, the participants in this study greatly valued the protocol of *no blame* and the use of *professional conversations*. The protocol of no blame has been incorporated into the IDEAS program since its inception. Included because “it is an explicit commitment to the development of safe and supportive environments that are essential to the process of professional learning” (Crowther et al., 2002, p. 37). This protocol has proven to be very successful in helping establish environments where IDEAS facilitators feel safe; safe from unprofessional comments, taunts and the like. When the nature of the type of learning is taken into account, it is easy to see why the protocol of no blame is so important as it enables the participants to feel safe enough to do things they would not normally do, thus extending themselves and learning from the experiences.

While the professional conversations and no blame protocols were important contributors to the establishment and maintenance of a safe environment, they were always secondary to the role of the principal in maintaining the environment of safety. The protocol of no blame and the use of professional discussions are tools that the principal or facilitator can use as mechanisms that contribute to the teacher leader’s perception of safety, however it is the role of the principal that is paramount to establishing and maintaining the necessary safety. In this study one of the participants withdrew from the IDEAS facilitation role as he believed that the

principal had not provided him with the necessary support. In referring to the principal he stated:

I felt that I'd been left alone to introduce IDEAS by myself and I hadn't really been supported by [Principal]. She agreed with that....I felt very lonely and vulnerable, and I feel that I took the brunt [from resistant staff] of the IDEAS issues and the jokes.

Teacher leadership development is heavily dependent on the actions of the principal (Barth, 2001). Teacher leadership development does not happen on its own; “the most essential prerequisite for success is commitment from leaders” (Birnie & Lustgarten, 1996, p. 135). According to Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) “new teacher leadership roles depend heavily on teacher leader-principal interaction and collaboration, principals are in first-order positions to block, to support and facilitate, and to shape the nature and function of teacher leadership in schools” (p. 151).

Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) state:

Mak[ing] teacher leadership a priority and tak[ing] risks to provide teacher leaders with what they need to succeed. This does not happen by chance; it is a conscious effort by these leaders to design an environment that is supportive of all learning, including teacher development. (p. 85)

The strong school leader develops structural systems that support teacher leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Specifically, principals may incorporate policies and structures that support and buttress emerging teacher leadership roles (Crowther & Olsen, 1997).

When considering relationships, it is worth remembering that teacher leadership changes the relationships between principals and teachers. It is important that both the teacher leaders and principals reflect and consider the new relationships including new conceptions of power (Murphy, 2005; Wasley, 1991). Crowther et al., (2002, p. 64) remind us that the “implications for school principals are considerable”...and that the changed relationships and role that emerge can “pose significant challenges for principals” (p. 60).

If principals want to encourage teacher leadership, they must take measures to establish a culture of trust and building strong relationships with teachers (Murphy, 2005). Any teacher will be reluctant to take on a leadership role without being comfortable with the level of trust received from the school administration (Kahrs, 1996, p. 36, cited in Murphy, 2005, p. 132). Louis (2007) found that:

Trust cannot be easily separated from expanded teacher empowerment and influence. Teachers are not passive actors in the school, but co-constructors of trust. As active professionals, teachers who feel left out of important decisions will react by withdrawing trust, which then undermines change. (p. 19)

The previous overview of principal support strategies provided in this literature comparison establishes the critical role of the principal in the development of teacher leadership, especially with reference to the need for safety, and is consistent with the experiences of the IDEAS facilitators in this study.

When the participants in this study first accepted the role as IDEAS facilitators many had little experience in whole-school leadership processes or in working closely with the respective principals. In accepting the role as IDEAS facilitator the IDEAS facilitators and the principals in this study have demonstrated trust in each other.

The IDEAS facilitators wanted to experience learning and leading, however were concerned about safety. From the time the participants committed to their IDEAS facilitation role they needed to trust that the principal, and to an extent the IDEAS program, would establish and maintain the safe environment necessary for them to experience learning and leading of the type necessary to become teacher leaders.

In terms of trust and collegial relationships, the substantive theory developed in this study supports the possibility that; 1) the existence and maintenance over time, of a safe environment whereby prospective teacher leaders and principals can experience learning and leading together, enhances existing trust and enables the co-construction of environments with higher levels of trust, and 2) that teacher leadership development depends on trust, which in turn depends on the existence of a safe environment to experience learning and leading.

9.5.2 Trust and Psychological Safety

The literature on school improvement includes discussions about the importance of trust to the process of school improvement. Researchers such as Louis

(2007), Goddard, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) and Bryk and Schneider (2002) have established trust as a resource for school improvement. As I read this literature I reflected on the issue of safety and made what I believe is a logical link between safety and trust, reasoning that in a trusting environment the IDEAS facilitators would feel safe. However as I delved further into the construct of trust I became less comfortable with my initial reasoning.

Different researchers define trust in different ways. Louis (2007) refers to trust “as confidence in or reliance on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle, of another person or group” (p. 4). Louis (2007) distinguishes between “institutional” and “relational” trust (p. 5), while Bryk and Schneider (2002) discuss three types of trust; “organic, contractual and relational” (pp.16-20). Both Louis and Bryk and Schneider explain that it is the “relational trust” that is most important characteristic of effective schools.

Trust is based on relationships and personal interactions (Louis, 2007). It results from being a valued member of a group, from sustained relationships, is evolutionary, and is founded on beliefs and observed behaviours (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). As I reflected on trust, particularly relational trust, it was clear that it was something that developed over time. Also, according to Goddard et al. (2001) while many schools have pockets of high relational trust within, the overall whole school measure of relational trust was usually low.

The substantive theory developed in this thesis locates safety as a key property of the core category. The respondents constantly made reference to some of their peers being *critical or aggressive* and there was strong agreement from the

respondents that the professional communities in which they worked could be risky places for those who were seen to be associated with change.

As I interrogated the school improvement literature I searched for the relationship between trust and safety, however was struck by the absence of such literature. On subsequent broadening of my search I located a small, relatively recent body of literature on a construct which has been termed by Edmondson (2002) as “psychological safety” (p. 1). Edmondson distinguishes between trust and psychological safety on several grounds, however it is the timeframe and the “focus on self rather than others” (2002, p. 8) that distinguishes psychological safety from trust. Trust is established over a period of time, whereas psychological safety can be established in a much shorter timeframe. Furthermore, unlike trust, psychological safety is not necessarily reciprocal. In a trusting relationship one asks oneself if he/she is safe and if others are also safe, whereas psychological safety requires only that the individual perceives him/herself to be safe (Edmondson, 2002).

While Edmondson (2002) points out that trust and psychological safety are distinct constructs, she does recognise their complementarity and commonality, in that both “describe intrapsychic states involving perceptions of risk or vulnerability, as well as making choices to minimise negative consequences...both have potential positive consequences for work groups and organisations” (p. 8).

Psychological safety acknowledges that most people are “impression managers; reluctant to engage in behaviours that could threaten the image others hold of them” (Edmondson, 2002, p. 1). We consciously and unconsciously manage the

risk to the image that others hold of us. It is of particular relevance when we find ourselves in uncertain, unfamiliar or changing circumstances. In such circumstances we often need to engage in learning behaviour such as asking questions, seeking help, experimenting, seeking clarification or taking risks. Most people, for instrumental or socio-emotional reasons, (we prefer others' approval rather than disapproval) seek to minimise harm to their reputation (Edmondson, 1999, 2002).

Psychological safety is defined as “the degree to which people perceive their work environment as conducive to taking interpersonal risks. In psychological safe environments, people believe that if they make a mistake others will not penalise or think less of them for it” (Edmondson, 2002, p. 5). In addition, she explains that:

... individuals engage in a kind of tacit calculus at micro-behavioural decision points, in which they assess the interpersonal risk associated with a given behaviour (Edmondson 1999). In this tacit process, one weighs the potential action against the particular interpersonal climate, as in, ‘If I do this here, will I be hurt, embarrassed or criticized?’ A negative answer to this tacit question allows the actor to proceed. In this way, an action that might be unthinkable in one work group can be readily taken in another, due to different beliefs about probable interpersonal consequences. (Edmondson, 2002, pp. 6-7)

Edmondson cites Schein (1985) explaining that psychological safety helps people overcome defensiveness or in Schein's terms “learning anxiety” (2002, p. 7) when confronted with disconcerting, confusing or ambiguous situations.

“Psychological safety describes a climate in which the focus can be on productive

discussion that enables early prevention of problems and the accomplishment of shared goals because people are less likely to focus on self-protection” (Edmondson, 2002, p. 7).

It is the link between learning and psychological safety that is of particular importance, for Edmondson (2002) explains that the easiest way to avoid reputation damage is to avoid asking questions, seeking clarification, experimenting and reflecting. By saying and doing nothing, our reputations remain intact, however no real learning occurs. Furthermore, for organisations that wish to change, overcome challenges or confront problems (such as the IDEAS schools in this study), psychological safety is paramount. Participants who are able to work together in a non-threatening manner are more likely to contribute new ideas and engage in reflective learning and experimentation as opposed to those who work in environments where “proposing a new idea will lead to an attack, to him or her being censored, ridiculed or penalized” (West, 1990, p. 312).

