



“NOT FOR SALE: THE CHALLENGE TO IMBUE A KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR SHALOM IN AN AUSTRALIAN MARKET-DRIVEN  
CONTEXT”

A thesis submitted by  
Bronwyn Wong, MEd

For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy  
2020

## Abstract

In a world that has been increasingly influenced by market-driven motives that have sculpted the priorities of organisations so that presentation, productivity and popularity take pre-eminence, organisations can find themselves drifting from their core purpose and values. This study sought to examine the challenges that Christian schools face to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. The term “Kingdom-shaping” refers individually and collectively to the individuals who and the communities that are about being shaped by the reign of God, and who and that are purposed towards instilling the reign of God in the world so that the commission to tend and watch over the earth (Genesis 2: 15) might be fulfilled. Such a vision that is about fostering right relationships between God and people, between people and each other, between people within themselves, and between people and nature reflects Shalom. Thus, the study’s research questions directed my focus towards understanding how a group of participating teachers understood the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education; the hindrances that these teachers were facing in imbuing Kingdom-shaping practice in their work; and the transformation of teacher practice as the participating teachers considered their work through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom.

Central to this research project has been my desire to understand the challenges posed by the intersections that occur between the market and a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. It was necessary to probe the ways that the market had adversely influenced education through examining the perceived cultural purpose of education, and how elements of marketisation were indicated through media, Federal and State government, and broader community emphasis on elevating test results, school ranking and shopping for the best school. This marketised view was then likened to the metaphor of Babylon that had been used in biblical literature to represent the progress and triumph of the powerful. Subsequent to this exploration of the market was an examination of the nature of Kingdom-shaping and the development of a lens through which to understand the nature of Shalom. This lens was entitled “the Tripod of Shalom” and comprised three elements: [The Word](#); [incarnation](#); and [Proclamation](#). The Tripod became the conceptual framework for the study,

and guided the participants and me in our growing understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education.

The research in this study was conducted through face-to-face interviews with six participating teachers at Yew Tree Christian College, a pseudonym for a Christian school in New South Wales, Australia, at which I was also teaching. The interviews allowed me to gain an understanding of how the participating teachers understood the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice and whether—or how—this was influencing their daily practice. After the interviews were completed, the participating teachers and I met eight times during 2018 as a focus group to engage in Action Research (AR). This allowed us to delve collectively into the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice, examine the ongoing practices at the focus school and consider how we might mitigate any hindrances that we were facing in imbuing Kingdom-shaping practice there.

An examination of interview and focus group transcripts through Critical Discourse Analysis yielded rich insights into how the teachers were conceptualising a Christian education. These, together with the ensuing action from the AR, enabled me to see that teachers largely understood Christian education as being about depositing cognitive biblical knowledge in students. There was little comprehension of a Kingdom-shaping education that could emerge as a delicate fragrance from a synthesis of spiritual **knowing**, **incarnational being** and **doing** that was focused on **proclaiming** freedom from captivity. Over the period of a year, my understandings and the understandings of the participating teachers of the nature of Kingdom-shaping shifted, and there was a dawning comprehension that, in order to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, it was necessary for us to *be* Kingdom-shaping within ourselves. This epiphany led to new understandings of Christian education. Consequently, hindrances to practising an authentic Christian education that had been highlighted by the participating teachers—such as an undue emphasis on testing, dehumanising teaching practices and an unreasonable focus on the focus school's image—began to dissipate as hope rose out of our awakening and transformed our perspectives and undertakings.

This study contributed new understandings of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom, placing greater emphasis on a balance among **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, rather than previously where the focus had been on the acquisition of cognitive biblical knowledge. Further to this was the contribution to research practice where Kingdom-shaping principles were applied to the research methodology and methods. Ensuing as a result were new understandings of how a Kingdom-shaped community might interact in the midst of conflict. Additionally, there was a contribution to the research methods so that **knowing**, **being** and **doing** framed the AR cycles and the analysis of data, and undergirded ethical processes throughout the project. As a result, it became clear that of pivotal importance in any Kingdom-shaping undertaking—whether it be education or research practice—are community relationships, being integrally authentic to one’s vision and values, and an understanding that life’s purpose is about flourishing through justice and mercy, rather than about self-promotion and grandstanding.

In conclusion, this research project has been focused on understanding the challenges that exist in imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. I have closely examined the manifestations of a market-driven culture, particularly the emphasis placed on student and school success, and I have inquired into the nature of Kingdom-shaping for Shalom. Ensuing from my research has been the Tripod of Shalom that has framed Kingdom-shaping through an alchemy among knowing **The Word**, **incarnational being** and **Proclamational doing**. Utilising the Tripod of Shalom—and through AR—, a group of six participating teachers and I were able to mitigate some of the hindrances that we were facing in our work and, in so doing, we deepened our understanding of Kingdom-shaping practice. As a result, this research study has posed new considerations with regard to imbuing Kingdom-shaping education; undertaking Kingdom-shaping research; and, in the midst of what could be a hopeless, market-driven culture, demonstrating that there is indeed hope for a flourishing life that is focused on imbuing God’s Kingdom for Shalom.

**Key Words:** Christian education, Kingdom-shaping, Market-driven, Shalom

## Certification of Thesis

This thesis is entirely the work of Bronwyn Wong, except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Professor Patrick Danaher

Associate Supervisor: Dr Andy Davies

Adjunct Associate Supervisor: Dr Pamela Harvey

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University of Southern Queensland.

## Acknowledgements

To Fred, my husband and best friend, without whom I would never have begun this research study or completed it. Your belief in the significance of the project, willingness to listen, encouragement, refusal to let me give up and the many Saturdays that you took care of our boys while I locked myself away at my desk were priceless. I honour you.

To my two boys, Malakai and Reuven, who grudgingly sacrificed time with me and who often had to put up with a mother who distinctly resembled “Uncle Quentin” from Enid Blyton’s *The Famous Five*. Hopefully I can make it up to you.

To my amazing USQ supervisors, Patrick and Andy. Your investment of time into my research went far beyond the call of duty. Our regular meetings were a source of insight and support (and many a laugh). I will miss them greatly.

To Pam, my gracious adjunct supervisor. Your probing questions and theological insights were so valuable as you discovered places where I was taking a flying leap and had failed to join the dots. You forced me to dig deeper and grapple with what I was trying to say.

To my six participating teachers whose voices resonated throughout this research project. Your intrinsic motivation and deep personal investment in the project blew me away. It was such a privilege to work with you and to listen to your heartbeat for Christian education.

To my parents, Neville and Sylvia, who always encouraged me to do my best. You sowed the seed that began this journey and you have also watered it along the way.

To Stephen, my critical friend who offered feedback and thoughts—many of which have found their way into the project. I so appreciated the time you took to meet with me and to read my thesis.

To Dallas and Jacqueline. I have fond memories of watching our children whizzing by on scooters while we discussed Kemmis, Lacan and Fairclough. Thank you for allowing me to practise my presentations and nutting through the various elements of CDA, AR and End Note.

To my many friends and supporters who have prayed for me, listened to me and encouraged me throughout the course of my study. Every single one of you has strengthened my resolve to finish. I especially mention Wilma, my prayer partner and mentor who has been a pivotal part of my life over many years.

To the Australian Government that has funded this project through the Research Training Scheme. Thank you for the opportunity to undertake a PhD.

I dedicate this project to God, my King. I pray that every day I might become more Kingdom-shaping and that I may take up the call to tend and cultivate the earth and encourage others to do the same.

## Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Certification of Thesis</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>List of Related Publications and Presentations</b>	<b>xiii</b>
PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES	XIII
PEER REVIEWED CHAPTERS IN EDITED RESEARCH BOOKS	XIII
PRESENTATIONS	XIII
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 THESIS INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.1 A Note on the Colours	5
1.2 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	5
1.3 THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STUDY	5
1.4 THE KEY THEMES THAT ARE CENTRAL TO THE RESEARCH	7
1.5 IMPORTANT TERMS IN THE RESEARCH	10
1.6 THE RESEARCH APPROACH: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD	11
1.6.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	12
1.6.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE	15
1.6.2.1 Theoretical Knowledge	15
1.6.2.2 Methodological Knowledge	15
1.6.2.3 Policy-Based Knowledge	16
1.6.2.3 Practice-Based Knowledge	16
1.7 THE POSITIONALITY OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH THEME	17
1.8 THE THESIS OUTLINE	21
1.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	23
<b>Chapter 2: The Literature Review</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	25
2.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR SHALOM	26
2.2.1 THE CHALLENGE TO FIND AN APPROPRIATE MODEL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	26



2.2.2 KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR SHALOM	31
2.3 THE MARKET-DRIVEN CONTEXT OF SCHOOLING	37
2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF A MARKET-DRIVEN CONTEXT ON YEW TREE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE	46
2.5 THE WRESTLE FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS	49
2.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	51

## **Chapter 3: The Conceptual Framework** 52

3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	52
3.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	52
3.3 THE COMPONENTS OF THE TRIPOD FRAMEWORK	57
3.3.1 ELEMENT 1 – THE WORD	58
3.3.1.1 Knowledge about the Word (Cognitive)	60
3.3.1.2 Knowing the Word (Spiritual)	62
3.3.1.3 A Note on the Symbolic Nature of the Colours of the Rings in the Tripod of Shalom	64
3.3.1.4 The Use of the Colour Blue to Symbolise The Word	65
<b>3.3.2. ELEMENT 2 – INCARNATION</b>	65
<b>3.3.2.1 The Use of the Colour Red to Symbolise Incarnation</b>	71
3.3.3 ELEMENT 3 – PROCLAMATION	72
<b>3.3.3.1. The Use of the Colour Yellow to Symbolise the Proclamation of Life</b>	79
3.4 THE TRIPOD OF SHALOM AND PRAYER	79
3.5 CRITIQUES AND CONTESTATIONS OF THE ELEMENTS OF THE TRIPOD OF SHALOM	82
3.6 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	84

## **Chapter 4: Methodology** 86

4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	86
4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN	88
4.2.1 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM	88
4.2.2 CRITICAL PEDAGOGY FOR SHALOM	88
4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH	90
4.4 METHOD – THE ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN	91
4.4.1 ACTION RESEARCH IS ABOUT ACTING	91
4.4.2 ACTION RESEARCH – A CO-LABOURING PROCESS	92
4.4.2.1 The Number of Participants	92
4.4.2.2 The Selection of Participants	93
4.4.2.3 Brief Biographical Notes about the Participants	95
4.4.2.4 Interviews with the Participants	97
4.4.2.5 The Process Learning Circles (PLCs)	98
4.4.3 THE ACTION RESEARCH CYCLES	100
4.4.4 THE ENSUING ACTION IN THE ACTION RESEARCH	106
4.5 METHOD – DATA ANALYSIS	114
4.5.1 – CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	114
4.5.2 THE PROCESS OF CDA	116
4.5.2.1 First Dimension: Text Analysis	116
4.5.2.2 Second Dimension: Discourse Practice: Interpretation	118
4.5.2.3 Third Dimension: Sociocultural Practice: Explanation	120
4.6 ETHICS	127
4.6.1 THE BIOGRAPHY, POSITION AND ROLES OF THE RESEARCHER	127
4.6.2 THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PRACTICE IN THIS PROJECT	129

4.6.2.1 The First Criterion for Authenticity: The Word—Knowing the Truth	131
4.6.2.2 The Second Criterion: incarnation—Being the Way	138
4.6.2.3 The Third Criterion: Proclamation—Doing the Life	143
4.7 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	148

## Chapter 5: Analysis – Participants’ Understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian Education 149

5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	149
5.2. ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTION 1	151
5.2.1 A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL EDUCATION IS SYNONYMOUS WITH KINGDOM-SHAPING	152
5.2.2 THE PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF <b>KNOWING THE WORD</b> IN PARTICIPANT TALK ABOUT KINGDOM-SHAPING	157
5.2.3 COGNITIVE <b>KNOWLEDGE</b> AND SPIRITUAL <b>KNOWING</b> IN PARTICIPANT TALK ABOUT <b>THE WORD</b>	159
5.2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF <b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> IN PARTICIPANT TALK ABOUT KINGDOM-SHAPING	162
5.2.5 PARTICIPANT TALK ABOUT <b>PROCLAMATION</b>	168
5.2.5.1 Proclamation Requires Unified Action Rather than Selfishness	169
5.2.5.2 Proclamation is about Serving Others	172
5.2.5.3 Proclamation is about Renewal	176
5.3 SUMMING UP RESEARCH QUESTION 1: PARTICIPATING TEACHERS’ UNDERSTANDINGS OF A KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	178

## Chapter 6: Analysis – Hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Education 179

6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	179
6.2 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2—INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES	181
6.2.1 THE EFFECTS OF MARKET-DRIVEN HINDRANCES ON THE PARTICIPATING TEACHERS: FRUSTRATION	185
6.2.2 THE EFFECTS OF MARKET-DRIVEN HINDRANCES ON THE PARTICIPATING TEACHERS: DISEMPOWERMENT	192
6.2.3 THE EFFECTS OF MARKET-DRIVEN HINDRANCES ON THE PARTICIPATING TEACHERS: EROSION OF KINGDOM-SHAPING	196
6.3 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTION 2 – COLLECTIVE PERSPECTIVE/S	201
6.4 SUMMING UP RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HINDRANCES REVEALED BY PARTICIPATING TEACHERS THAT CONFLICTED WITH THEIR KINGDOM-SHAPING PRACTICE	213