The relationship between psychological safety and positive learning and organisational outcomes has been established. Baer and Frese (2003) maintain that organisations with an environment for psychological safety “enhance learning behaviour as well as the use of employees’ creative potential” (p. 50). Edmondson (1999) states that psychological safety results in better team learning, while Brown and Leigh (1996) report that it results in “higher level of job involvement and exertion of greater effort” (as cited in Baer & Frese, 2003, p. 50). In research undertaken in a manufacturing company, Baer and Frese (2003) found that there was a direct positive relationship between climate for psychological safety and firm

performance. Edmondson (2002) also reports similar outcomes from research undertaken in medical work environments. Baer and Frese (2003) concluded their study with a recommendation that effective process innovation can only be achieved by ensuring psychological safety.

Team leaders have an important role in creating learning environments that are psychologically safe (Edmondson, 1999, 2002). Leaders through their actions can create environments of psychological safety. By removing sanctions for mistakes made by those whose motivations are well intentioned, and aligned with the goals of the group, by reducing power and status differences within the group and accepting human fallibility as natural, the leader can create a psychologically safe environment where members feel safe to learn without fear of punishment or humiliation (Edmondson, 2002).

Psychological safety should be distinguished from complacency or an “anything goes” (Edmondson, 2002, p. 22) attitude. Psychological safety exists in environments where members are actively engaged in work and learning, it involves effort and challenge and one must be motivated before this can occur. The relationship between psychological safety and motivation to achieve agreed team goals is important, for without agreed inspirational and shared goals it is unlikely that a team will be motivated to ask questions, search for solutions, take risks or experiment; actions associated with learning (Edmondson, 2002). Inspirational shared goals or ambitious visions motivate members to engage in learning behaviours, however only if a psychologically safe environment exists in which learning without sanction, humiliation or punishment can occur. Thus, when

organisations want to achieve innovation or engage in change, the pivotal role of the team leader in creating shared goals and psychologically safe learning environments becomes obvious.

The construct of psychological safety appears to be highly relevant to the substantive theory developed in this study. The participants in this study were motivated to learn and the environments in which they worked (IDEAS schools) were engaged in processes of change and innovation. The IDEAS program is one that provides ample opportunity for teams to engage in learning, reflection and risk taking. In the processes (sub-core categories) of *Preparing to Commit* and *Experiencing Learning and Leading*, the participants described learning experiences consistent with the type of learning that occurs in psychologically safe environments. The core category of *Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* makes explicit the relationship between learning and safety. The participants in this study were concerned about what their peers thought of them, they were worried about the taunts and comments from their peers. From the perspective of psychological safety they appear to be engaging in “impression management” (Edmondson, 2002, p. 1). The participants needed reassurance that the principal would support them if things went wrong. The comment of one participant (following excerpt) is indicative of his concern about his peers and the need for the principal to provide the necessary safety:

...at the same time I was really scared. I have never done anything like this before and we have some really nasty people on staff here. After talking with [Principal's name] I felt confident enough to give it a go. He assured me that he would not let them take their frustrations out on me. I was still scared but

prepared to give it a go. You know I didn't sleep properly for ages. I had to talk myself through the fear.

Participants in this study also made reference to the use of professional conversations and the principle of no blame, both of which are designed to assist members of groups engage in respectful and professional conversations. The participants in this study found that the use of the professional conversation protocols and the principle of no blame enabled the more teachers (their peers) to communicate and interact in a respectful manner. The resulting conversations were safer and the fear of humiliation or sanction was less. The use of the professional conversations and the protocol of no blame, along with the explicit support of the principal, enabled the IDEAS facilitators to feel safe. It appears that the establishment of such a psychologically safe environment was the precursor for the transformative learning that occurred. Furthermore, a psychologically safe environment where one can learn from mistakes without fear of sanction or punishment is consistent with the learning environment where emerging leaders can develop the confidence necessary to become teacher leaders.

As a consequence of establishing and maintaining safe environments in which the IDEAS facilitators can experience learning and leading, the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* maintains that the IDEAS facilitators construct a new professional image of themselves. Thus it is important to review the literature associated with this process. In the literature comparison, Donald Super's (1990) psychological construct of career self-concept and the more recent theory of career construction by Mark Savickas (2002, 2005) provide researchers with useful

conceptual frameworks and are consistent with the substantive theory that has been developed from this research.

9.6 Career Self-Concept and Career Construction

Donald Super developed and reformulated his life-span, life-space theory over a period of 40 years, from 1953 until his death in 1994. His (1990) life-span, life space approach to career development was underpinned by a total of 14 propositions, including:

- i. That career development can be described in a series of stages, characterised by a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment and decline.
- ii. The process of career development is essentially the development of occupational self-concept.

Super (1990) depicts a strong relationship between career development and personal development, making it clear that you cannot separate feeling about careers from the individual. He depicts a career as:

the life course of a person encountering a series of developmental tasks and attempting to handle them in such a way as to become the kind of person he or she wants to become. With a changing self and changing situations, the matching process is never really completed. (Super, 1990, pp. 206-207)

According to Super (1990) a career is an ongoing process which, in a perfect world, enables an individual to become what he or she “wants to become” (p. 225); a

proposition consistent with Maslow's (1954) concept of self actualisation discussed earlier in this chapter. In more recent times, Mark Savickas (2005) has extended Super's earlier notions, further seeing career as an opportunity to "realise potential", "provide a context for human development", and "work as a manifestation of selfhood and vocational development as a continuing process of improving the match between the self and the situation" (p. 44).

Savickas (2002, 2005) has developed a career construction theory that builds on earlier work of Super (1953, 1984, 1990). The theory of career construction uses "social constructionism" as a metatheory and explains "the interpretive and interpersonal processes through which individuals impose meaning and direction on their vocational behaviour" (2005, p. 42). Savickas maintains that we construct representations of reality and not reality itself. By taking contextualist and constructionist perspectives, career construction sees "development driven by adaptation to an environment rather by maturation of inner structures" (2005, p. 43). McIlveen (2009) explains that "the constructivist approach emphasises the individual as the primary creator of meaningfulness, whereas the social constructionist approach emphasises how psychosocial environmental systems (for example; discourse) mediate how the individual engages in the process of creating meaningfulness" (p. 77). McIlveen (2009) also explains that the social constructionist approach is subsumed by a contextualist worldview that sees individuals interacting with their environment which is simultaneously changing, and that an event can only be understood with reference to time and context. Savickas' (2005) career construction theory is consistent with this worldview in maintaining that "individuals construct their careers by imposing meaning on their occupational behaviour and occupational

experiences” (p. 43). Accordingly, Savickas defines career as “a subjective construction that imposes personal meaning on past memories, present experiences, and future aspirations, by weaving them into a life theme that patterns the individual’s life work” (2005, p. 43).

Savickas (2005) lists a total of 16 propositions that underpin his theory. Those relevant to the substantive theory developed in this study include propositions nine and ten. Proposition nine maintains that:

The process of career construction is essentially that of developing and implementing vocational self-concepts in work roles... implementation of vocational self-concepts in work roles involves a synthesis and compromise between individual and social factors. It evolves from role playing and learning from feedback. (p. 46)

Proposition ten relates to change and includes: “...self-concepts and vocational preference do change with time and experience as the situations in which people live and work change” (Savickas, 2005, p. 46).

The substantive theory developed in this research asserts that the IDEAS facilitators, as a consequence of their interactions with each other and their environments, change their perceptions of themselves, from teachers to teacher leaders and is consistent with Super’s construct of career self-concept and Savickas’ process of career construction.

The literature comparison below further explores processes that broadly relate to the process of career construction and have earned their way into this comparison due to their relevance to the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

9.6.1 Becoming a Teacher Leader as Enhanced Role Breadth Self-Efficacy

I began this thesis by arguing that schools needed to change and that the work of teachers also needed to change. The IDEAS program acknowledges both and provides a mechanism for that change. I have argued that as a result of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators who were able to experience learning and leading in safe environments, the participants transformed from teachers to teacher leaders. I have argued that this transition was a consequence of developing an understanding of and experiencing success in teacher leadership roles, and an extended process of professional learning that has enabled participants to transform their thinking about their roles as teacher leaders in schools, which are themselves changing.

Throughout the thesis, I have referred to participants developing a growing confidence to lead and that this was a consequence of their experiences. I have stated that they began to perceive themselves as teacher leaders who were confident in their roles as teacher leaders. I have further argued that one cannot be a teacher leader unless one *thinks of oneself* as a teacher leader. According to the substantive theory, there are two important dimensions to *Becoming a Teacher Leader*; developing the confidence to lead and developing transformed view of oneself and one's work.

Parker (1998) has proposed that employees in modern organisations need to develop expanded performance requirements. As organisations change they need to develop confidence to perform a greater variety of roles or different roles. Referring to this as “Role Breadth Self-Efficacy” (RBSE) (p. 1) she explains that RBSE is different from Bandura’s (1986) concept of self-efficacy. “Self-efficacy refers to people’s judgements about their ability to perform particular tasks. It is concerned not with the skills one has, but the judgements of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses” (Bandura, 1986, as cited in Parker, 1998, p. 1). Employees with high self-efficacy feel capable of performing tasks and are more successful in performing them (Barling & Beattie, 1983), will persist for longer periods under adverse conditions (Lent, Brown & Larkin, 1987) and according to Hill, Smith and Mann (1987) will be more effective in coping with change.