## Chapter 7: Analysis – Transformed Practice: Together, the Instruments of Change 215

7.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	215
7.1.1 A WORD ON TRANSFORMATION	216
7.2 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3 – TRANSFORMATION OF <b>KNOWING</b> AND <b>BEING</b>	217
7.2.1 <b>KINGDOM-SHAPING IS MORE THAN JUST HEAD KNOWLEDGE</b>	218
7.2.2 KINGDOM-SHAPING IS PROFOUNDLY <b>ONTOLOGICAL</b>	222
7.2.3 KINGDOM-SHAPING INTEGRATES <b>THE WORD</b> , <b>INCARNATION</b> AND <b>PROCLAMATION</b>	226
7.3 ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTION 3 – TRANSFORMATION OF <b>BEING</b> AND <b>DOING</b>	232
7.3.1 THE FIRST AND SECOND CYCLES – ACTION IS ABOUT <b>DOING</b> KINGDOM-SHAPING	233
7.3.2 THE THIRD CYCLE – ACTION IS ABOUT <b>BEING</b> KINGDOM-SHAPING	243
7.3.3 TRANSFORMED PRACTICE	248
7.4 SUMMING UP RESEARCH QUESTION 3: DEEPENING INSIGHTS INTO KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THAT LED TO TRANSFORMATIONAL PRACTICE	253

<b>Chapter 8: Conclusion of the Thesis</b>	<b>255</b>
8.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION	255
8.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH	256
8.3 UNDERSTANDINGS THAT HAVE EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH	262
8.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1 – UNDERSTANDINGS OF KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	262
8.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2 – HINDRANCES TO KINGDOM-SHAPING EDUCATION	264
8.3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 3 – DEEPENING INSIGHTS INTO KINGDOM-SHAPING CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THAT WERE TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR PRACTICE	266
8.4 THE KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS THAT HAVE EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH	267
8.4.1 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE	268
8.4.2 CONTRIBUTIONS TO METHODOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE	270
8.4.3 CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRACTICE-BASED KNOWLEDGE	272
8.4.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLICY-BASED KNOWLEDGE	274
8.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	276
8.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT	277
8.7 RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY – THE PLANTING OF A SEED	279
8.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION	280
<b>References</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>300</b>
APPENDIX A: FAIRCLOUGH’S (1996) DISCOURSE AS TEXT, INTERACTION AND CONTEXT (P. 25)	301
APPENDIX B: THE RESEARCH STUDY LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS	302
APPENDIX C: THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	304
APPENDIX D: EXTRACTS FROM PHASE 3—COMMITMENT TO ACTION AND ACTION RESEARCH—FROM MEETING 1	306
APPENDIX E: THE ETHICS CONSENT FORM—PARTS A AND B	309
APPENDIX F: THE READINGS IN PHASE 2 AND THEIR CORRESPONDING PLCs MEETINGS	315
APPENDIX G: A KINGDOM-SHAPED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOR SHALOM – PHASE 2, MEETING 1	316

## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.1: The Economic Impact of Improving Schooling Quality (Deloitte Access Economics, 2016)</i> .....	8
<i>Figure 2.1 The Neoliberal Squeeze on Christian Schools</i> .....	38
<i>Figure 3.1: The Overarching Conceptual Framework</i> .....	53
<i>Figure 3.2: The Tripod of Shalom</i> .....	54
<i>Figure 3.3 The Hermeneutical Spiral (Van Engen, n.d., p. 26)</i> .....	60
<i>Figure 3.4: Goethe’s (1970) Colour Wheel (Book Cover)</i> .....	72
<i>Figure 4.5 The Action Research Cycle (Coghlan &amp; Brannick, 2005, p. 22)</i> .....	100
<i>Figure 4.6: The Concurrent Cycles of Action Research (Coghlan &amp; Brannick, 2005, p. 24)</i> .....	102
<i>Figure 4.7: The Experiential Learning Cycle in Action Research Projects (Coghlan &amp; Brannick, 2005, p. 35)</i> .....	104
<i>Figure 4.8: The Tree Metaphor</i> .....	105
<i>Figure 4.9: The Fourfold Interaction Model (Heron, 1996, p. 134)</i> .....	106
<i>Figure 4.1: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and the Tripod of Shalom</i> .....	121
<i>Figure 4.2: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and Lacan (Neill, 2013)</i> .....	124
<i>Figure 4.3: The Master Discourse (Neill, 2013, pp. 12, 13, 15)</i> .....	124
<i>Figure 4.4: The CDA Component of the Overarching Conceptual Framework</i> .....	126
<i>Figure 4.10 Gatherings of Staff Members and Students to Pray Photograph 1</i> .....	143
<i>Figure 4.11 Gatherings of Staff Members and Students to Pray Photograph 2</i> .....	143
<i>Figure 7.1: Coding of Knowing, Being and Doing in Meeting 1</i> .....	227
<i>Figure 7.2: Coding of Knowing, Being and Doing in Meeting 5</i> .....	228
<i>Figure 7.3: Coding of Knowing, Being and Doing in Meeting 7</i> .....	228

## List of Tables

Table 3.1: The Elements of the Conceptual Framework Diagram and their Corresponding Chapters .....	53
Table 3.2: Prayer (Ladd & Spika, 2002; Lynn, 2003, 2004) and its Connection with the Tripod of Shalom.....	81
Table 4.10: The Alignment Among Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs Phases, the AR Cycles (2005) and the Tripod of Shalom.....	101
Table 4.11: Changed Action (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2 .....	110
Table 4.12: Changed Understandings (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2.....	110
Table 4.13: Changed Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2 .....	110
Table 4.14: Changed Action (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3 .....	112
Table 4.15: Changed Understandings (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3.....	112
Table 4.16: Changed Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3 .....	113
Table 4.1: The Three Dimensions of Fairclough’s CDA – Based on Fairclough’s (1996) Concentric Diagram (p. 25) .....	116
Table 4.2: Nodes Used to Organise the Transcripts of Participant discourse as Part of the First Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA Related to Research Question 1 .....	117
Table 4.3: Nodes Used to Organise the Transcripts of Participant discourse as Part of the First Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA Related to Research Question 2 .....	117
Table 4.4: discourse Markers and Interpretation in the Second Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA .....	117
Table 4.5: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Text Analysis: Description, .....	118
when Applied to Data in this Research .....	118
Table 4.6: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Discourse Practice: Interpretation, .....	119
when Applied to Data in this Research .....	119
Table 4.7: The Transdisciplinary Lenses Applied to the Third Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA.....	120
Table 4.8: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, Using the Lens of the Tripod of Shalom.....	123
Table 4.9: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, .....	125
when Applied to Data in this Research .....	125
Table 4.17: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research.....	131
Table 4.18: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research – <i>incarnation</i> .....	138
Table 4.19: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research – <i>Proclamation</i> .....	143
Table 5.1: Lenses Applied to the Research Questions .....	150
Table 5.2 Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 1 .....	151
Table 5.3: Comparisons in the Prevalence of “Um” in Shane’s Speech.....	154
Table 5.4: Emerging Themes in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping Christian Education.....	157
Table 5.5: The Reflection of the Tripod of Shalom in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping .....	158
Table 5.6: The Proportion of Participant Talk about Community in Each of the Tripod Elements .....	166
Table 5.7: Transitive Verbs in Andrea’s Discourse about Kingdom-shaping.....	174
Table 5.8: The Transition between Agents and Actions in Andrea’s Discourse .....	175
Table 6.1: Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 2 .....	181
Table 6.2: The Proportion of Participant Discourse about the Different Hindrances .....	182
Table 6.3: Philippa’s Feelings about Traditional School Systems Compared with Her Desired Alternative .....	190
Table 6.4: Participant Language in the Extract that Reflected Acquiescence to the Master Signifier .....	191
Table 6.5: Competing Points of Tension between a Kingdom-shaping Focus and Other Educational Requirements .....	199
Table 6.6: Changed Practices at Yew Tree Christian College and Associated Language Used by Participants..	211
Table 7.1: The Words and Metaphors of Participants with Regard to Kingdom-shaping .....	223
Table 7.2: The Three AR Cycles and Their Focus .....	233
Table 7.3: Transitive Verbs in Shane’s Talk about Action .....	236
Table 7.4: The Tripod Elements in Participant Reflections on the Research Action.....	251
Table 7.5: A Reflection of Shalom in Participant Dialogue .....	253

## List of Related Publications and Presentations

### Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Wong, B. (2017). The distraction of winking lights: Sailing for Shalom in Christian education. *Christian Teachers Journal*, 25(2), 4-7. Retrieved from <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=819383354839280;res=IELHSS>

### Peer Reviewed Chapters in Edited Research Books

Wong, B. (under contract). Cultivating a vision for change: Applying action research to empower teachers in an independent Christian school in New South Wales, Australia in a market-driven schooling system. In D.L. Mulligan & P.A. Danaher (Eds.) *Researching within the educational margins: Strategies for communicating and articulating voices* (Palgrave studies in education research methods). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

### Presentations

Wong, B. (2016, October 16). *Searching for shalom*. Paper presented at the Association for Christian Schools English Teachers Association Conference, The Hills Lodge, Sydney, NSW, Australia.

Wong, B. (2016, November 18). *The “sell” of education: Using an alternative key to unlock flourishing in Christian schooling*. Paper presented at the 18<sup>th</sup> University of Southern Queensland Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Group research symposium, University of Southern Queensland, Springfield, Qld, Australia.

Wong, B. (2019, July 16). *Reimagining the English classroom through Kingdom-shaping practice*. Paper presented at the International Transforming Education Conference (ITEC): “Reimagining Practice”, The Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, SA, Australia.

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Thesis

*The first day of work experience, I realised [that] the bravest people are [in] kindergarten.*

*Little seeds in a garden, waiting to be grown, and all I really know  
Is that they laugh and smile, something I wanted to do for a while.*

*I saw them place building blocks, [as] if they were building the future...*

*However, jobs are listed in categories, machines and in line.*

*That's fine, but how can you line up in this twisted world*

*Where your smile is curled and curved into a frown*

*So it's hard to tell if this world is upright, or upside down?*

*But now, when they ask, "Who do you want to be?" My answer:*

*I'd be the sun, shining light to help you walk your path.*

*I'd burn bright, so you won't look at me but still be glad.*

*I'd be the theory proving the fact [that]*

*The reason why aliens haven't attacked us is because*

*We're so beautiful and yet we are old.*

*We are history, told upon history, awaiting mysteries in our hearts... (Supan, 2019, n.p.)*

### 1.1 Thesis Introduction

The burning passion for this research arose out of my own context as a then Head of Faculty at Yew Tree Christian College. Jeremiah's—the weeping biblical prophet to Judah—description of God's message for the people that was “in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed I cannot” (Jeremiah 20:9) resonates powerfully with me because my own feelings that were the basis for this research have also burned in my bones like a fire. Brueggemann (2001) suggested that it is entirely appropriate for us to make connections between issues of oppression and exploitation and the prophetic biblical texts, proposing that they offer new possibilities for addressing the dominant harsh reality. For this reason, the voices of the modern day “prophets” —those

who are confronted by the harsh reality and who are captured by a transformed vision that inspires them to “refus[e] to live inside an alien, numbing imagination” and instead alternatively to “embrace the very ‘imagination of God’” (Brueggemann, 2001, Preface to the Revised Edition, Section V, Para. 6)—are featured prominently throughout this thesis as we have collectively considered the conflict between the context of the market and Christian education and, indeed, education as a whole.

The epigraph above, which is an extract from Patrick Supan’s<sup>1</sup> spoken word poetry, encapsulates beautifully the message that underpins this research because Patrick too was a prophet who was indicating a desire to embrace the imagination of God. As I listened to and watched Patrick perform this piece for an assembly that was packed with enthralled high school students and teachers at his school, I was drawn in by the melodic rise and fall of his voice, the resonant emphasis that he placed on the images that he cast before us like hovering holographs and, most of all, by the compelling passion that burst forth through his proud stance, his eyes cast by fire and his trembling conviction. Patrick’s evocative contrast between the youthful innocence of children in kindergarten “building the future” and the troubling darkness of the world, and his consequent challenge to his listeners that we might “shine through the dark”, were a reminder that we *can* make a difference. It was therefore most appropriate to open and close the thesis with his words: the beginning and the ending of his spoken word poem, *Kindergarten*, a word that in German literally means “children’s garden”.

The influence of the market, described by Patrick as a “twisted world” where “jobs are listed in categories, machines and in line”, is manifested in the quantification and measurement of student and teacher output; it has seen an elevation in the place of testing, a drive towards polishing the public veneer of schools through their branding and a consequent reduction in other pivotal elements of education such as maintaining a healthy balance between life and learning and the holistic spiritual development of students. As a Christian educator, I find the oppressive effects of this reduction on the pivotal elements of education very troubling.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrick was a student in Year 10 at the Christian school where I was teaching during part of the time that I was writing this thesis. At the time that he wrote and performed this piece, he had been at the school for a little over six months.



In my nine years as a Head of English and 20 years of teaching English at the time of writing, the pressure of high stakes testing has increased in manifold ways. Whereas in a past life the dates of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) would pass in a small blip on the school calendar, now, as NAPLAN approaches, there is a flurry of preparation. There are, of course, the room changes and timetable adjustments, but in addition to these there are anxious weeks drilling grammar, persuasive writing, spelling conventions and more grammar. There are the conversations between parents and teachers, and between teachers and school executive members, where questions such as “How are you preparing students for NAPLAN?” and “Where are the practice tests?” are posed. There is heightened stress in students as they (and their parents) are targeted by shops selling NAPLAN study books from almost the day after Christmas. In addition to NAPLAN in New South Wales, the preparation for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) looms like a hungry monster ready to devour the natural inquisitiveness and joy of learning, and to replace it with a voracious appetite to swallow the bitter pill that will ensure success. And, after results arrive at the school (NAPLAN) and in the inboxes of mobile phones (HSC), there is invariably the school’s dissection of outcomes, the scrutiny of scores on various graphs and the determination of how value in terms of more marks in the high achieving categories may be added for the future. What are our weaknesses? How can we improve? What is our game plan? Not so that our students are more adept at communicating, problem solving or engaging more fully and vibrantly in the world, but because it has implications for schools in terms of enrolments and a badge of success.