Parker (1998) explains that “RBSE concerns the extent to which people feel confident that they are able to carry out a broader and more proactive role, beyond traditional described requirements” (p. 1). “RBSE refers to employees’ belief that they are capable of performing an array of tasks given they are motivated to do so” (p. 2). While Parker (1998) points out that the factors that facilitate RBSE have not been explored, she makes reference to Bandura’s (1982) four factors that develop self-efficacy. She explains of Bandura’s four factors that: “the first is enactive mastery, or repeated performance success;... the second is modelling or vicarious experience;... the third verbal persuasion or realistic encouragement and the fourth, being...experience [such as] skill levels and motivation” (Parker, 1998, p. 2).

The development of enhanced RBSE as described by Parker is consistent with what I noted of the IDEAS facilitators as they developed into teacher leaders and provides a useful conceptual model that supports the substantive theory. Enactive mastery it seems was achieved through the successful leadership experiences. The modelling and vicarious experiences are a result of working closely with other facilitators and principals in processes of leadership. The verbal persuasion and realistic encouragement result from the principal's initial endorsement, continued support, and the support from fellow IDEAS facilitators. The fourth is consistent with the knowledge that the IDEAS facilitators in this study were experienced competent teachers who were motivated to grow and develop.

Parker's concept of RBSE is useful in understanding the manner in which the participants in this study developed the *confidence* to perform the type of teacher leadership tasks (for example; leading professional developments sessions for colleagues, developing vision statements and school-wide pedagogical frameworks) beyond that of a teacher, however consistent with those of a teacher leader. A teacher leader has a broader role than a teacher; hence in becoming a teacher leader the role breadth has expanded with the new role encompassing new and different skills. For the teachers in this study, the confidence to perform those new tasks was developed through learning and leading in a safe environment, thus while their role expanded, so too did their confidence to perform that role.

9.6.2 Becoming a Teacher Leader as Changing Role Perception and Role Transition

The transition of teacher to teacher leader can be understood in terms of Neale and Griffin's (2006) "Self-Held Work Role" model. This model assumes work perceptions are not static and the role holder's idiosyncratic ideas and beliefs about one's role influence behaviour at work. The authors argue that the model is useful in understanding work role transition and especially so in organisations that are in processes of change and enable employees some freedom in defining their roles.

Neale and Griffin's (2006) model of role perception consists of three components; system requirements, role schemas and self-concept with all three components interacting to influence behaviour. "System requirements are based on individuals' perceptions of the employing organisation and the demands the system makes of them" (Neal & Griffin, 2006, p. 27). Role schemas are cognitive structures which Fiske & Taylor (1991) explain:

define behaviours [which individuals] believe are typically exhibited by role holders within the broader society. Those role schemas are constructed on the basis of experience within specific organisations, job training, observation of role holders and socialisation into society...once a role schema is formed and activated [the authors] propose that it will influence behaviour in the role. (as cited in Neale & Griffin, 2006, pp. 28-29)

Neale and Griffin's definition of self-concept has been developed from the writings of Bargh (1982), Kupier and Rogers (1979), and Markus (1977), and states "self-concept [is] a cognitive schema that filters, stores and organises information

about the self” (Neal & Griffin, 2006, p. 29), and includes “self descriptive attitudes and traits, declarative facts about self and autobiographical data” (Neal & Griffin, 2006, p. 29). While aspects of self are with us always, Neale and Griffin (2006) remind us that individuals prefer to exhibit behaviours that are consistent rather than inconsistent with their self-concept.

The two stage role transition model developed by Neale and Griffin (2006) assumes a changed role or position (new job, new position in same organisation) results in a change in behavioural expectations and cognitive disruption. The second stage is an adjustment process whereby one adapts to the altered behavioural expectations, across all three components of the self-held work role model. The cognitive disruption (see earlier descriptions of Mezirow’s (1991) concept of transformative learning) and the adaption (see descriptions of Savikas’ (2002, 2005) career construction) components of this two stage model are consistent with the substantive theory that emerged in this study.

While self-concept is not static, people differ in their willingness to alter self-concept. Markus and Kunda (1986) maintain that some people are eager to adjust self-concept. If the adjustment allows the individual to move closer to the “ideal future self” (p. 861) then there is more willingness, while if the adjustment moves one towards the “feared future self” (p. 861) then the willingness to change is low. This observation is particularly relevant to the teachers in this study as in the *Becoming Ready* phase it emerged that while many of the participants could not describe what they wanted for themselves in terms of career development, they were very aware of and fearful of becoming what several termed *bitter and twisted*. In

terms of the above, the participants in this study appear to be motivated by a desire to avoid the feared future self.

Neale and Griffin (2006) refer to the findings of Turner (1978) who “suggested that behaviours [developed as a result of] large investment of effort over a long period of time would become incorporated into self concept” (cited in Neale & Griffin, 2006, p. 33). Given the extended nature of the transition from teacher to teacher leader described in this study, Turner’s observation is of relevance to the substantive theory developed as a consequence of this research.

Schools that are participating in the IDEAS program are themselves in process of transition, and therefore it can be argued that the system requirements component of Neale and Griffin’s (2006) three-part model is also changing. Neale and Griffin (2006) maintain that employees who are able to form positive relationships with supervisors have interpersonal skills and high RBSE (all three are characteristics of the participants in this study), are more successful at integrating changing systemic requirements into their self-concept and role schemas.

Neale and Griffin (2006) propose that organisations with a higher status will better enable participants to facilitate changes to role schema. The proposition of organisational status, however, is complex with the broader society having various positions on the status of schools. These positions can change, sometime rapidly, according to school, context, time, knowledge, amongst others. My observations, although anecdotal, of the schools which participated in this research lead me to believe that the participating schools were well regarded by their local communities

and in terms of Neale and Griffin's reference to status, should be regarded as high status organisations.

Role schemas can also change. Griffin and Neale (2006) maintain that the longer one is in a role the less likely it is that role schemas will change and to do so will require a great deal of "contrary evidence" (p. 37). With reference to "contrary evidence", the IDEAS program includes numerous assumptions/principles and practices (for example: teachers are the key to school revitalisation, teachers are leaders, collective responsibility, no blame) that challenge long held assumptions about the role of the teacher, especially experienced teachers who are the focus of this research. While experienced teachers may be more resistant to changing role schemas, the participants in this study were eager to develop and grow and highly motivated to learn and may be exceptions to those referred to by Griffin and Neale. Alternatively, their experiences of learning and leading in a safe environment has provided them with enough "contrary evidence" (p. 37) and despite their extensive past experience it appears that the participants in this study have actively constructed a new "role schemas" (Griffin & Neale, 2006, pp. 28-29).

9.6.3 Becoming a Teacher Leader as Job Crafting

A tourist visiting Italy came across a construction site. What are you doing? he asked the three stonemasons. I am cutting stone, answered the first. I am cutting stone for 1000 lire a day, the second said. I am building a cathedral, said the third. (Anonymous, cited in Soccio, 2009, p. 160)

Gergen (1994) refers to “social constructionism as an individual’s psychological construction of the experiential world” (p. 67). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose that the raw materials for that process are the “tasks and interactions that compose the days, the jobs, and the lives” of individuals (p. 179). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) use the term “job crafting”:

to capture the actions employees take to shape, mold, and redefine their jobs. Job crafters are individuals who actively compose both what their job is physically, by changing a job’s task boundaries, what their job is cognitively, by changing the way they think about the relationships among job tasks, and what their job is relationally, by changing the interactions and relationships they have with others at work. Job crafting is a psychological, social, and physical act, in which cues are read about physical boundaries of the work and are interpreted by motivated crafters. Job crafters act upon the relational boundaries of the job, changing their identity and the meaning of work in the process. In doing so, job crafters create different jobs for themselves, within the context of defined jobs. Thus, job crafting is a creative and improvised process that captures how individuals locally adapt their jobs in ways that create and sustain a viable definition of the work they do and who they are at work. (p. 180)

Motivations to craft jobs will be moderated by the individual and the opportunity. Individuals, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) state, may be motivated by one or more of the following: “need for control over job and work meaning; need for positive self image; need for human connection with others” (p. 182). In most cases the motivation to craft a job results from the needs of people whose needs are

not being met in their present role (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Job crafting enables employees to alter their jobs and their feelings of purpose in ways that affect the meaning of work and one's work identity. In doing so the job crafter is agentic in the process.

In describing the transition from teacher to teacher leader, I have argued that in the transition teachers perceive themselves and their role differently; a cognitive process. They work with colleagues (within and beyond school) and principals in different ways; a relational change. Finally the physical boundaries of their work and work roles change as they assume greater responsibility for beyond classroom issues and more responsibility for professional learning of peers.

The transition from teacher to teacher leader is consistent with Wrzesniewski & Dutton's (2001) process of job crafting; a psychosocial process with physical, cognitive and relational elements. The participants in this study were yearning to be "purposeful and professional" (Lambert, 2003, p. 4) once again and were highly motivated to "job craft" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 180). Furthermore the opportunity to job craft presented itself in the form of the IDEAS facilitation role; a role where the facilitator is an agent in the transformation of the school and in doing so their own work identity.

9.7 Summary

In locating the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in the extant literature, this literature comparison has demonstrated the relationship between

various existing theoretical constructs, the core category and the various sub-core categories.

Beginning with an overview of the phases of teachers' careers and motivation, it establishes that experienced teachers have an ongoing desire to grow and develop, and depending on previous experiences and external conditions may become ready to experience growth and development of the type explained in this study. Provided that the individual teacher is ready to grow and develop, the role of IDEAS facilitator is seen as an opportunity for growth and development and as a way in which the experienced teacher can make a contribution to the whole school. While the participants in this study were motivated by their dual desires for growth and development as well as making a whole school contribution, they were fearful of their colleagues, of the possibility for taunts, exclusion or sanction. The extant literature confirmed that those making the transition from teacher to teacher leader face many challenges, including possible sanction and exclusion. It also demonstrated that the understanding of the role of the teacher leader is not clearly understood and that the egalitarian nature of school cultures presents a challenge to the emergence of teacher leadership.

The extant literature confirms the important relationship between safety, learning and leading and establishes the centrality of safety to the transformative type of learning experienced by those becoming teacher leaders. The role of the principal in establishing and maintaining safe learning environments for teacher learning and development is also verified by the extant literature.

The literature comparison also discusses the relationships between safety, particularly psychological safety and learning, learning and constructivism, constructionism and career self-concept. Finally, the relevance of processes of career construction, career role perception and transition, the development of role breadth self-efficacy and career crafting as they relate to the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* are discussed.

The process of career construction is of particular relevance to the substantive theory developed in this thesis. Earlier in this thesis I wrote: *that one is a teacher leader when one perceives oneself as a teacher leader*. In doing so, I have advocated a constructivist view of teacher leadership as opposed to a structural view. Those who advocate structural views tend to define teacher leadership in terms of particular competencies, roles or positions. While I acknowledge that a particular model of teacher leadership known as parallel leadership (Crowther et al., 2002) is incorporated into the IDEAS program, and was most likely influential in shaping the participants' constructions of teacher leadership, the construct of teacher leadership remains ill-defined (Ainscow & Southworth, 1996; Datnow & Castellano, 2002). Thus, I recognise, in maintaining that the IDEAS facilitators in this study have become teacher leaders, the constructed images of the various individuals are unique. Consequently, Savickas' (2002, 2005) career construction model is highly relevant. So too is the "Self-Held Work Role" model of Neale and Griffin (2006) and Wrzesniewski & Dutton's (2001) construct of "Job Crafting". Each of these models locates the onus for *becoming* with the individual and recognises that while all the participants have something in common (they have all become teacher leaders), the constructed image of each individual is unique.

The extant literature supports the substantive theory in that the particular constructs and evidence from a variety of sources and discipline areas appear to be compatible with the psychosocial process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* developed as a consequence of this investigation. Additionally however, it does establish what appears to be a gap in the existing literature, in that it has demonstrated the construct of psychological safety has not been researched in schools. Given the established relationships between trust and teacher leadership development in schools, and trust and psychological safety in non-education work settings, further research into the possible relationships between psychological safety and the development of teacher leadership in schools may prove worthwhile.

The substantive theory developed in this study is supported by several theoretical constructs. The literature that has earned its way into this literature comparison has been drawn from a variety of disciplines and interest areas including, amongst others; psychology, career development, organisational behaviour, education, leadership and sociology. Given that the literature comparison draws from an eclectic range of contributing areas, it is not surprising that a range of terminologies and definitions have been incorporated into the literature review. The distinction between various terms such as career self concept (Super, 1990), work identity (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), self-concept (as used by Griffin & Neale, 2006) that on the surface may appear to be very similar, has not been explored in detail. While an exploration of this type may be desirable in possible future studies which may be undertaken for the purposes of theory testing, the purpose of this study has been of theory development. Furthermore, as grounded theories are not forced into existing theoretical constructs, it is not surprising that such theoretical eclecticism is evident in literature comparisons of grounded theories studies.

CHAPTER 10-SIGNIFICANCE, IMPLICATIONS AND EVALUATION.

10.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* was located in the extant literature. This final chapter will begin with reference to the purpose and aims of the research, and will determine if these have been attained. This will be followed by a review of the significance of the findings and their contribution to the literature. Consistent with Glaser's (1978) view that a grounded theory should have implications for practitioners, I will then follow with a discussion of potential implications. Glaser (1998) also maintains that a grounded theory study should also contain some discussion of the implications for further research. The limitations of the research will then be acknowledged, after which I will evaluate the substantive theory using the criteria suggested by Glaser (1978, 1998). I end this chapter with a reflection on my experiences as a grounded researcher.

10.2 Achievement of the Purpose and Aims of the Research

When I began this study, I wanted to *develop a deeper understanding of the teachers' perspectives of their own work as a consequence of their experiences as IDEAS facilitators*. As is the case with grounded theory, the broad purpose was to generate a substantive theory "that accounted for a pattern of behaviour which is relevant and problematic for those involved" (Glaser, 1998, p. 93). To do so, I had to aim to identify the main issue which is continually being resolved by the participants.

In identifying the core category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* I believe I have achieved the aim of the study, while the purpose has also been achieved through the development of the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*.

10.3 Significance of the Thesis

In achieving the purpose and aim of the research, this thesis makes a contribution to the extant literature, most notably by developing a deep understanding of the manner in which teachers make the transition from teacher to teacher leader. The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* develops the understanding of how experienced teachers, who did not perceive themselves as leaders and had a limited understanding of teacher leadership, evolved to develop leadership skills, to behave and act as teacher leaders and to develop an active construction of themselves as teacher leaders. Because of the psychosocial nature of the process, the substantive theory complements the existing understandings of teacher leadership, and makes a major contribution in terms of the participants' perspective of the experience of how teachers become teacher leaders.

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* makes explicit the relationship between *safety* and *teacher leadership development*. In doing so it provides an insight into the complex role of the principal in the establishment and maintenance of safe environments, as well as the centrality of the principal in the process of teacher leadership development. The study has not only made explicit the importance of safety in the process of teacher leadership development, it has also contributed to the understanding of the participants' perceptions of the various

factors that create such environments. Additionally, through the exploration of the relationships between the construct of safety and psychological safety (Edmonson, 2002), this study has identified a gap in the literature. It appears that while the construct of psychological safety has been explored in a range of work contexts, no such research has been undertaken in schools. Given the already established relationships between trust in schools and teacher leadership, and the relatedness of safety, psychological safety and trust, further research into psychological safety in schools appears to be worthy of serious consideration.

In developing the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* this thesis claims significance on the grounds that it has enhanced understanding of the manner in which IDEAS facilitators, through their experiences of *Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment*, reconstructed their career self-concepts and developed the confidence to enact teacher leadership roles in their schools. The substantive theory facilitates the creation of a constructivist career development perspective of teacher leadership development, which extends understandings currently available in the literature.

In addition, the core-category of *Experiencing Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* makes explicit the importance of safety as a co-requisite to the learning and leading processes that have been articulated by researchers such as Crowther et al. (2009), Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996), Lambert (2003), Lieberman and Miller (1999) and Murphy (2005). By deepening understanding of the interrelationships between leading, learning, and learning to lead, and making explicit the experiential, contextualised and transformative nature of these experiences over an extended period of time, this thesis makes a contribution to the

existing literature regarding the nature of the learning necessary for successful teacher leadership development.

By locating the substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* in the extant literature on career development, the substantive theory positions teacher leadership development as a cognitive process of career construction and in doing so represents a unique perspective on teacher leadership development. Its *through the eyes of the participants' perspective* provides a unique insight into needs of those who make the transition from teacher to teacher leader. In doing so, this thesis has the potential to be useful to intending teacher leaders, as well as those who are interested in helping others to develop as teacher leaders.

10.4 Implications for Practitioners

Consistent with the nature of grounded theory, an expectation of the development of the substantive theory is that it should be relevant to the people within the substantive area of inquiry, and it should have practical application.

Those who use it should find that they:

have enough control in everyday situations to make its application worth trying.... The person who applies the theory must be enabled to understand and analyse ongoing situational realities, to produce and predict change in them, and to predict and control consequences both for the object of change and for other parts of the total situation that will be affected. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 245)

The substantive theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* has clear relevance to those in IDEAS schools. The sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* is believed to have particular relevance to experienced teachers who may benefit from heightened awareness of the feelings of confusion and anxiety, which seem typical of many in this cohort. For experienced teachers who may be considering accepting the IDEAS facilitation role in their school, an understanding of the manner in which the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* enables participants to satisfy their professional desires to grow and develop, and become professional and purposeful (Lambert, 2003) may be helpful.

The importance of the principal in the creation and maintenance of safe environments in which teacher leadership can develop has been verified by this research. For principals who may be considering recommending the IDEAS program, or other whole-school initiatives, to their staff, an understanding of the sub-core category of *Sizing Up*, where the whole school engages in processes of deciding to accept, or otherwise, a project, is relevant for its insights regarding the establishment of safety and the legitimisation of teacher leadership.