Somehow, somewhere, the balance between learning and formal education—particularly as it applies to schooling<sup>2</sup>—has been lost. Learning is about enrichment and curiosity and experimentation. However, often in this current context, my experience has been that ticking boxes and meeting outcomes and measurement have been placed at the forefront of

---

<sup>2</sup> While the terms “education” and “schooling” are often used synonymously, there are subtle differences between the two. Education can refer to everything learned in life and is ongoing, whereas schooling is the education that takes place specifically at a school (Nwobodo, 2018). For the purposes of this thesis, I have used the terms “Christian schooling” and “Christian school education” to refer to the formal education that takes place in a Christian school. The term “education” has been used deliberately when applied to Kingdom-shaping to recognise that Kingdom-shaping education should not be confined to a school context. Rather, it encompasses all of life.

schooling. Paulo Freire (2005) summed it up so beautifully in his words that “Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72), yet there is scarcely time for the continuing, hopeful inquiry that occurs in a school community. In an indictment of the current processes and of the way that education is largely undertaken in the Western world, Freire went so far as to say that, without inquiry and without praxis, there is no humanity. And I may add that, without humanity, there is no life.

The realisation that I was feeling increasingly suffocated by the narrowing focus on results and testing prompted me to become more vigilant as to how this emphasis was impacting on colleagues, students and the school as a whole. A concern began to creep over me like the afternoon shadow that descends through the trees—hardly noticeable at first, but then suddenly making itself known in a chill breeze and a darkening of the afternoon—that perhaps this shift in language and focus was starting to change who we were becoming as teachers and students and as a school, and could potentially change me. Was this what I had signed on for? Producing a set of hands who would turn the wheel of a national economy? Facilitating young men and women who, equipped with their first-class education and consequent careers, could go and live snug, middle-class lives? I began to read and to search for answers. To my surprise, as I embarked on this research study, there was little, if anything, that had been published that considered explicitly the impact of a market-driven context on Christian schools. Hence, I set out to explore this relationship, and to consider the distinctive nature of an education that might be imbued at a Christian school and the hindrances that might be inhibiting such a distinctive Christian education from taking place.

It is important to highlight at this point that I have intentionally composed this thesis in the first person, and that I have deliberately chosen language that is not often employed—and that perhaps has even been considered out of place—in formal academic writing. A neoliberal, market-driven perspective is reductionist (Bettache & Chui, 2019), and its effect has been a *technicisation* of knowledge (Connell, 2013) and language. I have, as a result, attempted to breathe palpable life into my writing through utilising a variety of literary devices, including those that are usually seen in poetry, such as metaphor, personification,

active verbs and onomatopoeia. It is my hope that, in doing so, the words of the participating teachers in this research will imbue vitality, and that the images that are cast forth will be powerful and inspirational for presenting an alternative viewpoint to the booming and dehumanising voice of the market.

### *1.1.1 A Note on the Colours*

Throughout this thesis, the reader will see that a variety of colours have been used. These are to distinguish among the elements of the Tripod of Shalom that form the conceptual framework for this study, and also to distinguish among the various voices that appear in the work. The following key explains the meanings behind the various hues:

- The Tripod of Shalom's three elements are:
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

## 1.2 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 1 unfolds as a map to assist with navigating this thesis. The chapter offers an overview of the key elements of the study and the themes that underpin the research. A brief explanation of the methodology and methods is also given, along with how these elements are proposed to engage with the research problem and questions. A rationale and anticipated contributions to knowledge are posed, and I also situate the study within my own position as researcher in the context of the study.

## 1.3 The Key Elements of the Study

This qualitative research project has been situated in the context of Yew Tree Christian College. A pseudonym has been used for the focus school to maintain anonymity, both for the school itself and for the teacher participants who took part in the research. The name

that was chosen for the school—“Yew Tree Christian College”—was selected for the symbolism of the yew tree and for the significance that a tree brings to this research. Trees signify growth and have been used prolifically throughout the Bible, such as in the Psalms and also in the Gospels. The yew tree itself affords an added signifier to this research and to the focus school from both negative and positive viewpoints:

- It is perceived to represent death because it is the graveyard tree and all parts of it contain a highly poisonous toxin that causes cardiac arrest and respiratory failure;
- Its wood has been used in the past for making tools of death, such as long bows;
- It has yielded hope for some cancer patients through a mitotic inhibitor that is present and that may be used as a chemotherapy agent; and
- Old yew trees that have appeared dead have suddenly sprouted again and regenerated (Accola, 2009).

The above characteristics of the yew tree make it an appropriate symbol for the focus school because they reflect the capacity of schooling to bring “death”—through a suffocating, narrow, market-driven focus—or “life”—through a holistic education that is about training the whole student. Furthermore, although the focus school has recently demonstrated symptoms that are indicative of a market-driven view of schooling, and that have the capacity to imbue death for its community—as is outlined in Section 2.3 of this thesis—the fact that the yew tree may regenerate is a reminder that growth is always possible, and that hope for a flourishing future must not be lost.

Yew Tree Christian College is located in the state of New South Wales, Australia, and has a closed enrolment; at least one parent was required to be a Christian and part of a local church, or the child in attendance at the school had her or his own Christian commitment (Yew Tree Christian College, n.d., “Enrolment Policy”). The school is affiliated with Christian Schools Australia (CSA). CSA identifies the purpose of a Christian school education as the educational and spiritual formation of each individual child, and to see students finding their life’s purpose in Christ (Christian Schools Australia, n.d.). It has been important for this research to detail how CSA presents Christian education because:

- Its way of thinking about Christian education has influenced the understanding of Christian education in this research;
- Yew Tree Christian College bases its manifestation of Christian education on the purpose and values of CSA; and
- Because of my personal connections with CSA that originated in 1983 with my father's appointment as a leader in a CSA school, my own understanding of Christian education has been significantly influenced by close family relationships with the forefathers of CSA—namely the Rev Dr Robert Frisken, Mr David Magill and Rev Peter Hester.

During this research undertaking, I was a teacher and Head of English at Yew Tree Christian College. I embarked on this qualitative project, utilising case study as a type of research (Starman, 2013), with a desire to understand how the market-driven context that I was beginning to observe was influencing the way that we understood and imbued Christian education at the school. The hope was that, in doing so, I might individually and collectively, along with the teachers who participated in this research, develop a deeper understanding of the essence of Christian education in our context—which was becoming increasingly focused on the end result rather than on the process—and consider how we may be able to imbue authentically an education that was aligned with God's Kingdom despite the challenges of the context.

#### 1.4 The Key Themes that are Central to the Research

The idea that education is about skilling a nation's future workforce and consequent economy has underpinned educational policy both nationally and internationally. This was indicated in the idea presented by Andreas Schleicher (2016), Director for Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), that lost economic output as a result of poor education policies and practices, and the consequent failure of students to achieve the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) baseline level of performance, have a significant impact on a country's long-term economic growth. Echoing this view, which is underpinned by human capital theory, is the Australian Government document: *The economic impact of improving school quality* (Deloitte Access

Economics, 2016), which stated: “More than ever before, Australia’s economic potential is dependent on the production, distribution and application of human capital” (p. 5). In a diagram that appeared in the introduction of this same document and that is depicted in Figure 1.1 below, education achievement was explicitly tied to the economic output of the country. Please see Figure 1.1: The Economic Impact of Improving Schooling Quality.

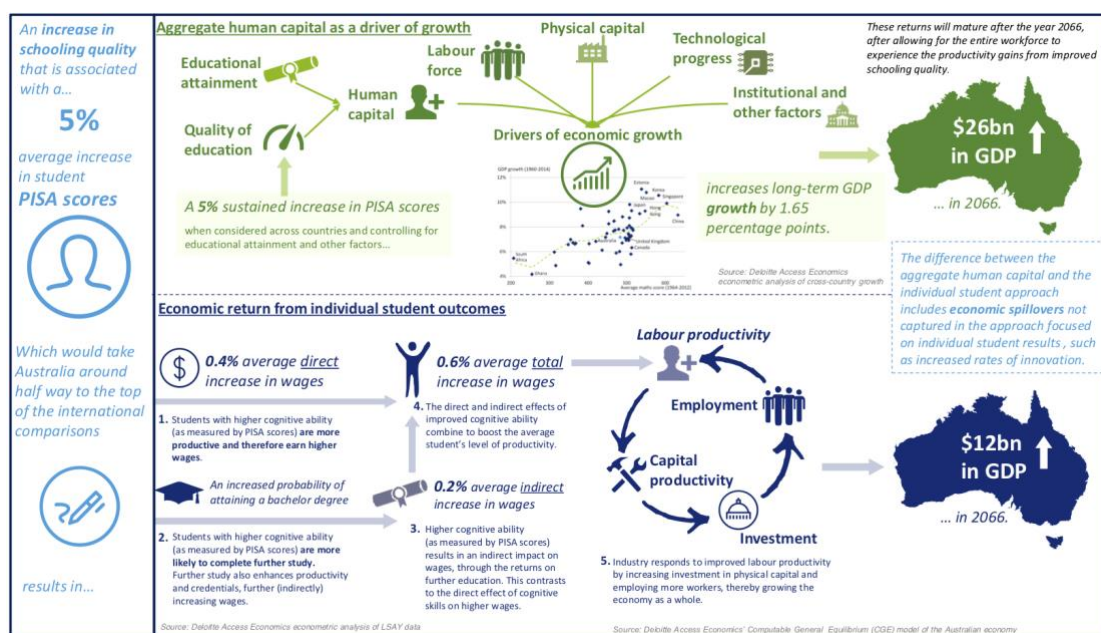


Figure 1.1: The Economic Impact of Improving Schooling Quality (Deloitte Access Economics, 2016)

This government document presented the view that education in Australia is about driving economic growth. Devoid of the mention of human flourishing, or of developing a sense of identity, community belonging or character, the diagram instead focused narrowly on the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through an increase in PISA scores. The consequent defleshing of our students as their blood is tapped and piped through the vampiric arteries of a ravenous steel monster—the pulsing steam engine of the nation’s economy—is abhorrent and dehumanising. This context, driven by the market, is a critical theme of this research study because the government’s emphasis on improving education standards and elevating student results places a titan pressure on teachers, who—like Atlas, charged with holding up the celestial heavens—are cast beneath the weight of the nation’s economy under which they are slowly, systematically and completely crippled.

Fuelled by government economic rhetoric, parents have also jumped on the economic bandwagon, desiring the best education for their children in the hopes that a bright career will promise a prosperous future. In his Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) publication as part of a federal Australian electoral campaign, Julian Hill (2016), the federal Australian Labor Party candidate for Bruce, stated in an article entitled “Education is the key to prosperity”: “People want a great education so that they can provide better lives for their families....Parents know that the greatest gift they can give their children is an education” (n.p.). As a result, schools have been confronted by a transactional attitude where parents demand their money’s worth or they will go elsewhere. And, as a result of the pressure to perform, children who are defined by a number are stressed out, “cutting themselves, ...starving themselves,...depressed,...[and] wracked with anxiety” (Clark, 2016, p. 3). Such a pressure on teachers and schools to produce high academic results to attract enrolments, particularly at independent schools—such as CSA schools—compounded by the need to wake up the ever growing army of disengaged learners, and to care for the casualties who are the collateral damage of such a system—has the capacity to create a diversion that distracts a Christian school from its true purpose: the holistic, spiritual development of its students.

So what is the alternative? This was the question that troubled me as I set out, like Bilbo Baggins, responding to an unexpected knock on the door. Like Bilbo, I “never could remember how [I] found [myself] outside, without a hat, a walking-stick or any money...running as fast as [my] furry feet could carry [me] down the lane...” (Tolkien, 1993, p. 38). But, as the research journey began and my feet found the path, the conviction that—collectively—Christian schools must become aware of the distinctive vision of Christian education began to burn in my bones, and accordingly I embarked on relentlessly pursuing an understanding of authentic Christian education. This, then—a Christian education that is about Kingdom-shaping for Shalom—, became another intrinsic theme of this research project. Unlike the preceding imposter for education that has flagrantly and brutally stripped learning of all its bright potential, a Christian education that is about Kingdom-shaping is focused on the flourishing of students so that they may set about “unfold[ing] creation’s latent possibilities” (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 221). As I began to grapple with the nature of an authentic Christian education, I began to glimpse that the true purpose of a

Christian education is to see our students striving “to make God’s purposes their own,...tilt[ing] forward toward God’s restoration of all things” (Plantinga, 2002, p. xii), and that “...it is often the wild-eyed dogs of day-to-day that determine our dance steps” (D. I. Smith, 2018, p. 1). Coming to terms with “the wild-eyed dogs” that were often at ankle level rather than in the lofty heights became a daily challenge for the research participants and me during our action research (AR) as we undertook to understand the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education.

### 1.5 Important Terms in the Research

- **Kingdom-shaping:** The idea that God’s supreme purposes and vision for His creation are at work, moulding both people and their endeavours. The word “shaping”, as opposed to “shaped” was deliberately chosen to reflect that Kingdom-shaping is an ongoing process, rather than a static state that may be reached. Moreover, shaping implies that it is through God’s shaping—or sculpting—of a person’s life that they then shape the world around them as they imbue a life that is Kingdom motivated. When applied to Christian education, Kingdom-shaping refers to an education that is focused on God’s moulding occurring in the members of the school community, both individually and collectively, to imbue a life that reflects God’s Kingdom. Please refer to Section 2.1.2 for a more detailed explanation.
- **Market-driven:** When applied to education, the idea that the desired outcomes of the market—such as financial profit—are the driving forces.
- **Shalom:** Signifies a state of wholeness that is imbued through people who are in right relationship with God, one another, self and nature. Please refer to Section 2.1.2 for further detail.
- **The Tripod of Shalom:** A framework for Shalom that consists of three elements: **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. Please refer to Section 3.2 for a more detailed explanation.
- **Practice:** The application of belief and the emerging way of doing something that then becomes a way of life. Instead of focusing on the distinct practices that often contribute to a Christian education, such as Chapel Services, Biblical Studies and Mission Trips, practice in the context of this research project is about understanding



how Kingdom-shaping might be genuinely *practised* as a way of life in the milieu of a Christian education. Please refer to Chapter 7 for a detailed exploration.

## 1.6 The Research Approach: Methodology and Method

In order to realise the aims of the research, choices have been deliberately made around research methodology and methods. I chose not to quantify Christian education through collecting large-scale samples to deconstruct and analyse painstakingly. Such an endeavour could have jettisoned me into the very trap that I was critiquing in this research—auditing Christian education as a product and a static entity. To etherise Christian education like a splayed patient on a table readied for dissection would have led to a clinical autopsy that failed to take into consideration the life and vitality that zithers at the centre of individual schools and the vibrant personalities who pulse within those places. Hence, critical pedagogy was selected as a framework because its dialectical nature could facilitate me as the researcher to see beyond the school as a site of Christian instruction, and also to consider it as a place where student—and teacher—empowerment and transformation could take place (McLaren, 2002). Moreover, because critical pedagogy had the capacity to direct my research towards the important questions such as how “our everyday commonsense understandings...get produced and lived out” (McLaren, 2002, p. 72), I chose a qualitative research approach as the vehicle for this journey. A lively vision of the life and energy at Yew Tree Christian College was observed through purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015), and through inviting six teachers from the school to participate in an individual interview, and then, over the duration of a year, in Process Learning Circles (PLCs) (Caine & Caine, 2010) we met as a collective group to use AR to consider our Christian practice and to wrestle with how we might imbue a Christian education that was focused on God’s Kingdom. It was hoped that AR would have synergy with the aims of the research because it draws people into the processes of inquiry, enabling them to participate and collaborate in a dynamic relationship (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). In the same way that studying moving images—such as film—rather than still images—such as photographs—could capture life, AR had all the capacity to render a moving, dynamic understanding of Christian education at Yew Tree Christian College, rather than objectifying the subject in a series of still snapshots through quantitative research approaches. Congruent with the desire to understand the

market-driven hindrances that were inhibiting an authentic Christian education from being imbued at Yew Tree Christian College, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010) was then used to garner an understanding of teacher talk that was captured in the interviews and PLCs meetings through transcripts of audio-recorded discourse.

### 1.6.1 The Research Problem and the Research Questions

The dislocation that I was perceiving between my understanding of the purposes and practice of a Christian education and the purposes and practice of education that were being realised in my broader cultural context formed the case study for this research project. Christian education has the capacity to be a pivotal player in the restoration of the world, and to reconcile those things that are broken, distorted and disjointed in relation to their original creational intent. Education may, therefore, be viewed as a redemptive activity (Knight, 2006). The focal point, then, of a Christian education ought to be the “nature, condition, and needs of the student” (Knight, 2006, p. 207). Among others, Knight posed the following factors that should be central to understanding the student in a Christian education:

- As humans, they are created in the image of God;
- As a child of God, each child has infinite and eternal possibilities;
- They are holistic units comprised of a tightly knit weaving of body and soul; and
- Each is individual, unique and of immense personal worth.

Accordingly, the purpose and goal of a Christian education “are the restoration of the image of God in each student and the reconciliation of students with God, their fellow students, their own selves, and the natural world” (Knight, 2006, p. 210).

This vision of the purpose of education is antithetical to the broader social and government view that perceives students as human capital (Deloitte Access Economics, 2016). The 2019 draft update of the declaration on Australian education goals (Education Council, 2019) broadly included what appeared to be a well-rounded view of education: flexibility and resilience, critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity, for students to grow a well-developed sense of self and to navigate the complex issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—such as climate change and the fast pace of technology. Nevertheless, the insidious influence of the

market puppeteer continued to lurk in the shadows—largely out of sight—but clearly pulling the strings that would see students continue to play the role of wooden puppets grotesquely gyrating to a story over which they had no control, and which identified them as mere capital in someone else’s possession. Inklings of the true agenda with regard to Australian education could be found in:

- Statements in the 2019 draft update of the declaration on education goals (Education Council, 2019) such as: “Our education system must equip our young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to...participate in the workforce and contribute to Australia’s economic prosperity” (p. 2).
- Media reports, such as that published in the online *Sydney Morning Herald*, that communicated the story that: “Australian prosperity may suffer if a slide in its world ranking for the skills and capabilities of its people—driven by falling school test scores—is not reversed, according to a global study” (Irvine, 2018, n.p.).
- Publications by the Gonski Institute for Education suggesting: “If the human capital gap between urban and non-urban Australia was closed, Australia’s GDP could be increased by 3.3%, or \$56 billion” (Holden & Zhang, 2018, p. 4). This report into the economic impact of improving regional education in Australia went on to state that careful research was essential to determine the educational interventions that would be required to achieve the highest yields of return.
- The 2019 NSW curriculum review (Masters, 2019, October) placing emphasis on the future employment capacity of school leavers, identifying in the first paragraph of the executive summary that “Broader changes in society...have changed forever the world in which students live, including future employment possibilities...” (p. x). Encouragingly, however, the document did emphasise the goal for a curriculum that would “support teachers to nurture wonder, [and] ignite passion...” (p. x), and there was a recognition that the current curriculum is overly focused on examination preparation.
- The 2019 analysis of human capital trends carried out by Deloitte (Volini et al., 2019). In response to the challenges faced by businesses in an increasingly technological world, Volini et al. argued that there was a new emphasis on organisations being able to reinvent themselves as humane, social enterprises

because this would maximise performance and improve productivity. Thus the “humane”, “flourishing” and “social” elements that appeared in the 2019 draft update of the declaration on education goals and the 2019 curriculum review could be attributed to a desire to maximise performance and improve productivity.

The emphasis on education as being a significant driver of the Australian economy is dehumanising and places the focus on productivity. This was clear in the draft declaration for education (Education Council, 2019) where the goals were attached to excellence, successful learning, reaching potential, and strengthening accountability and transparency through measurement and tracking. Yet this culturally market-driven accepted view of the purpose of education and of the quantification of success in terms of productivity has significant potential to derail Christian schools. This is because the narrative that their success could be measured in producing the highest achievers in high stakes testing, such as NAPLAN and the HSC, was a distraction from their true purpose, which is about fostering human flourishing.

This research project was therefore focused on understanding the nature of an authentic Christian education that was truly about Kingdom principles—rather than economic growth and the quantification of success—, and on identifying the hindrances that Christian teachers were facing in undertaking such an education in a Christian school. Secondly, through this research project, I desired to understand what would occur if a group of teachers at a Christian school deliberately and intentionally set out—in this market-driven context—to practise a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that was about flourishing. Accordingly, three research questions were posed that framed this project. The questions were:

1. What were the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?
2. What hindrances were revealed by the participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?
3. How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?

## 1.6.2 Contributions to Knowledge

This research project was fostered by a desire to understand how, in the current market-driven context, Christian schools could be counter-cultural and avoid mission drift (Greer & Horst, 2014). My reasoning was that, in revealing the insidious master puppeteer, I could make a difference in my own context and perhaps in the broader Christian school arena as a whole. Therefore, my desire was to increase my own epistemological, ontological and axiological understanding of the nature and practice of Christian education, believing that this may increase the possibility of effecting a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in a market-driven context.

### 1.6.2.1 *Theoretical Knowledge*

My perception was that the education in which I was immersed at Yew Tree Christian College was being slowly and insidiously manipulated by the forces of the market—as they were applied through curriculum documents and other government communication—and by the expectations of parents who were highly malleable to the demands of the market-driven context. It seemed that, as a result, the Christian education that was being offered at that school was becoming less distinctive from other schools that did not subscribe to a Christian ethos. It was expected that, through this research project, a deeper theoretical understanding of the nature of an authentic Christian education may emerge. An authentic Christian education would need to be distinctively different from the education that was being offered by the dominant culture and that was overtly focused on the measurement of academic achievement and success. In comprehending the distinctive nature of a Christian education, it would be important to consider the purposes of such an education—namely, the spiritual development of students, restoration of their identity as image bearers and reconciliation with Kingdom-shaping principles for life—and then to understand what action would be required to practise such an education based on this understanding.

### 1.6.2.2 *Methodological Knowledge*

Given that this research project was to take place in a Christian context and with an overtly Christian focus, it was my expectation that the research may yield some methodological

knowledge for research methods as a whole. These expectations were centred around utilising the Tripod of Shalom as a framework for enacting various elements of the research:

1. An increased understanding of how participants might relate with one another in the PLCs and of how to construct an AR intervention through the lens of **knowing**, **being** and **doing**;
2. The creation of an additional lens through which to conduct CDA that was focused on the synergetic interplay among **knowing**, **being** and **doing**; and
3. The development of a framework for analysing the significance and quality of Christian research practice.

### *1.6.2.3 Policy-Based Knowledge*

Through the interviews that I planned to conduct with the six participating teachers, I expected to be able to identify some of the hindrances that teachers were facing in effecting a Christian education in their daily practice, and perhaps to mitigate some of these factors. Accordingly, the Tripod of Shalom could potentially enable teachers—and others in wider contexts, such as nurses and politicians—to navigate the hindrances that emerge out of a market-driven context, and to consider a practical and holistic way of community life based on the interaction among:

- **Knowledge** of a biblical view of life through **The Word**;
- **Incarnation** that allows the words of the biblical view to be empowered when they are appropriated into a person's way of **being**; and
- **Proclamation** that seeks to free the oppressed and that is inspired by **incarnation** and founded on **The Word**.

### *1.6.2.3 Practice-Based Knowledge*

Practically, this research was about challenging Christian teachers to view education more broadly than from the perspective of preparing a future workforce. Instead, it suggested that a Kingdom-shaping education is about equipping young people who will use their training to “rule well over God’s entire good-but-broken world, imitating Him well...both in public and private, through human occupations of all kinds...” (Overman, 2016, p. 23). My

intention through the AR and work with the participating teachers was to develop a framework for Kingdom-shaping education that could be used by any school in any context. Consequently, in education, the Tripod of Shalom is a three-part framework that has the potential to offer:

1. An understanding of why we educate;
2. Structures of teaching and learning that are Kingdom-shaping;
3. The possibility for the participating teachers to actively model Kingdom-shaping relationships and teaching in practice; and
4. Empowerment of a group of teachers to think about and carry out their teaching practice differently, demonstrating what Kingdom-shaping education may look like in practice because AR can be transformative (McTaggart, Nixon, & Kemmis, 2017).

In the context of this research, this framework was to be applied by the participating teachers to their practice, and it was my expectation that, over time, the participating teachers would be able to visit one another's classes and observe the Tripod of Shalom in action, shaping our practice.

### 1.7 The Positionality of the Researcher in the Context of the Research Theme

The term "positionality" encapsulates both the worldview that an individual brings to, and the position that she or he takes in relation to, a research project (Holmes, 2014). To acknowledge these elements that may influence the way that a researcher represents her or his findings, it is important for the researcher to contextualise the views, values and beliefs that are relevant to the process undertaken in the research and the findings that emerge from that research (Holmes, 2014). Accordingly, the following subsection of Chapter 1: Introduction explores my positionality within this research, particularly focusing on the place that Christian education has had in my life personally and in the life of my family.

My journey with Christian education began at the age of eight when my family was living in the country town of Hay in South Western New South Wales. We were undertaking the typical rural life by the Murrumbidgee River that was built on our church community and our involvement in local public schools—the primary school that my sister and I attended

and the high school where my father taught. At this time, through a variety of circumstances, my father became increasingly—and reluctantly—filled with a conviction that he was to take up the role of Deputy Principal at a Christian high school in Sydney, New South Wales. Accordingly, our family extracted ourselves—painfully—from our safe and comprehensible world in Hay and attempted to graft ourselves into a city life—a universe that was completely and utterly foreign.

The shift that our family made from Hay to Sydney and into the Christian school context was highly significant for my father and for me. Over time, my father moved from deputy principal into the position of principal at that school and became a well-known and respected Christian educator. After leaving that initial school that relocated us to Sydney, he undertook other roles as principal, including an interim posting at a struggling Christian school. Now retired, his legacy lives on. In 2019, as I began a new role at another Christian school, a fellow new staff member approached me and enthused: “I have heard about your dad. He is a legend where I come from!” These compliments, often accompanied by anecdotes, are frequent in my experience with other Christian educators, highlighting the influence that my father has had on Christian teachers and on the broader Christian school movement as a whole.