The relevance of the substantive theory to principals is multifaceted. An understanding of the important role of the principal in *endorsing* leadership potential of teachers, along with the principal's role in the establishment of a safe environment in which learning and leading can occur, is paramount in enabling teachers to become teacher leaders. Additionally, it is important that principals themselves understand that the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is a process of learning and leading, and learning to lead. Furthermore, in understanding that the participants engaged in a transformative learning process enables principals to recognise that the

process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is a complex process of growth and development and that it takes substantial time for teachers to become teacher leaders. By developing an understanding of the process of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*, and realising that the research participants were concerned about their safety, especially in relation to risks of failure, alienation, sanctions or challenges from colleagues, principals can develop a heightened appreciation of the significance of safety and its complex association with teacher learning, leadership development and school revitalisation.

For teachers, an awareness that *Becoming a Teacher Leader* is a process whereby teachers come to view themselves and their work in different ways, and that this transformation occurs as a consequence of experiencing learning and leadership in a safe environment over an extended period of time, is made explicit by the research.

10.5 Implications for Further Research

Glaser (1998) recognised that most research studies are limited by available resources and these dictate the boundaries of the study. This was the case in this study, as it was conducted in a small number of government schools in Western Australia and Victoria and was limited by both purpose (PhD study) and time. The potential exists however, to do similar research in a broader range of school settings, (for example, in other states, Catholic schools or Independent schools) thus enhancing the understandings emerging from the research, and potentially broadening any generalisability.

One limitation of this study, and the associated substantive theory, is a consequence of the relatively small number of participating schools. In this study, it emerged that the participants were all experienced teachers. In my experience I have also noticed that there are several younger teachers who have, or wish to become, teacher leaders. As the substantive theory in this thesis has been developed based on the experiences of experienced teachers, a comparative study of younger teachers in the process of becoming teacher leaders could be useful. Such research has the potential to contribute to a broader understanding of how teachers of all ages become teacher leaders. Furthermore, an understanding of the needs of prospective teacher leaders of all ages is likely to be useful to those who may be interested in enhancing the development of teacher leadership in schools. The substantive theory developed in this study was undertaken in schools that had voluntarily chosen to participate in the IDEAS program. A comparative study of becoming a teacher leader in schools that are not engaged in such a process could also be useful, especially in that a study of this type has the potential to deepen an understanding of the possible contribution which the IDEAS program may make to the development of teacher leadership.

Finally, because grounded studies generate theory and because of the substantive nature of that theory, there is subsequent opportunity to test the theory which has been developed, and in doing so, further develop the theory. Theory testing research often follows theory generating research (Glaser, 1978).

10.6 Comebacks

Glaser (1998) defines “comebacks” as “categories within a substantive theory that are sub-core or less in relevance for theory, but provide an interest area on their own” (p. 200).

While there are many possibilities for further research that emerge from this study, the sub-core category of *Becoming Ready* has made explicit that in the schools where this research took place, prior to the IDEAS program being adopted, the experienced teachers perceived that their needs for growth and development were not being met. Additionally, they believed that apart from the IDEAS program, there remain few meaningful opportunities for experienced teachers to have such needs met. The understanding of the needs of experienced teachers that arises from this thesis is consistent with the existing literature in relation to experienced teachers’ needs for growth and development, in particular those described by Huberman (1993) as being in their mid-career phase. While the perceptions of confusion and anxiety which were reported by the participants in this study are consistent with what other researchers (Farber, 1999; Huberman, 1993; Prick, 1986) have found, the understandings that emerged in relation to *searching for* and *becoming aware* have highlighted what seems to be the career plight of many experienced teachers. As a consequence of this research, I have developed an interest in gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, particularly in that the findings of this thesis indicate that the participants in this study believed they enhanced their teaching effectiveness and relationships with students as a consequence of experiencing learning and leading in a safe environment. Given the many experienced teachers

working in schools throughout Australia, and the potential to affect classroom practice, it seems that this issue is worthy of further research.

10.7 Elevation to Formal Theory

Because of the substantive nature of the theory, generalisability from this study is limited, however there is opportunity to test the theory that has been developed, and in doing so, further develop the theory. Substantive theory differs from formal theory in that substantive theory builds on generalisations of observations in a particular empirical area, while formal theory is built from comparative analysis of different substantive cases and applies to a broader conceptual area (Glor, 2008).

Glaser (1978) explains that substantive theory is associated with a substantive situation, unlike formal theory which is developed in a formal or conceptual area and can be more widely generalised. Accordingly, the substantive theory in this study should not be generalised any further, as it is particular to the IDEAS facilitation role and the view of leadership (parallel leadership) that has been adopted in this study. Regardless, the substantive theory arising from this study could be useful along with other substantive grounded theories that relate to the broad areas of leadership development or career development, especially in teachers. Any future studies which incorporate a similar perspective of teacher leadership development, and are undertaken in a broader range of schools (Catholic, Independent or Providers of Vocational Education) may be useful in the possible future development of formal theory.

10.8 Criteria for Evaluation of a Grounded Theory Research Study

To the positivist, the terms reliability and validity are recognised as the standards that determine research quality. Sprenkle and Piercy (2005) explain that the use of such terms however presents an epistemological problem to the grounded researcher, who has adopted a different paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain that the qualitative equivalents are normally regarded as credibility and trustworthiness.

Traditional notions of what constitutes good scientific research (validity and reliability) apply to, and have historical links with, quantitative verification studies. Grounded theory however, aims to generate theory rather than measure or verify. Sarantakas (1998) therefore reminds researchers that qualitative research should be evaluated by means appropriate to the research paradigm, the methodology, and the purpose of the study, not by the means appropriate to quantitative verification studies. Thus when evaluating a grounded theory study, Elliott and Lazenbatt (2005) refer to the criteria of fit, work, relevance, and modifiability. In 1967, Glaser and Strauss developed a means of evaluating the quality of a grounded study based on the three criteria of fit, relevance and work. Glaser later (1978, 2001) added a fourth criterion of modifiability, and he (Glaser, 2003) maintains that grounded theory is the only methodology that generates conceptualisations that fit, work, and are relevant.

While I have used Glaser's four criteria to evaluate the quality of the substantive theory developed in this study, it is also important to ensure that what is represented as grounded theory is in fact, grounded theory. Grounded theory studies, like other qualitative studies, are open to error; however in the process of doing

grounded theory, checking is built into the process and is seen as an integral part of the constant comparison and theoretical sampling. Glaser (1978) states that grounded theory has a built-in mandate to strive for verification, and this is done through the process of category saturation and results in a parsimonious theory. This verification, according to Searle (1999), can occur through member checking. In this study, participant verification was sought throughout the study; beginning in the early stages of the study when participants were asked to confirm that the early analyses were accurate reflections of meaning. Member checking also occurred later in the study especially during coding and in the final stages of theory generation.

Elliott and Lazenbatt (2005) explain that, while grounded theory can be used in many disciplines, it is important that a grounded study follow specific grounded theory methodology. They cite a review of nursing research undertaken by Benoliel (1996) which claims that “in a review of 146 grounded theory abstracts published between 1990-1994, Benoliel found that over 50% of studies claiming to use grounded theory are, in her view, not applying it” (cited in Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005, p. 49).

Glaser (1998) maintains that grounded theory should be understood as a package of research methods, including data collection, coding and analysing through memoing, theoretical sampling, and using the constant comparative method. Goulding (1999) refers to what she calls “methodological transgression” (p. 16). Such transgressions refer to “the frank violation of the grounded theory philosophy and methodology” (Skodal-Wilson & Ambler-Hutchinson, 1996, cited in Goulding, 1999, p. 16). This may involve methodological muddling:

such as phenomenological research being presented as grounded... but also applies to cases where the canons of quantitative method are modified and applied to interview or textual data, and where the outcome is a study described in positivist terms, random sampling, reliability, validity statistics, independent and dependent variables and so on. (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992, cited in Goulding, 1999, p. 16)

Using Glaser's four criteria, a brief evaluation of the substantive theory which emerges from this study follows.

10.8.1 Fit

Fit is synonymous with validity and is said to exist when the categories and subcategories of the substantive theory fit the data without being forced (Glaser, 1978). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 239) referred to a grounded theory as having "fit" when it is "faithful to the everyday realities of a substantive area". Fit, according to Stern, Allen and Moxley (1984), is evident when the participants accept the theory, stating: "that's it, they say: that is just the way it is!" (p. 376).

Brooks (1998) maintains that fit can be verified by "reviewing the process of theory generation" (p. 62). If the process of grounded theory has been followed and the researcher has remained close to the data, then a high level of fit should result (Brooks, 1998).

Based on these definitions, I am confident that the substantive theory which has been generated meets the evaluative criteria of fit. In Chapter 2, I discussed the

process of data collection, analysis and theory generation. Throughout the study, I have been careful to closely follow the procedures of orthodox grounded theory. I also stayed close to the data, and in the presentation of this thesis I have been careful to include an audit trail comprised of an extensive inclusion of excerpts, as well as the incorporation of some memos. Finally, in the process of member checking, I found there was strong acceptance of the theory and its associated core category and sub-core categories.

10.8.2 Relevance

When the core category of the substantive grounded theory is able to explain the main concern of the participants and the ongoing social process, it has relevance (Glaser, 1978). Hutchinson (1986) says that if the participants are grabbed by the core category it has relevance. Relevance, according to Glaser (1998) emerges with fit and that “the emergent concepts will relate to the true issues of the participants in the substantive area” (p. 236).

Through the process of theory generation I have sought feedback, in the form of member checking, thus ensuring that the emerging theory was characterised by both grab and relevance. The consistent feedback from this process verified the relevance of the core category and is therefore an accurate representation of “what is really going on [and] that is important to the people in the substantive area” (Glaser, 1998, p. 237). The substantive theory presented in this study addresses the problem of how the participants resolved their main concern. The main concern of the

participants in this study proved to be a desire to *Experience Learning and Leading in a Safe Environment* and it emerged as the core category.

10.8.3 Workability

For a substantive grounded theory to work, Glaser (1978) states it “should be able to explain what happened, predict what will happen and interpret what is happening in an area of substantive or formal inquiry” (p. 4). Workability also means that a grounded theory must be capable of accounting for the main concern of the participants and explain variations in patterns of behaviour. It is not possible to have workability without fit (Glaser, 1978, 1998; Hutchinson, 1986) and workability is only possible by adhering to the systemic process outlined by the principles of grounded theory (Glaser, 1998; Hutchinson, 1986). The substantive theory in this study adequately explains the variations in behaviour. It adequately explains the behaviour of those IDEAS facilitators who become teacher leaders; however it was also able to account for the behaviour of IDEAS facilitators who withdrew from the facilitation role when the necessary safe environment was not maintained. The substantive theory developed in this study has arisen from strict adherence to the principles of grounded theory, is able to adequately explain variations in behaviour, and meets the criteria for workability.

10.8.4 Modifiability

Glaser (1978) explains the importance of modifiability by stating that “generation is an ever modifying process and nothing is sacred if the analyst is dedicated to giving priority attention to the data” (p. 5). A grounded theory,

according to Glaser (1998) cannot be “wrong” (p. 237) as it can always be modified as a result of later data. According to Glaser (2001), grounded theory is able to “endure and change” (p. 123) because it is conceptual rather than descriptive or empirical in nature. Unlike empirical verification studies that usually take long periods to complete and can be relatively static, grounded theories are able to maintain relevance through modifiability. They are able to expand or alter if new data emerge (Glaser, 1978).

In the processes of collecting, coding, analysing and abstracting, I soon realised the significance of modifiability as I found myself continually modifying what emerged, essentially starting over again many times. However, as I approached saturation the need to modify decreased, finally finishing with eventual saturation. While the substantive theory generated in this study meets Glaser’s criteria of fit, relevance and workability, it is also modifiable, and does not preclude the possibility that additional future data may result in modification of the current substantive theory.

10.9 Some Personal Reflections

I studied science at secondary school. On leaving school, I studied agricultural science, later to become a teacher of science in secondary schools. My experiences as a science student and a science educator shaped my thinking, and I now realise that I had developed a strong positivist orientation to the world. In my later studies I was able to maintain my positivist perspectives, constantly dismissing as unimportant, that which could not be explained in terms of hard quantitative data.

It was only when I became interested in understanding the work lives of participants in this study that I was forced to confront what I now believe to have been a blinkered view of the world. For, what I wanted to understand could not be achieved through processes of measurement and analysis of hard data. It took me quite a period of time and a great deal of deep reflection before I realised that I needed to adopt a new paradigm; one that would enable me to see the many things that had previously been hidden from my view.

In the process of wanting to understand the world from the perspectives of others, I also became increasingly aware of the limitations of researching within a positivistic theoretical framework. I found the process of grounded theory enlightening. It was disciplined, yet flexible, and it enabled me to see, and increasingly understand, many things that my own habits of thinking had previously hidden from my view.

In short, in seeking to understand others and to develop the theory of *Becoming a Teacher Leader*, I now realise that I also have been experiencing the process of *becoming*. I too have constructed, and continue to construct new images of myself and my place in the world.

APPENDIX A: ETHICS CLEARANCE



University of Southern Queensland

TOOWOOMBA QUEENSLAND 4350

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AUSTRALIA

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OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER DEGREES

Samuel Tickell

Postgraduate and Ethics Officer

PHONE (07) 4631 1438 | FAX (07) 4631 2955

EMAIL tickells@usq.edu.au

28 August 2007

Mr Mark Dawson
Faculty of Education
USQ

Dear Mr Dawson

Re: Ethics Clearance for Research Project, *Understanding the work of teacher leaders in times of change. Towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work*

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee recently reviewed your application for ethics clearance. Your project has been endorsed and full ethics approval has been given. Reference number **H07STU682** is assigned to this approval that remains valid to **24 August 2008**.

The Committee is required to monitor research projects that have received ethics clearance to ensure their conduct is not jeopardising the rights and interests of those who agreed to participate. Accordingly, you are asked to forward a **written report** to this office after twelve months from the date of this approval or upon completion of the project.

A questionnaire will be sent to you requesting details that will include: the status of the project; a statement from you as principal investigator, that the project is in compliance with any special conditions stated as a condition of ethical approval; and confirming the security of the data collected and the conditions governing access to the data. The questionnaire, available on the web, can be forwarded with your written report.

Please note that you are responsible for notifying the Committee immediately of any matter that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the proposed procedure.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samuel Tickell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Samuel Tickell
Postgraduate and Ethics Officer
Office of Research and Higher Degrees

cc: A/Prof D Andrews

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN VICTORIA



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Office for Education Policy and Innovation

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
Telephone: +61 3 9637 2000
DX 2 0285
GPO Box 4967
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

SOS003744

Mr Mark Dawson
C/- Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
West Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Dear Mr Dawson

Thank you for your application of 1 November 2007 in which you request permission to conduct a research study in government schools titled: *Understanding the work of teacher leaders in times of change: towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work.*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. Should your institution's ethics committee require changes or you decide to make changes, these changes must be submitted to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for its consideration before you proceed.
2. You obtain approval for the research to be conducted in each school directly from the principal. Details of your research, copies of this letter of approval and the letter of approval from the relevant ethics committee are to be provided to the principal. The final decision as to whether or not your research can proceed in a school rests with the principal.
3. No student is to participate in this research study unless they are willing to do so and parental permission is received. Sufficient information must be provided to enable parents to make an informed decision and their consent must be obtained in writing.
4. As a matter of courtesy, you should advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director.
5. Any extensions or variations to the research proposal, additional research involving use of the data collected, or publication of the data beyond that normally associated with academic studies will require a further research approval submission.



6. At the conclusion of your study, a copy or summary of the research findings should be forwarded to Education Policy and Research Division, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Level 2, 33 St Andrews Place, GPO Box 4367, Melbourne, 3001.

I wish you well with your research study. Should you have further enquiries on this matter, please contact Chris Warne, Project Officer, Education Policy and Research, by phone on (03) 9637 2272 or by email at <warne.christine.p@edumail.vic.gov.au>.

Yours sincerely



Dr Jim Tangas
A/Assistant General Manager
Education Policy and Research

27: 11/2007

enc

APPENDIX C: APPROVAL TO UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Department of Education and Training
Government of Western Australia

Your ref:

Our ref: DC7/15808

Enquiries:

Mr Mark Dawson
c/o Faculty of Education
University of South Queensland
West Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Dear Mr Dawson

Thank you for your completed application received 1 November 2007 to conduct research on Department of Education and Training sites.

The focus and outcomes of your research project titled, *Understanding the work of teacher leaders in contexts of change: Towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work*, are of interest to the Department, and I give permission for you to approach site managers to invite their participation. However, it is a condition of approval that the results of this study are forwarded to the Department upon conclusion.

Consistent with Department policy, participation in your research project will be the decision of the particular schools invited to participate and individual staff members.

Responsibility for quality control of ethics and methodology of the proposed research resides with the institution supervising the research. The Department notes a copy of a letter confirming that you have received ethical approval of your research protocol from the University of South Queensland Human Research Ethics Committee.

Any changes to the proposed methodology will need to be submitted for Department approval prior to implementation.

Please contact Katie Bray on (08) 9264 5344 or researchandpolicy@det.wa.edu.au if you have further enquiries.

Very best wishes for the successful completion of your project.

Yours sincerely

NORMA JEFFERY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
POLICY, PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

22 November 2007

151 Royal Street, East Perth, Western Australia 6004

APPENDIX D: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

Attachment 1

Department of Education
Victoria

Application to Conduct Research in Schools - Summary

1. **Applicant(s):** Mark Dawson.....
.....
Phone: 07 46312335.... **Fax:** 07 46312808 **Email:**
dawsonm@usq.edu.au
Address: c/o Faculty of Education, University of Southern Queensland, West St,
Toowoomba, QLD, 4350
.....