For me, I grew up earning a few dollars through helping out at the CCSL<sup>3</sup> summer national conferences. These conferences were designed to introduce new teachers to Christian community education, and to provide training for teachers at Christian schools and for members of their school boards (Friskin, 2011). I would prepare dips and cakes for morning teas, and fill urns and fraternise with the delegates from a multitude of exotic places in Australia and overseas who had come to immerse themselves in understanding the nature and purposes of a CCSL Christian education. During the keynote sessions, I would creep through hushed corridors past the auditorium, mysterious words floating through cracks in the door. “What alchemy was taking place in those rooms?” I wondered. I remember fondly the interstate visitors who billeted in my home and the conversations that I had as a young

---

<sup>3</sup> In the early days of Christian education in Australia, CSA was known as “CCSL”—Christian Community Schools Limited.



person with the conference attendees over lunch, dreaming privately that, one day, I would attend those conferences—not as a helper in the kitchen—but as a participating Christian teacher delegate. Sadly, that has not really occurred because, over time and partially owing to the transition from CCSL to CSA in the year 2000, the summer CCSL conferences have dwindled away. Occasionally a CSA conference has emerged—for a day or two, rather than their original four days—but lost is that sense of joint purpose and vision that is still so pungent in my memory.

My unique upbringing in the home of a Christian school principal—in what could still be described as pioneering days for Christian education<sup>4</sup>—allowed me to overhear conversations, to engage with other Christian educators who shared meals at our table and to observe the practices and rituals of Christian education that all became deeply ingrained in my DNA. Indeed, in his hand-written inscription in the opening page of my copy of *It only takes a spark: The story of Christian Community Schools* by Bob Frisken (2011), Bob—who was, and still is, a close family friend and the founding principal of the first CCSL school—validated my involvement in the Christian school narrative, writing: “Bronwyn, you have shared so much in this story, and there is still so much God calls you to do”. It has been these formative experiences with Christian education and interactions with its pioneers that have shaped who I am as a Christian educator today.

Consequently, over 37 years, 22 of them as a Christian educator, I have developed a deep commitment to the vision for Christian education. My Masters research thesis was, therefore, focused on understanding the effectiveness of a Christian education for shaping students’ biblical worldview with regard to relationships (Wong, 2008). In a similar vein to research conducted by Green and Cooling (2009),—albeit on a much smaller scale—I desired to know whether a Christian education really made a difference in the spiritual and formational shaping of the students who attended the Christian school at which I was teaching. In recent years, my attention has moved to focus on the nature of an authentic Christian education as a whole. The extent of my disturbance that Yew Tree Christian College in particular might be in the early stages of drift from what I perceived was central

---

<sup>4</sup> This was the early 1980s, and the school at which my father was principal began in 1977.

to Christian education could, perhaps, be partly explained by the fact that, when I was a child, our family had known the founding principal. I was aware of the immense sacrifices that had taken place in the pioneering days of the school, and of the fire that had been in the bones of those who had made those sacrifices in order to birth a school that was about students growing up into Christ.

This research project saw me situated as an “insider” researcher (Kerstetter, 2012). An insider researcher shares characteristics with those who are the topic of the research, and may in fact be one of the members of the group that is the focus of the study (Saidin & Yaacob, 2016). It has been debated as to whether insider research is trustworthy because the researcher can be too subjective, there can be bias and threats to objectivity, and there can be issues of confidentiality and power struggles (M. Greene, 2014). There are, however, significant advantages that can be achieved in insider research because the insider researcher brings:

- A passion to the research;
- A deep understanding and nuanced perspective of the topic;
- An ability to relate well with the research participants; and
- An understanding of the research context (Berkovic, Ayton, Briggs, & Ackerman, 2020; Saidin & Yaacob, 2016).

As I embarked on the processes for confirmation of candidature and ethics applications for this research, there were concerns raised by the panel assessing my confirmation and also by the Ethics Committee as to whether my position as a Head of Faculty at the research site would compromise the research, and whether the participants would be at risk of coercion through a power imbalance. On the contrary, my position as an insider allowed a deeply rewarding, collaborative relationship to develop amongst all members of the PLCs that fostered a willingness to be authentic, and that resulted in data that were immensely rich and meaningful.

The prior understandings of Christian education that I had developed through my upbringing and that I have described in this section were, however, brought with me into

this research. Therefore, as I approached the project with these assumptions underpinning my perspective of Christian education, these were, to some extent, influential on the understanding of the participants through the knowledge sharing that took place, particularly in the early stages of the research. Nevertheless, as the participants and I progressed in this research over the period of a year, the level of relationship that I had with the participants because of my insider position meant that their honest and probing questions, and our collective desire to truly grapple with the nature of Christian education, led to a deep challenging and reshaping of my prior assumptions as I was forced to consider that perhaps my earlier convictions prior to engaging in the research project had been somewhat superficial and simplistic. It is hoped that the words of the participants as they appear in Chapters 5 through to 7 imbue this poignancy, and demonstrate for themselves the benefits that were realised through my insider positionality in this research.

## 1.8 The Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters, the structure of which is now described. Chapter 2 focused on unpacking the literature that pertains to the topics central to this research—namely, a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom, and the market-driven context of schooling. Throughout this chapter, I explored the reasons for the lack of an appropriate model for Christian education, and the consequent need for me to devise one of my own that has been entitled “the Tripod of Shalom”. Because Yew Tree Christian College was a CSA school, it was also necessary to unpack some of the understanding of Christian education imbued by CSA, and this was based on professional development that was conducted by CSA, and that was attended by me separately on two occasions and by the teaching staff members at Yew Tree Christian College. Most importantly, in relation to Kingdom-shaping and Shalom, it has been critical to review the literature that explores both the nature of God’s Kingdom and Shalom and how that might relate to a Christian education. Finally, the latter half of this chapter considered literature that was about the market-driven context of schooling. This included elements of neoliberalism, an emphasis on testing and the quantification of results, and how this has influenced schools, parents, students, teachers and Yew Tree Christian College as a whole.

Chapter 3 was centred on the conceptual framework that has undergirded this research, the Tripod of Shalom. Throughout this chapter, the role that the Tripod played throughout the research with regard to identifying the elements of Shalom, structuring the study's research methods, providing a lens for the analysis of data and guiding ethical ways of relating was established and explored. Central to the chapter was the detailed exploration of each of the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom: **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. Each were examined for its discreet nature and connection with Shalom and its synergetic relationship with a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. The three colours that have been chosen to represent the elements of the Tripod of Shalom were also justified throughout this chapter.

Chapter 4, the Methodology chapter, was centred on exploring and justifying the methodology and methods that were utilised throughout this research project. Accordingly, with regard to the methodology, the research design was unpacked, identifying critical pedagogy as the research paradigm, and the reasoning behind using this approach was defended. Additionally, the choice to use qualitative research was explained and placed within the context of the overall research concept. After this, the methods that were used to action the methodology were discussed in detail. These included the use of CDA to analyse the data and the unique way that this was conducted in this particular project, using a transdisciplinary approach that incorporated the Lacanian Discourse Theory and the Tripod of Shalom. The importance of AR to the project was also identified in this chapter, along with the process that was undertaken to effect this in practice. Chapter 4 also introduced the selection of the participants and their unique identities that they brought to the project. Finally, the chapter concluded with a description of the ethical considerations that were employed and the authenticity of the overall research.

Three chapters were used to present and analyse the data that were collected in this project. These were Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Each of the three chapters focused on one of the three questions that guided the research. Chapter 5 centred on the first question that considered the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. The second research question that focused on the hindrances that participants faced in imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education guided

the analysis of data in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 was undergirded by the third research question that concentrated on understanding the participating teachers' deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, and how these were transformational for their practice.

In the final chapter of this thesis, the research project was summarised. Beyond revising the research methodology and methods and synthesising the findings, there was an exploration of the various contributions to knowledge that had emerged from the project. These included theoretical, methodological, practice-based and policy-based contributions. Suggestions for further research were made along with possible policy development. Finally, the thesis closed with a personal reflection of my journey with this project and with the participants who travelled alongside me throughout 2018.

## 1.8 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I introduced this project that focused on the challenge to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. I began by describing my passion for the research topic and the consequences that I perceived were a by-product of the interaction between the market and education and, in particular, a Christian education. Following this, I introduced the location of this case study, Yew Tree Christian College, and whence the data were derived. It was also important then to explore some of the themes that were central to the research, and to consider how the research approach—methodology and methods—facilitated the emergence of these themes through the analysis of the data. The research questions were stated, and the expected knowledge contributions—theoretical, methodological and practice-based—that might emerge as a result of considering the data in the light of the questions were considered. Finally, prior to the thesis outline, I reflected on my positionality as the researcher and how that had shaped my interest in the research topic. The following chapter expands on the literature that was central to understanding the nature of the market and its impact on Christian education. It also explores the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

## Chapter 2: The Literature Review

### *Shallow Expectations*

*Expectations: a strong belief that something will happen or be the case...*

*Society tells us we need to succeed...*

*They force-feed us with their thoughts till we finally concede*

*That we must be like everyone else...it's a need.*

*We forget what we wanted and focus on society. We believe the lies.*

*Lies flooding our minds till we're eventually blinded by what they want us to believe. Lies flooding till it finally creates an ocean.*

*An ocean with crashing waves that would drown out our aspirations, our determination, our dedication, now defined by shallow expectations...*

*All to feel accepted, and not rejected.*

*To have stability and security and think we've been perfected?...*

*By society? By what it wants?*

*Did we all forget what we want?...*

*Did we forget the years studying and deciding what we want to do with our life?*

*Why are we defined by shallow expectations?*

*It gives me such frustration that our dreams and creations are treated like abominations.*

*Can society get off my back and go on vacation?<sup>5</sup>*

Bella, Year 8 student at Yew Tree Christian College – Spoken Word

Poetry

---

<sup>5</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - The Word – Knowing (blue);
  - incarnation – Being (red); and
  - Proclamation – Doing (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - The quoted words of the participant teachers (green);
  - The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College (pink); and
  - The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College (purple).

## 2.1 Chapter Introduction

In Chapter 1, I introduced the thesis topic—the difficulty to imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom— and I explored why it was so important to me. My own experiences as the daughter of a Christian school educator and also as a teacher in Christian schools were described for their contributions to my positionality as the researcher in this project. In order for the reader to gain insight into the underlying issues that bubbled beneath the surface of this research topic, I briefly considered the nature of a market-driven education and its impact on Kingdom-shaping. The reader was also signposted towards the research approach that was explored throughout the thesis and the projected outcomes that might emerge from the study.

Chapter 2 builds on the concepts and ideas that were briefly considered in Chapter 1. Understanding where we have been so that we may map a way forward is very important in the journey to discover what it could mean to engender a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. Consequently, this review explores literature that focuses on a variety of areas that are relevant to the aims of this research. As a starting place, the focus is on the literature that centres on the nature and purposes of Christian education, followed by the context of the research, the neoliberal marketisation of education.

In a desire to find the humanity in schooling, and to understand how the collision between the voracious appetite of the market for quantification and the mandate of Christian education may be navigated, I devised three research questions. These three questions shaped my exploration and, together with the research participants, enabled the navigation of a journey that led in the direction of hope and Shalom. The three questions were:

1. What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?
2. What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?
3. How were the participating teachers' deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?

## 2.2 An Introduction to Kingdom-Shaping Christian Education for Shalom

### 2.2.1 The Challenge to Find an Appropriate Model of Christian Education

As the research questions reveal, central to this project has been the desire to understand more fully the nature of Christian education and Christian schooling. The desire at the outset of the study was to be more intentional in imbuing a Christian education at Yew Tree Christian College—the focus school—, particularly in a context that has sought to wrest attention towards the market and away from the particular goals and aspirations of Christian education. As the research progressed, it began to be apparent to the research participants and me that we were starting to delineate between an education that is Christian—or simply Christian schooling—and a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that is for Shalom. Throughout the process of the research, the difficulties in truly understanding the purpose of and process of Christian education and what models may be appropriated in order to effect Christian education became increasingly apparent. This section is focused on exploring some of those challenges that emerged and on explicating the literature that is about Christian education as it applies to Christian schools.

An abundance of literature exists about the term “integration of faith and learning” (at least 500,000 Internet sources). The breadth of the term was described by Badley (2009); it has been used both to identify the academic linking of Scripture with subject content and to describe the physical application of faith to life (p. 7). As the “process by which two often very differing visions are related in an interesting and informative way on the basis of one or more shared presuppositions” (Badley, 1994, p. 20), the integration of faith and learning comes in a range of different models such as:

- *Fusion* integration, where elements when fused together become a new entity and original elements lose their identity;
- *Incorporation* integration, where one element dissolves into another;
- *Correlation* integration, where similarities between elements are noted but not blended;
- *Dialogical* integration, where a conversation takes place between two elements; and



- *Perspectival* integration, where an element is viewed from a worldview perspective (Badley, 1994). Badley (1994) noted, though, that, because no elements are joined here, one could argue that the model of perspectival integration stretches the definition of integration.

The integration of faith and learning is a term that may come to mind firstly when attempting to understand the means of achieving Christian education. Glanzer (2008), however, argued that the integration model is “too philosophical...[and] not Reformed<sup>6</sup> or biblical enough” (p. 43), instead suggesting a redemptive model where the role of a scholar “involves gaining increased understanding into God’s creation as a means of reversing the effects of the fall” (p. 48). Also of concern is that an integration model comes perilously close to eclecticism, a combination of multiple philosophies that Knight (2006) suggested “may be tempting to the beginner...” (p. 165), but that is likely to lead to a Christian education that lacks a genuinely Christian approach, particularly in versions such as fusion integration and incorporation integration. In fact, Christian Schools Australia (CSA) (2017), in its explanation of what makes Christian education distinctive, gave two possible outcomes of what they termed an “integral” approach to Christian education. The first outcome can be dualism, where sacred and secular are divided, and the second possibility is syncretism, where elements are blended and therefore the sacred is lost amongst a reinterpretation of the secular. Neither of these outcomes fulfils the aim of a Christian education that must include the clear elucidation of creation in the light of its relationship with God (Percy, 2004). Badley (1994) proposed that confusion is the by-product of an attempt at simply marrying Christian worldview, faith and theology with the academic disciplines. Furthermore, its approach that sees educators sift through a range of secular options in order to arrive at a tangible Christian culture makes it “an insufficient base for Christian education” (Knight, 2006, p. 164), and may lead to a situation where Christian schools simply “[frustrate] the purpose of their existence” (Knight, 2006, p. 164).