2. Title of proposal: *Understanding the work of teacher leaders in times of change: Towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work.*

3. Outline of proposal:

Understanding the work of teacher leaders in contexts of change:
Towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work.

Drucker reminds us that:

Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation....Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself-its world view; its basic values; its social and political structures; its arts; its key institutions. Fifty years later, there is a new world... We are currently living through such a transformation. (Drucker,1994.p.1)

In order for schools to remain meaningful and effective in such times, most have recognised the need to change. By drawing extensively on the literature, this thesis establishes that teachers in contemporary educational workplaces (in this case, schools) are required to participate in change processes. By establishing that the workplaces and the work of teachers are subject to continuous change, this study aims to understand how involvement in one such change process (in this case, the IDEAS process) impacts on the manner in which those teachers perceive their work.

Extending on the work of Fullan (2001) and Day (1999) this thesis takes the position that for schools to change, the way in which teachers ‘think and feel’ must also change. It seeks therefore to understand the manner, if any, in which teachers who accept leadership responsibilities in whole school revitalisation processes change their perceptions of work and the effect, if any, of these changed perceptions on school improvement processes, in this case the IDEAS process.

The Leadership Research Initiative (LRI) has worked for the past decade in developing and implementing the ‘Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievement in Schools’ (IDEAS) process in over 300 varied and diverse schools (primary, secondary, public and private schools, rural and metropolitan, large and small) throughout Australia (including Queensland, NSW, Victoria and Western Australia) and internationally in Singapore and Italy. The researcher has worked in over 100 of these schools and worked with hundreds of teachers and principals during this time.

As IDEAS is a ‘whole school’ revitalisation process it requires the participation of all teachers. However, as would be expected the level of participation, enthusiasm and passion for the process varies from teacher to teacher. There are those who from the very beginning are passionate and committed to the process and are eager to learn more, often taking on active leadership roles in the process. This study seeks to understand not only why these educators become so heavily committed, however it seeks to deepen the understanding of the impact that such involvement has on the manner in which they perceive their work as teachers; how it has impacted on their ‘hearts and minds’.

Do these teachers change their perceptions of their work as a result of participation in the process? If so, do these changed perceptions affect the process of school revitalisation? Are some of the components, principles and processes that constitute the IDEAS project more likely to be associated with changing perceptions of work than others?

There are also the associated questions, such as: Is there something about the process that captures their imagination? Is there something about the context that is important? Are those who are drawn to the process at a particular phase of their careers? Why do some teachers continue to sustain their interest and passion even after the formal engagement in their school has concluded? Does the active participation in this process impact on teachers’ perceptions of their work and their work lives? Do they believe that they are better teachers as a result of their participation?

Why does a study of this type matter?

The group of educators that are being investigated in this study are willing participants in school change. Given the imperatives for schools to change it is critical to understand what motivates some teachers to become involved and the impact of such participation on their work and perceptions of it. Schools are more likely to benefit from change if the teachers within are amenable and willing to participate, even lead such change. According to Fullan (2001) and Hargreaves

(2003), these will most likely be the successful schools of the future. By understanding these educators, their perceptions of their work, what motivates them to explore alternatives, extend themselves, to accept and seek leadership opportunities, work together, and intellectualise about their work it is anticipated that the LRI will be in a better position to assist schools in the process of revitalisation using the IDEAS model.

This study does not seek to develop generalisable findings; rather it aims to deepen understandings of teachers' work in changing contexts. It acknowledges the importance of time and context and the social construction of meaning and knowledge. The researcher recognises that each teacher is an individual and aims to deepen his understanding of what it's like to 'walk in the shoes of others', thus has chosen to undertake this study using a grounded phenomenological approach. Grounded theory does not test hypotheses and does not impose a theoretical framework on a situation. It has been chosen because of its emergent nature. As Glaser (1992) reminds us it is important to discover the theory that is implicit in the data.

The chief method of data collection will be open ended interview and participants will be chosen through purposive sampling.

References

Day, C. (1999) *Developing teachers*. London: Falmer press.

Drucker, M. (1994) *The age of social transformation*. Atlantic Review Monthly: November.

Fullan, M. (2001) *Managing in a culture of change*. New York: Jossey-Bass

Glaser, B, G. (1992) *Basics of grounded theory analysis: emergence vs forcing*. Mill Valley, Ca.: Sociology Press.

Hargreaves, A. (2003) *Teaching in the age of insecurity*. New York: Teachers College Press.

4. Contribution study will make to the education, health, safety or welfare of students and/or the education process:

This study aims to better understand the changing nature of teachers' work. In particular it seeks to deepen the understanding of the manner in which teachers' perceptions of work change when schools undertake a structured change process (in this case the IDEAS process).

Role theory asserts that people behave in ways that are determined by their perception(s) of their role, thus for teachers to adapt to emerging roles in schools of the future, a process of role re-conceptualisation must occur. As this rarely happens in most processes of school change, it is not surprising that many school change initiatives are unsuccessful.

Anecdotal evidence is emerging that indicates such perceptual change is occurring in some teachers involved in the IDEAS process.

While this study involves teachers and does not directly impact students, the results will enhance understandings of processes associated with re-conceptualisation of role which according to Day (1999) is necessary for school change to be effective. These enhanced understandings of the interrelationships between teacher change and school change have the potential to assist principals and teachers to be more responsive to teacher career needs in times of change. According to already existing research this has the potential to indirectly influence students through positive impacts on teacher commitment and student outcomes.

.....
.....

5. Research question(s):

The Focus Question

How does school participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affect teacher leaders and their perceptions of work role?

Emergent questions

Do different features of the IDEAS project (philosophies, components, principles....) affect the manner in which teachers perceive their work role?

Are there relationships between the changes that occur (eg: school organisation, vision, practices, policies, pedagogies, professional development, ...) as a consequence of the IDEAS process and the manner in which teachers perceive their work role?

Is there an explanatory model that demonstrates the interrelationships between the components, principles and outcomes of the IDEAS process and teachers' perceptions of role?

6. Methodology including sampling procedure and the people to be included in the sample:

This study does not seek to develop generalisable findings; rather it aims to deepen understandings of teachers’ work in changing contexts. It acknowledges the importance of time and context and the social construction of meaning and knowledge. The researcher recognises that each teacher is an individual and aims to deepen his understanding of what it’s like to ‘walk in the shoes of others’, thus has chosen to undertake this study using a grounded phenomenological approach. Grounded theory does not test hypotheses and does not impose a theoretical framework on a situation and has been chosen because of its emergent nature. The chief method of data collection will be open ended interview and participants will be chosen through purposive sampling.

Participants will be recruited on a voluntary basis. It is anticipated that 10-12 participants will be recruited. All participants will be teacher leaders. For the purposes of selection ‘teacher leaders’ will be defined to those who have acted as ‘facilitators’ in the implementation of IDEAS at their school.

In the past two years the researcher has facilitated IDEAS project work in over 40 schools and worked with teacher leaders and principals in each of these schools. All ‘teacher leaders’ that may choose to participate in the project are known to the researcher.

Subject to approval, participants will be invited to participate via a formal letter sent by the researcher. The letter will be sent to ‘teacher leaders’ through the Principal at each school.

7. Department of Education regions from which sample will be drawn (please tick)					
Eastern Metropolitan	*	Western Metropolitan	*	Hume	
Northern Metropolitan	*	Barwon South Western		Gippsland	
Southern Metropolitan		Grampians		Loddon Mallee	

8. Have you previously applied to conduct this or similar research within Victorian Government schools?	Yes	No
<p>If “yes” state where, when and Departmental reference number if known:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Reference Number:</p>		

9. Research instruments: (Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached)

Proposed Interview questions

Please note the following questions are a guide only. While the researcher hopes that he will be able to gather data in relation to the following questions the nature of the open unstructured interview will not necessarily follow the format below.

The unstructured interview has been chosen in recognition of its capacity to enable deep understanding through the lens of the participant.

10. Method of data analysis:

As the researcher wishes to generate rather than test theory, a grounded methodology will be adopted. The data collected will be qualitative in nature and analysed using grounded approaches to data analysis, including memo writing, open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

11. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:

All participants will be highly competent adult professional teachers over the age of 18 years. Each will be provided with an informed consent form prior to participation. The researcher will clarify any concerns, answer any questions and only proceed when participants are at ease with the process.

12. Procedures to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):

All participants are guaranteed confidentiality and any data collected will remain confidential. Real names will not be used at any time. All participants will be given pseudonyms and any identifying information (eg: name of school, location) will also be given pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used in all written records and reports.

Only the researcher will have a record of who participated in this study and all records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in my office. Electronic records and transcripts stored on my computer will be secured through password protected access

The data collected will be used only in the preparation of the doctoral thesis described.

All electronic records will be stored securely on my USQ computer which is password protected. Any paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office in the Faculty of Education, USQ. These records will be stored securely for a period of 5 years.

Signed consent forms and data that may identify participants will be kept in separate secure locations in my office.

13. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable):

The nature of the interview is unlikely to cause anxiety or have any negative psychological impact. Huberman (1993) has conducted similar research (130 participants) in a range of European schools and reports that all teachers, with the exception of one found the experience beneficial.

Participants will be volunteers, free to leave at any stage and confidentiality will be assured.

Participants will be fully informed in advance in relation to the process and the content of the proposed interviews. The interviews will most likely occur in the school setting, in a private venue, however at the participant's request, may occur in an alternative setting.

The interviews to be conducted will be of an open-ended conversational nature. The nature of the questions requires volunteers to reflect on their workplace leadership experiences. Given the interview type and the topic of research, it is highly unlikely that there will be any risk to participants. The interviewer however, has conducted many interviews and has guidance and counselling experience and qualifications. He is very aware that interviews can be unpredictable and will terminate the interview in the unlikely event that the participant expresses or displays anxiety.

Researchers including Huberman (1993) and Vandenberg and Huberman (1999) have conducted similar interviews and found that participants reported the experience beneficial rather than an imposition. Interviews will be 60-90 minutes in duration.

It is anticipated that most participants will be interviewed only once, however to deepen understanding it may be necessary to interview some participants on a second occasion.

14. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable):

Participants will be informed about the nature of the study and the processes involved in the collection of data. As already stated it is unlikely that the process will be detrimental to participants in any way, however as the interviewer is a trained and experienced counsellor he will conduct all interviews with sensitivity, always having the welfare of the individual as his foremost concern. Interviews will be terminated at the slightest sign of discomfort and participants will be debriefed after all interviews.

I

15. Timeline for research:

It is intended that the data collection phase will begin in December 07 and be completed by June 08.

16. Intended use of research:

This inquiry is part of a PhD research project conducted by the above researcher. It seeks to deepen understandings of teacher leader's perceptions of work in contexts of change.

17. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary course?	Yes	No
	<p>If "yes"</p> <p>Qualification: Doctor of Philosophy Institution: University of Southern Queensland.....</p> <p>Supervisor: Assoc Professor Dorothy Andrews Faculty/school:</p> <p>..... (name) Education</p> <p>..... (signature)</p>	

18. Declaration:

I declare the above information is true and correct:

.....

.....

Signature of Applicant(s) Date: __ / __ / __

19. Agreement to provide reports and to grant the Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report

I/we agree to provide the Victorian Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/we further agree to provide a report to the schools in a format agreed to by the principal(s) of participating schools.

I/we grant the Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using either the print or electronic media.

Signature of Applicant(s) (__ / __ / __)

Return form to: Ms Chris Warne
 Project Officer (Research)
 Research and Innovation Division
 Department of Education
 Level 2, 33 St Andrews Place
 GPO Box 4367
 Melbourne 3001

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This form outlines the purposes of the study as well as a description of your participation and rights as a participant.

Title of Project

Understanding the work of teacher leaders in contexts of change: *Towards an understanding of the manner in which participation in the IDEAS school revitalisation project affects teacher leaders and their perceptions of work.*

Investigator

Mr Mark Dawson
c/o Faculty of Education
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba
daswonm@usq.edu.au
46312335

Purpose

This inquiry is part of a PhD research project conducted by the above researcher. It seeks to deepen understandings of teacher leader's perceptions of work in contexts of change.

Procedures

To collect the data for this inquiry the researcher intends to conduct two face to face interviews and one focus group.

Duration of Data Collection Phase.

It is anticipated that the interviews will be conducted in November or December 2007 with each interview being be 60-90 minutes in duration.

Location of Data collection

While it is intended that the data will be collected in the workplace, the researcher is prepared to collect data at times and places convenient to the participants.

Conditions under which data will be collected.

The individual face to face interviews will be conducted in the workplace at a time convenient to the interviewees. All interviews will be conducted in a private and comfortable location. All interviews will, be audio recorded, later to be transcribed and used in the data analysis process.

Participants will be given a copy of the proposed questions at the beginning of each interview or focus group.

Guarantee of Anonymity and Confidentiality of Data

All participants are guaranteed complete confidentiality and any data collected will remain anonymous. Your real name will not be used at any time. All participants will be given pseudonyms and any identifying information (eg name of school, location) will also be given pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used in all written records and reports.

Only the researcher will have a record of who participated in this study and all records will be stored securely and confidentially. At the completion of the study all electronic records will be erased and all paper record shredded. The data collected will be used only in the preparation of the doctoral thesis detailed above.

The data collected will be used in the preparation of a doctoral thesis. This thesis will be published and available through the University of Southern Queensland library. The published thesis may also be available in electronic format.

Right to refuse or withdraw

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point in the study for any reason and without any prejudice. If you choose to withdraw all information relating to your participation will be returned to you or destroyed.

Supervisors

My supervisors for this inquiry and contact details should you require them are:

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Complaints

If you have any concern regarding any aspect of this study or its implementation please contact the ‘secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee’ ph: (07) 46311438.

Statement of Informed Consent

I have read the above description of the study and rights as a participant. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Name:

Signature:

Date:.....

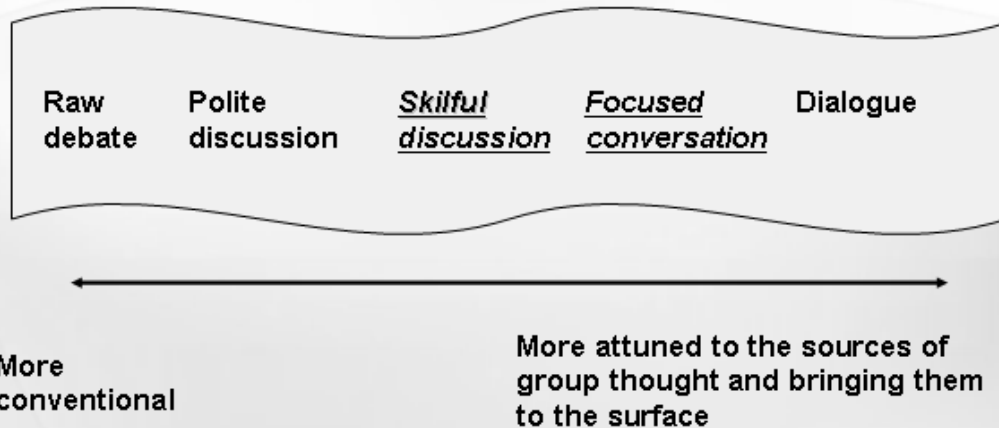
APPENDIX F: PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION



Professional Conversation

Professional Conversations: A continuum

A continuum with 'raw debate' (highly adversarial) at one end and 'dialogue' (focused on inquiry) at the other.



Adapted from Senge, The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (1994) p386

The following guide suggests the exercise of new cognitive and emotional muscles.

A guide to skilful discussion

- See each other as colleagues in mutual quest for deeper insight and clarity (*Remember collegueship does not mean that you need to agree or share the same views. The real power of seeing each other as colleagues comes into play when there are differences of view*)
- Suspend your assumptions (*become willing to loosen the 'grip of certainty' about all views, including your own*)
- Regard the conversation as spontaneous rather than a strategic
- Use active listening skills like 'paraphrasing' (so it seems there is....), 'perception check' (I get the sense this isn't what you support) and avoid too much internal dialogue

The Rules of Skilful Discussion...

- Talk only to improve the silence. Occasionally stop talking, not only to others but to yourself.
- Balance advocating or sharing your position with inquiry into someone else's.
- Contribute to building shared meaning – seek to clarify what others are saying.
- No 'ping-ponging' back and forth between two people.
- Talk into the space in the middle of the group.
- Do not interrupt others. Slow down the discussion and be patient.
- Speak only positively – don't be critical or disparaging.
- Be happy if the group reaches an impasse, because it is on the verge of a breakthrough - don't stop - keep the process moving.
- Let silence happen and see what occurs out of that process ...every now and again take a vow of silence.

(Source: IDEAS, based on Kaagan's 2000 adaptation of Senge et al, 1994)

Observer's Notes for Group Feedback

The Rules of Skilful Discussion	Observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk only to improve the silence. Still the voice within you. • Balance advocacy or sharing your position with inquiry into someone else's. • Contribute to building shared meaning – seek to clarify what others are saying. • No 'ping-ponging' back and forth between two people. • Talk into the space in the middle of the group. • Do not interrupt others. Slow down the discussion, be patient. • Speak only positively – hold back from criticising, evaluating or disparaging what another person says. • Be overjoyed if the group does reach an impasse, because it is on the verge of a breakthrough – don't stop. Keep the process moving. • Let silence happen and see what occurs out of that process ...every now and again take a vow of silence. 	

Recorder's Notes

ISSUE / QUESTION	RESPONSE / DISCUSSION
<p style="text-align: center;">Conversation Summary</p>	

Closing Activity: A perspective on the day - where to now?

Focused Conversation

Objectives

- Review the day's activity
- Surface new insights and challenges
- Recontextualise to own setting

The Conversation

Objective Level

What have been the specific activities today?

Reflective Level

What were the objectives of these activities?

What insights have you gained?

Interpretive Level

What has been relevant for you and the needs of your particular school?
Are there specific challenges for you that have arisen as a result of the activities?

Are there any issues that need to be addressed as a matter of priority?

Decisional Level

What else do we need to know?

What is our timeline for the completion of visioning?

What is our next step?

Where do we hope to be at the end of the year?

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