---

<sup>6</sup> Glanzer (2008) encapsulated Reformed thinking as the interpretation of all of life within the Biblical story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. An emphasis in his interpretation was centred on engaging in the “unfolding of creation by participating in the creational work of God...” (p. 44).

In the list of integration models, the only option that did not have the potential to lead to syncretism or a sacred/secular dichotomy was perspectival integration. A Christian education that is seeking the Kingdom of God is careful to avoid such a dichotomy, and recognises the fundamental importance of “the recognition that Jesus is Lord of every facet of life, Lord of every nook and cranny of the school yard” (Hanscamp, 2014, p. 12). Perspectival integration (Badley, 1994) that involves critiquing content through a biblically Christian worldview lens is an approach by which many Christian schools effect a Christian education. The importance of worldview was elaborated by Sire (2014), who defined it as:

...a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart,  
that can be expressed as a story or in a set of  
presuppositions...which we hold...about the basic  
constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on  
which we live and move and have our being. (p. 122)

Sire (2004), in his exploration of the implications of such a definition, argued that our worldview “is what is actualised in our behaviour. We live our worldview or it isn’t our worldview” (p. 133). Utilising the worldview approach “provides the framework or tool by which students and teachers understand life and the world” (Burggraaf, 2014, p. 70) and, based on that understanding, is “guided by a vision of a new and better world: The kingdom of God”, which involves modelling and teaching “a life of reforming discipleship” (G. G. Stronks & Blomberg, 1993, p. 9).

Worldview formation through Perspectival integration is the model of integration of faith and learning that framed the CSA *God’s Big Story* approach to Christian education. This Christian worldview formation approach that considers the biblical narrative through the framework of four phases—creation, fall, redemption and restoration—was significant to this research study because Yew Tree Christian College is affiliated with CSA. Worldview formation through *God’s Big Story* therefore demonstrates one approach to Christian education in which staff members at Yew Tree Christian College had been trained. The following discussion demonstrates the aims and processes that have been used by CSA to implement the *God’s Big Story* approach in Christian schools, and some of the challenges

that were experienced at Yew Tree Christian College as a result of training that occurred there at the beginning of 2018. This experience demonstrated to me and also to the participants who were involved in this research project that an understanding of Christian education requires dedicated epistemological, ontological and axiological exploration. It also reveals some of the difficulties in attempting to appropriate a model of Christian education at a school.

CSA is one of a variety of Christian school sectors under the umbrella of Australian Independent Schools (AIS). Schools in the CSA network are primarily affiliated with a local evangelical church and educate children of families who desire schooling that is founded on Christian principles and beliefs. CSA's approach to training teachers in utilising *God's Big Story* has been to train a smaller group of head teachers and school executives at "Train the Trainer" symposiums. It was envisaged that, using this training experience, the Presenter's Guide and the resources supplied in the training, these groups of leaders would then go and train teachers within their local jurisdictions. The CSA *God's Big Story* Presenter's Guide used at the 2017 Train the Trainers symposium, at which I was a delegate, stated that the goal of their curriculum training was to "...narrow the gap between intent and practice and give teachers tools to plan and implement quality curriculum with clear links to a biblical Christian worldview" (Starling, Cook, Scott, & Pendlebury, 2017, p. 9). CSA's comprehensive approach to planning Christian education also considered the importance of action that stems from worldview because it argued that "we are connected and restored as agents of change, stewards, honouring God in all things" (Starling et al., 2017, p. 68). At the 2017 *God's Big Story* "Train the Trainer" symposium, this desire for practical action that stems from honouring God was a thread that was woven throughout a number of keynote addresses, and it was exemplified in the involvement of students from local Christian schools as they led corporate worship with the delegates.

Because of its emphasis on belief and the mind (knowledge) that may not recognise the imperative of Christian practice (being and doing), the Perspectival integration approach—into which *God's Big Story* fits—can be problematic. The 2017 Presenter's Guide did seem to reflect this view that a worldview approach may be largely concerned with "information rather than formation" (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 219), consequently limiting intentional dynamic

action. Focusing largely on knowledge of biblical Christian worldview and explicit documentation of the biblical narrative in curriculum, the 2017 guide did not have enough emphasis on directing school leaders to instruct teaching staff members as to how they might inspire the outward manifestation of action that is based on this understanding. As a result, the intention for the training to inspire practice that rose out of the knowledge of a Christian worldview was lost in translation. This was reflected in participant feedback about the *God's Big Story* training received by all staff members in early 2018 at Yew Tree Christian College. Research participant, Philippa, commented that "The hard work is then translating that into our everyday work which we never do...There is a long way between the big abstract thing [and] the nitty gritty and we need to keep crossing that on a daily basis." Agreeing with this view, James then added: "I felt quite disheartened not being given practical examples or even a model of how it could work in a lesson. Again, everything was very conceptual, and I went away thinking, 'Oh, that's what I already do.' I kind of understand the big picture of the biblical perspective in my unit, but I don't know how to actually make it happen in a class discussion or in a lesson." The conclusion that the *God's Big Story* training manual did not have enough practical focus was demonstrated in the standards that were listed in the Presenter's Guide. For example, Part Four: Begin with the End in Mind included the following Christian Distinctive National Professional Standards for Teachers:

- NCD 1.1 Understand the ways in which students develop their understanding of God.
  - NCD 2.2 Understand the philosophical framework(s) influencing the ways in which content is framed and the ways in which a Christian perspective may be taught to students.
  - NCD 3.1 Integration of a Christian perspective throughout programs and assessment.
  - NCD 6.1 Development of a personal philosophy of Christian education based on biblical principles.
  - NCD 7.2 Contributes to the development of distinctive Christian practice in the school, profession and wider community.
- (Starling et al., 2017, p. 68)

Four of the five standards for this section of the Presenter’s Manual were focused on understanding perspectives and philosophy, whereas only one was focused on the tangible practice and profession of faith (NCD 7.2).

Consequently, as explored in this subsection, the literature reveals that Christian education involves a variety of approaches that are not easily packaged and passed on from one context to another. Furthermore, the heavy focus on knowing the Christian worldview has meant that some approaches to Christian schooling have been focused more on the development of the mind than on practical applications that recognise the whole person. This has therefore made it difficult for teachers to understand how to incorporate models of Christian education such as Perspectival integration—like *God’s Big Story*—in their daily practice. The lack of clarity that teachers at Yew Tree Christian College had regarding how to put the training into practice demonstrated the challenges that are faced when attempting to define the nature of a Christian education as it applies to Christian schools and the practice that is involved in achieving those aims.

### 2.2.2 Kingdom-Shaping Christian Education for Shalom

The *God’s Big Story* approach is one way that CSA schools have attempted to effect the purpose and vision of Christian school education as defined by CSA. On its website, CSA presented the purpose and vision of Christian school education as follows:

- On behalf of the Kingdom, for the world, that students are educated and formed to serve;
- For students to commit their lives, in faith, to follow Jesus and, empowered by the Spirit, to commit to serving others and the world;
- To prepare students to live full, productive and purposeful lives, contributing to the well-being of their families, communities and as global citizens; and
- Schools are nurturing communities and are excellent, Christ-centred, service focused, Christian communities, transforming and radical. (Christian Schools Australia, n.d., n.p.)

Through this purpose and vision, it is clear that, despite the potentially cognitive focus of *God’s Big Story*, CSA schools do seek the holistic development of each child within a community of grace, truth, belief and practice, in which students find their purpose in

following Jesus's example. This focus on the person as a whole who, in community, follows Jesus Christ could be said to mirror *Shalom*. Shalom is a vision for creation as it was meant to be, a life of flourishing and prospering (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 45) where people live in thriving, harmonious and life-giving relationships (Nessan, 2010, p. 10) "with God, themselves, each other, and nature – and...tak[e] delight in such relationships" (Wolterstorff, 2004, Introduction, para. 7). Shalom reflects the nature of the Kingdom of God because it is "the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfilment and delight..." (Plantinga, 1995, p. 10). Establishing the Kingdom of God, a state where God's rule is evident through Shalom, is central to the mission of Jesus Christ. This was demonstrated in the Lord's Prayer: "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, The New International Version). A Kingdom-shaping education is therefore conducted—recognising the Creator God's intents and authority, reconciled through the ministry of Jesus Christ (the Son of God – the Lord), and led by the Holy Spirit—individually and together as the community of God, to usher God's rule through actively setting about restoring and transforming the world (see also Wong, (under contract), n.p., reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan).

The term "Kingdom-shaping" has been deliberately used as opposed to "Kingdom-shaped". This is because the term "Kingdom-shaped" as an adjective has a sense of finality about it as if one may reach a state of being Kingdom-shaped. Kingdom-shaping, in contrast, when used both as a verb and as a participle allows for understanding that the term:

- Describes an ongoing process (verb) in the present tense rather than a static state that may be reached
- Describes what the outcome of an authentic Christian education should look like (participle).

Kingdom-shaping is a central element of an authentic Christian education. Furthermore, the first research question in this study has focused on how the participating teachers communicated their understanding of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. To comprehend fully the implications of this term, "Kingdom-shaping", it is important to explore the word "kingdom". Kingdom is a word that suggests a territory that is under the reign or authority of a king or queen ("Collins Dictionary", n.d.). It implies a

governance, citizenship and culture. Biblical literature uses the term “Kingdom” both literally, in terms of physical Kingdoms such as Egypt, Rome and the “eternal sovereignty of God” (“Collins Dictionary,” n.d.), and figuratively, such as the representation of Babylon as a literal Kingdom that was also hermeneutically used to symbolise “an oppressive and violent regime” (Vander Stichele, 2000, p. 9), and in Old Testament prophetic literature to symbolise “an evil power” (Alexander, Rosner, Carson, & Goldsworthy, 2000, p. 394).

Clarity regarding the significance of the Lord’s prayer and Jesus’s words, “Your Kingdom come...” (Matthew 6:10, The New International Version), emerges when these words are considered in the light of the idea that earthly existence involves a torn allegiance between what Augustine (1972) termed “the City of God” and “the city of this world” (p. 761). The difficulty, St. Augustine (1972) contended, is to be found in the fact that “God’s city lives in this world’s city, as far as its human element is concerned; but it lives there as an alien sojourner” (p. 761). Consequently, God’s creation, which Augustine (1972) described as “ordered...in perfect justice...” and where there was “temporal peace” (p. 872), “limits the harmonious agreement of citizens...to the establishment of a kind of compromise between human wills about the things relevant to mortal life” (p. 877). Augustine’s thesis that earthly life is perched on a fulcrum that swings between the City of God and the city of this world was also evident in the idea that, in leading the people of Israel out of bondage – or slavery – to the Egyptian Empire, Moses’ greatest assignment was to imbue within the Israelites, who had known only the life of Egypt and its “religion of static triumphalism” (Brueggemann, 2001, p. 6), a new culture that “dismantle[d] the politics of oppression and exploitation by countering it with a *politics of justice and compassion*” (Brueggemann, 2001, p. 6; *italics in original*). Consequently, Brueggemann (2001) proposed that the people of the Exodus participated in “the intentional formation of a *new social community* to match the vision of *God’s freedom*” (p. 7; *italics in original*), and that this freedom was antithetical to the culture that they had experienced within the Kingdom of Egypt.

The opposition between the metaphorical Babylon and the spiritual Kingdom of God was clearly depicted in John’s Gospel account of the trial of Jesus Christ. Here he juxtaposed the spiritual Kingdom of God (or the City of God) with the dominant Kingdom of Rome, a regime that Augustine (1972) suggested was “founded to be a kind of second Babylon” (p. 787).

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

But they shouted, “Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. (John 19:14-15)

In this cataclysmic confrontation between the Kingdom of God that was represented by Jesus, the King of the Jews, and the Kingdom of Rome that was represented by its vassal citizens, it is ironic that, in His death, Jesus was ultimately demonstrating that His Kingdom, which was “not of this world” (John 18:36, New International Version), ushered in a new type of citizenship founded on a vision of “God’s freedom” (Brueggemann, 2001, p. 7). In stark contrast to expectation, reflected in the confused question of Jesus’ disciples, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” (Acts 1:6, New Living Translation), which they continued to ask Him even after His resurrection (Acts 1:6, New Living Translation), the resurrection of Jesus declared “that the cross was a victory, not a defeat...[and] announces that God has indeed become king on earth as in heaven” (Wright, 2011a, p. 246), although not in the way that Jesus’ disciples expected. Wright’s (2011a) book, *How God Became King*, established the notion that the life that Jesus lived on earth and that was described in the four biblical Gospel accounts was in fact all about “sending out his followers (as a new Roman emperor might send out his emissaries, but with methods that match the message) to call the world to follow Him and learn His way of being human” (p. 246). Therefore, living a Kingdom-shaping life could be summed up in the words of Wright (2011a) who argued that we should celebrate the sovereignty of God over the world, “mak[ing] it a reality through the founding of communities rescued by his love, renewed by his power, and loyal to his name” (p. 247). Such a vision echoes the Kingdom narrative that is distinctively woven throughout the Bible: God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule (Goldsworthy, 2001).

In contrast to the Kingdom of God, which is about Shalom, the dominant kingdom (the city of this world, Babylon) focuses on self-promotion and symbolises the endeavour of humans “to create happiness for themselves amidst the unhappiness of this life” (Augustine, 1972, p. 843). The word “Babylon”, that kingdom representing “avaricious power, the evil



influences of sin and idolatry” (Alexander et al., 2000, p. 394) and all things that are resistant to God, has the same root word as “Babel”, the tower that was built by the people of the world and described in Genesis 11: “Then they said, ‘Come, let’s build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous’...” (Genesis 11:4, New Living Translation). Based on this account that saw the people fixated on greatness, self and a lust for fame, it could be argued that the Kingdom of Babylon embodied a desire for success, power and independence from God. In our current 21<sup>st</sup> century context, the dominant culture continues to be flavoured by similar desires to those that undergirded the Kingdom of Babylon. Neoliberalism, economic utilitarianism and a passion for economic prosperity are indicative of this similarity. The adverse impact of this on a Kingdom-shaping Christian education and also on the students who bear the brunt of such a kingdom is explored in Section 2: The market-driven context of schooling.

For Christian schools to be Kingdom-shaping and to educate for Shalom, it is critical that they have a true understanding of the purposes of education and consider that this understanding may be different from that of the dominant Kingdom – the city of this world, Babylon. Indeed, it is possible to go so far as to take Moses’ mandate from God to “...lead my people out of Egypt” (Exodus 3:10, New Living Translation) as a decree for Christian schools to be actively engaged in the prophetic calling to dismantle the dominant oppressive culture that is found in the city of this world and to educate for a new type of citizenship that is about “being restored to the task we were given in the beginning...the restoration of all God’s creation ...” (Colson, 1999, p. 296). Practically, the task of dismantling the dominant culture of Babylon arises from the desire to act justly and to love mercy (Micah 6:8, New International Version), and might look like Goheen’s (2011) challenge to the church to be a “contrast community” that will be:

- ...a community of justice in a world of economic and ecological injustice...
- a community of generosity and simplicity (of enough) in a consumer world...
- a community of selfless giving in a world of selfishness...
- a community of truth (humility and boldness) in a world of relativism...
- a community of hope in a world of disillusionment and consumer satiation...

- a community of joy in a world frantically pursuing pleasure...
- a community of thanksgiving in a world of entitlement... [and]
- a community who experiences God's presence in a secular world. (pp. 209 – 210)

The practical outworking of such a vision was part of the goal of this research as, in community with a group of six participants, we explored the nature of Shalom and what this tangibly looked like in our practice.

Historically, Yew Tree Christian College has been concerned with developing Shalom. This is expressed in its mission to “provid[e] a quality Christ-centred education which develops the whole person for life and eternity” (Yew Tree Christian College, n.d., n.p.) by offering a “transforming vision for life that is about wholeness expressed in right relationships with the Lord, oneself and others” (Yew Tree Christian College, n.d., n.p.). The commitment of the school leadership to the principles of Shalom was seen at Yew Tree Christian College in the regular development of staff members about the nature and realisation of Christian education, regular whole school community days that fostered relationships across the school and mission trips involving students and staff members. Furthermore, the commitment of staff members to the principles of Kingdom-shaping Christian education that is based on Shalom was practically evident in their responses to an address that I was asked to present to them as a “devotion” during the staff professional development week in early 2018. The feedback from teachers who heard the address demonstrated their desire to contribute to an education that is Kingdom-shaping for Shalom. One teacher, requesting a copy of the transcript, reflected that “I was very moved and impressed with the devotion that you brought to us last week”. Another, also requesting a copy of the transcript, stated that the analysis of a market-driven context and its implications for Christian education could be shared in her Economics class. This reaction complemented the reason that a number of participants in this research gave for involving themselves in the study. For example, Mary stated at the end of her interview that “...I think it's really important that these conversations are continuing because it means then that...hopefully we are reminding each other of what hopefully we can achieve and what we got into education for in the first place.” James also expressed excitement to be involved in the research because “...it's

something that I have been thinking about...how to be more intentional as a Christian teacher. Because I don't feel I'm intentional, and I want to learn how to do that better..."

### 2.3 The Market-Driven Context of Schooling

Some of the by-products of an oppressive dominant kingdom are reflected in the current focus and methods of education that are to be found in a market-driven culture. 13 years after her Nobel Prize speech, Doris Lessing's (2007) juxtaposition between poverty-stricken Zimbabweans "who were talking about books and an education when they had not eaten for three days" and rich English school boys whose "faces...are blank and cannot hear what you are saying" (n.p.) is still relevant. I wonder where the line is that demarcates the hunger for learning in Zimbabwe from the boredom and apathy of students in classrooms of the West, such as the United Kingdom and Australia. Broader possibilities of education are being narrowed by the quantification of results. Consequently, education is being condensed to measurable content that will equip the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce. In this market-driven context, Christian schools, which are about seeing students commit to a life of following Jesus Christ and serving others (Christian Schools Australia, n.d.), can lose sight of their vision and, to secure enrolments, concentrate on developing their branding and promoting academic success. In contrast to the "integration of faith and learning" that has been researched prolifically, an Internet search for "neoliberalism [or market-driven] and Christian education" garners no relevant studies, most focusing on the funding of Christian schools. This indicates that this study has distinctively, if not uniquely, set out to explore two elements that do not appear to have been the focus of previous research: the conflict between a market-driven context and the goals of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

For students, such a narrow view of education that is based on academic success and ranking is suffocating and disengaging. This multi-layered conflict is represented in Figure 2.1: The Neoliberal Squeeze on Christian Schools.

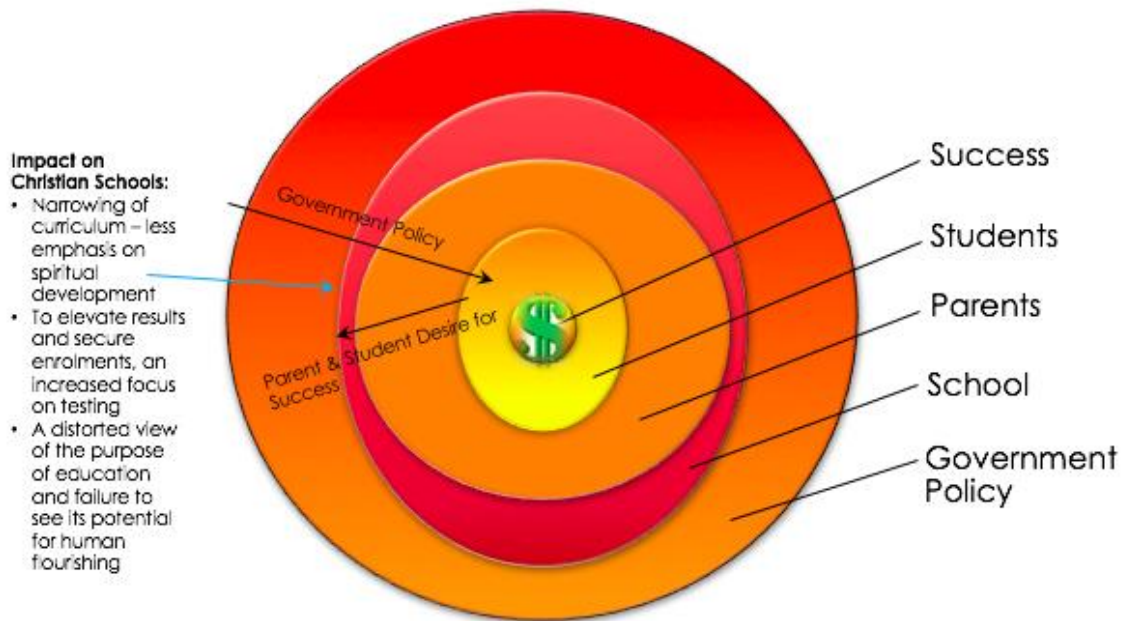


Figure 2.1 The Neoliberal Squeeze on Christian Schools

From the outside of the circle in Figure 2.1, pushing the focus of education is the view of Australian Commonwealth and State governments that education’s role is the preparation of a workforce. This interpretation, reflective of the dominant kingdom of Babylon and partially a result of a broader global capitalist vision that emphasises prosperity and productivity, is demonstrated in the goals of the Melbourne Declaration (Curriculum Corporation, 2008) that underpin the Australian curriculum. This document stated that educational reform for young Australians is “central to the nation’s social and economic prosperity and will position young people to live fulfilling, productive and responsible lives” (p. 6). Reiterating this view, the updated version of the Melbourne Declaration—the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Services Australia, 2019)—stated in the opening of its preamble that “Education...supports young people to realise their potential by providing skills they need to participate in the economy and in society...” (p. 2). Though it went on to add “and every aspect of their wellbeing” (p. 2), the contribution to the economy was given pre-eminence over personal growth. This is a perspective that is furthered by the argument that better chances of employment and higher earnings are strong incentives for governments to invest in education because “tertiary-educated adults

pay higher income taxes and social contributions and require fewer social transfers<sup>7</sup> (OECD, 2017, p. 121). Newspaper articles that identify “the big problem” with Australia’s education system as “its failure to provide enough of our youth with the skills they need to get and keep a decent job” (Gittins, 2017, n.p.) only perpetuate the opinion that education is nothing more than a process of depositing information in the “bank” (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Instead of the vision that schooling might be about the full development of the human personality (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), and about giving students the capacity to engage broadly, deeply and democratically with their world, this perspective reduces education to training that “fulfil[s] the need for human capital” (Giroux, 2014, p. 34), and that promotes unhealthy competition between students and their peers (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008).

Vehemently opposed to the idea that schooling is about training a future workforce, a Year 11 senior student at Yew Tree Christian College wrote in his end of year reflection: “...the whole world wants the students to be something they aren’t....[School] feels like a very long training camp, where they hand pick the good ones to go to work....If you didn’t work well...you’re either chucked out as a useless part of society...or somehow work your way up...” A graduating Year 12 student at the same school, feeling equally passionate about the dehumanising effects of her education, crafted a 24-page treatise entitled “The Issue with our School System” (Woods, 2017). In it, she emotively critiqued the narrow focus of schooling and argued that it is “solely focused on spitting students out into universities, in order to get careers and boost the economy...” (p. 4). McLaren (2007) sarcastically criticised this view of human capital, mocking the idea that it is every person’s dream to be exploited as a worker by corporations. The ones who were deemed by the senior student “as a useless part of society” were described by McLaren (2007) as “compris[ing] capitalism’s new reserve army who have been demoted to the rank of ‘unworthy’, even of exploitation” (p. 20). Ironically, as was pointed out by research participant Philippa in her interview, if job training is the sole focus of education, “you probably do not need very much of the education of the kind we’re talking about at all to get through in your career”. Furthermore,

---

<sup>7</sup> Social transfers refer to the social assistance that is provided by government bodies to those living in poverty.

the idea that schooling is all about readying students for rewarding and productive employment logically leads one to the conclusion that any school activity that is not deliberately calculated towards meeting job training is “a waste of valuable time” (Postman, 1996, p. 27). The incongruity between what is promised in terms of the outcomes of schooling and the actuality of job creation demonstrates that there is indeed a considerable gap (Apple, 2006); supporting this view are statistics showing that as many as 60 per cent of university students are studying and accruing debt in future careers that may no longer be viable in the changing vista of employment (Tutty, 2017).

This utilitarian freighting of education as a training ground for our future workforce limits the outcomes of education to the provision of information and skills that are self-focused on surviving and competing in the global market. Students become fixated on whether their learning is relevant to the workforce and question, “When will I ever need to *know* this?” or “When will I ever *use* this skill?” As a result, our pupils are groomed by a market-driven value system that promotes the survival of the fittest, and that “produces a theatre of cruelty” (Giroux, 2014, p. 72). An informal opinion survey from a Year 8 English class during 2017 at Yew Tree Christian College garnered 8 out of 21 students who believed that the purpose of schooling is about preparing them for a job or a career. The intense focus on schooling as the golden gateway into university and increased “opportunities for rewarding and productive employment” (Curriculum Corporation, 2008, p. 12) transports the message that is sold to parents and schools that education is “a great ship carrying passengers bound for what might be deemed a brighter future” (Wong, 2017b, p. 5). Education therefore becomes a commodity to be bought and sold to provide a comfortable citizenship in Babylon’s promised land of economic security. By contrast, a Christian education that is Kingdom-shaping should be others-focused and oriented to utilising knowledge and skills to “embrace and to celebrate true insights into the world” (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 163), and to demonstrating tangibly God’s ultimate reign through living a life of healing and restoration.

Working from the outside in and represented by the next layer of concentric circles, Figure 2.1 depicts the resultant squeeze on the school itself as a result of government and community pressure to elevate student results. Higher results are important to the New

South Wales government because the final Year 12 examination, known as the Higher School Certificate (HSC), “...provides a platform for developing the skills and talents of the next generation of citizens, who are the future workforce. Their skills and creativity underpin the state’s economic and social prosperity” (BOSTES, 2015, p. 3). Dowling (2008), analysing the move towards standardised testing in Australia, justified the accountability that is achieved through external tests such as NAPLAN in saying that there was a “growing realisation that education is a major factor in economic development” (p. 1). Testing students through setting a minimum expectation (BOSTES, 2015) for achievement is one way that increased rigour in literacy and numeracy is to be achieved in education. Such a focus, however, devalues education, as the by-products of testing are to be found in “their narrow focus” (Caldwell, 2010, p. 51) and in the subsequent distortion produced by an overt emphasis on test preparation that sees “valued goals...devalued” (Caldwell, 2010, p. 51). Ironically, in Texas, the United States, there is some evidence to suggest that student writing skills have declined since high-stakes testing began there owing to the “ditching [of] normal curricula in favour of week after week of isolated test-prep exercises” (Gluckman, 2002, p. 4). In Australia also, the 2019 NAPLAN report demonstrated that NAPLAN testing over the last 12 years has seen “no improvement nationally in average reading achievement” for students in Years 7 and 9 (Australian Curriculum And Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2019, p. 302). Additionally, Australia’s 2019 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) mathematics scores were described as the “lowest level since the survey began” and scores for science “plummeted to their lowest level ever”, prompting Australian federal Education Minister, Dan Tehan, to say that it should have “alarm bells ringing” (Duffy & Wylie, 2019, n.p.). The evaluation of Australian students as “lagging behind” (Duffy & Wylie, 2019, n.p.) Chinese students also demonstrated that PISA scores were being used to make comparisons between different school systems. Moreover, identifying punitive accountability, such as test results and teacher appraisal, as a “wrong driver”, Fullan (2011, p. 5) argued that “The net result of testing is that, instead of teachers being swept up to ride waves of successful reform, they will be crushed by a veritable tsunami of standards and assessments” (p. 9). Indicating that Fullan’s warning was accurate, research participant, James, described in his interview that “I feel tremendous pressure to have absolute proof of what grade I am giving my children and...there's so much more diagnostic testing coming out, and so when you see

kids in the red<sup>8</sup> for reading or not writing enough that becomes your focus to get them to an ability where they can write and they can read.” His frustrated summation of the perspective of teachers was encapsulated at the end of his interview: “We have a lot of knowledge about what education should be like, but we can't—there's too many tensions.”

Teachers are not the only ones to be crushed by such a system. For those students who consistently flounder in tests, achieving below the required literacy and numeracy levels, neither the expression of anger at perpetual failure nor the rejection of “the value of academic work” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 14) should be surprising when their inadequacy is reinforced daily. The suggestion here that high-stakes testing is unhelpful to student learning is supported by research in the United States that has found that the ones who suffer the most as a result of high-stakes testing policies are students who come from backgrounds of racial minority and who are poor (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). In Australia, while Indigenous Australian students' 2017 NAPLAN results reportedly improved (ACARA, 2017), it is boys who have been adversely affected, the 2017 NAPLAN results demonstrating that “nearly 25 percent of year 9 boys across Australia are not meeting the national minimum standard in writing” (Khalil, 2017, n.p.). The manifestation of boys' disillusionment with their education was evident in my own 2017 class of Year 10 boys who described school as “boring, tiring and painful”, and characterised by “learn[ing] in the most uncomfortable, unpleasant, difficult way possible”. Lesson after lesson, detached from the learning experience and with no investment in their education (despite their ability to sum up their feelings eloquently and succinctly), their plea was, “Can we go outside, Miss?”

For some educators, the desire to elevate student results stems from the view that education is “the best route for social mobility” (Muhammad, 2009, p. 1). Passionate about improving student retention rates in the United States, particularly among poorer and migrant communities, Muhammad cited multiple research statistics to support the perspective that education provides the potential for students to “some day enjoy a high quality of life” (Muhammad, 2009, p. 3). Muhammad's belief was largely underpinned by

---

<sup>8</sup> James's use of “in the red” reflected accounting terminology that is usually applied to a bank account that is in deficit.



the research of Levin (he argued that Levin had found links between high school graduation and this “quality of life”), and by the fear that, owing to technological advancements, poor and low achieving students cannot depend on the availability of low-skill jobs in factories. In his work on education, Levin (2009) zeroed in on how to improve school retention, arguing that “...education is a crucial determinant of life chances” (p. 5), and interpreting student non-completion of high school as a “failure” (p. 6), claiming that the goal of high school graduation should be the “minimum standard for adequate education” (p. 8). While quality of life is important and even an issue of social justice, Muhammad’s and Levin’s opinions were anchored in an assumption that this quality is built on economic prosperity. This was clearly articulated in Levin’s cost assessment that high school graduates greatly benefit society through the significantly increased level of income tax that they pay through the higher incomes afforded to those who are more highly qualified. While it may be true that “investment in adequate education for all children is more than just good public investment policy with high monetary returns” (Levin, 2009, p. 17) because a “society that...has higher employment, better health, less crime, and lower dependency is a better society in itself” (Levin, 2009, p. 17), Levin’s perspective neglected to credit other avenues of education that may be more appropriate for some students, such as apprenticeships, or to recognise that satisfaction in life is also a significant contributor to the quality of one’s existence, as was seen in the example of one student below.

Silas (a pseudonym) was a 16-year-old young man who graduated from Yew Tree Christian College without completing the final two years of senior school. For his parents, his final year of school was difficult, each morning a torturous struggle to get him to school on time. Throughout his final year, Silas was absent from school on 45 days. On an additional 44 days, Silas was late to school. In the entire school year, there were only three occasions where Silas attended school activities every day in a straight week, uninterrupted by either lateness or absence. In the eyes of Levin (2009), because Silas did not complete Year 11 and 12, he failed to meet the minimum standard for adequate education. In reality, however, Silas secured an apprenticeship at the conclusion of Year 10. Tirelessly pursuing alternative avenues to schooling, he was diligent in undertaking more than one work experience opportunity, and he started his formal employment and job training at the same time as his cohort embarked on Year 11. Asked about the difference between getting up to go to work

and getting up to go to school, Silas commented, “I am going to a learning environment that I can excel in and work harder and enjoy. There is more purpose in getting out of bed. My gifts get recognised. I am happier.” Silas was just one of many students who, while they were disenfranchised from formal, mainstream schooling, demonstrated their commitment to alternative education (McGregor & Mills, 2012). Yet these students, who do not necessarily fit into traditional mainstream schooling that focuses on academic measurement (Silas did not achieve beyond a Band 7<sup>9</sup> in his Year 9 NAPLAN), are often seen as the problem when they “fail” to take advantage of the education opportunities offered to them. McGregor and Mills (2012) criticised the fact that social justice in this context has been replaced by equality. “Equality of opportunity has overtaken notions of affirmative action with deficit labels attached to those young people who ‘fail’ to seize it. An ‘equitable’ approach ignores the social reality that children start school from very unequal positions...” (p. 845). Consequently, the current regime of testing and the mainstream style of schooling that seeks to measure each child against a common ideal, squeezing them all into a one-size-fits-all, equitable mould, actually has the opposite effect to that for which Levin (2009) argued. In reality, the constant reminders of failure through “the relentless ritualised distinctions of schooling” (Francis & Mills, 2012, p. 257) see social inequality being formalised, certified, structured and entrenched (Francis & Mills, 2012). Consequently, an army of unmotivated, detached students vacantly occupies our classrooms, citing “Nothing” as the intrinsic motivation for their education.

The high-stakes nature of standardised tests such as NAPLAN in Australia is attributed to the publication of results on the “MySchool Website” (ACARA, n.d.) where parents can compare the ‘success’ of schools. The creation of the MySchool Website, launched by the then education minister, Julia Gillard, consolidated the market in schooling (Connell, 2013). This, together with culturally constructed parental perceptions that one’s child’s prosperous

---

<sup>9</sup> During 2017, the New South Wales State government tied achievement in NAPLAN to the acquisition of minimum standards for HSC. Under this requirement, students in Year 9 were required to achieve at least a Band 8 (out of 10 possible bands) in NAPLAN Literacy, Writing and Numeracy tests to be eligible to receive their HSC at the end of Year 12. Students who did not meet this level were required to demonstrate that they had achieved minimum standards in these areas through completing a subsequent test. Owing to community backlash (Kontominas, 2018), this connection between NAPLAN and minimum standards was dropped during 2018. The fact that Silas did not achieve a Band 8 in any of his Year 9 NAPLAN tests demonstrated that, by New South Wales State government measurements, he had not met minimum standards of literacy and numeracy.

future is a by-product of his or her education, puts incredible pressure on independent schools, such as Christian schools, to perform academically in order to secure enrolments. A symptom of this commodification of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an increasing parental desire for schooling that ensures high academic attainment, reflected by Black (2016), who cited a “reported four million Google searches nationally to check on school zones for available real estate” (n.p.). Hattie (2016) warned, however, that such a comparison between schools, based on “destroying a rival in the same business” (p. 3), leads to distraction and that, rather than improved education, school choice sees “a clogging of the motorways” as parents drive the distance to their chosen school based on the hearsay of others (p. 4). Furthermore, such intense competition among education providers, Hattie (2016) suggested, is counterproductive in relation to improving the education that they offer. Figure 2.1, through the narrowing of the left and right sides of the circle in the “school” layer, demonstrates the intense compression on schools derived on one side from parental desire for academic success for their children and on the other side from government obsession with academic achievement and international recognition on the PISA stage. Such a narrow, quantitative view fails to understand that the role of schools “is to prepare students, not just for college or a career, but for life” (Hawkes, 2008, n.p.). Hawkes laid the blame for many contemporary schools failing to fulfil their responsibility to educate their students on the dominance of test results and the role that they played in “measuring the worth of a school” (n.p.).

The pressure to maintain enrolments tempts Christian schools to shift priorities from being Kingdom-shaping to focusing instead on elevating results in tests such as NAPLAN and the HSC. As Christian schools attempt to balance curriculum needs with a goal to educate for Kingdom shaping, they face the risk of reducing their focus on God’s Kingdom principles, instead placing greater focus on the dominant kingdom of Babylon and the juggernaut of the market. Such an outcome was noted in research by Macnaught (1995), who found that church-based schools in Britain and Europe had succumbed to the paradigm of the market where “the spiritual is reduced to the conventional sentiments of civic religion...promoting...values that might domesticate the feral young and persuade them to submit to the invisible hand of the rational economic order” (p. 9). In Australia, Justins’s

(2002) research based on the Christian Parent Controlled (CPC) School sector, challenged that:

If the marketplace assesses the commodity, which is education, on the basis of academic performance and on the physical appearance of students..., and CPC schools make a decision to compete in that marketplace, then they are in real danger of displacing their foundational values. (p. 248)

## 2.4 The Influence of a Market-Driven Context on Yew Tree Christian College

Early evidence of the gradual and insidious creeping of a commodified, market-driven view of education at Yew Tree Christian College was manifest through:

- **A significant rebranding of Yew Tree Christian College:**

During 2017, led by the Principal and the Board, a rebranding of Yew Tree Christian College was undertaken, based partially on the feedback received in the 2016 parent, staff and student survey. The process of rebranding included:

- Undertaking external consultation in order to implement a new school uniform, including a change in colour. The new uniform was significantly more expensive for parents to purchase than the previous one<sup>10</sup>;
- The use of an external consultant to undertake a “Values Vision Day” whereby a group of school leaders determined values, future vision and a new motto for the school<sup>11</sup>;
- Securing an external branding company to design a new school crest and other promotional items such as banners and letterheads;

---

<sup>10</sup> One example of the contrast in uniform pricing was to be found in the cost of the school cap. The original cap could be purchased for \$6, whereas the new cap was \$16.

<sup>11</sup> The firm utilised for the values vision day was a secular firm that described its purpose as being to “create, develop and support a range of interactive, experiential learning processes to explore personal values, improve team performance and transform organisational culture” (Ernst, 2009, n.p.). Despite the fact that the day was described by the principal as “a unique process to determine a set of values for [Yew Tree Christian College] that represents our Mission and Vision statements”, the program did not include prayer or any other indicators that the Christian identity of the school may play a role in determining the values and vision for the future.

- A new school name, incorporating the word “College” instead of “School” to appeal to a certain cultural element of the school community;
- A manifest of the above that appeared in the form of glossy advertising under the title of “strategic plan”. While internally the document included distinctively Christian content, the external cover contained catchy phrases such as “To Learn, To Grow, To Discover Together” that, apart from the school crest and a small Christ-centred motto in the bottom right hand corner, did not contain anything that was distinctively Christian;
- The use of paid models who posed as students and staff members of Yew Tree Christian College replaced all existing images that had been used and that had included actual students and staff members. These images were placed on a new website, the school bus and all other advertising material; and
- Communication by the Principal to staff members that Yew Tree Christian College must strive to be the college of choice for parents and students in the local and wider area.

Research participant Kevin’s reflection in his interview that “I worry that we will focus too much on making ourself [sic] an appealing school and compromising some of our biblical values” suggested that there were community concerns relating to the image of the school, and that the symptoms of a displacement of foundational values as suggested by Justins (2002) were already evident. As 2018 progressed, these anxieties were increasingly vocalised by a number of teachers at Yew Tree Christian College. This was summed up in the statement of one staff member: “The word that I am hearing over and over is ‘branding’. I don’t like it.”

- **An increased focus on NAPLAN and HSC results:**

Over a 12-year period as Head of English at Yew Tree Christian College, I found that the emphasis on NAPLAN increased. Early on, prior to the launch of the “My Schools” website, there was little focus on the testing of students. More recently, however, elevated attention to NAPLAN and also to HSC results was exemplified through:

- Meetings with the Deputy Principal and the Head of Mathematics to discuss the preparation of students for NAPLAN;

- In 2018, instruction from a Deputy Principal at Yew Tree Christian College was received by the Head of Mathematics and by the Head of English to:
  - Have all students complete practice online tests
  - Send the Deputy Principal a timetable of planned practice tests
  - Have accountability with staff members for the completion of practices
  - Confirm with the Deputy Principal that the memo was sent to all relevant staff members;
- Meetings with the Principal to analyse results and to determine how to “play the game” strategically to increase student achievement; and
- A question from the school board to one of the Deputy Principals regarding HSC results: “How will the increase in performance be measured?”.

- **The perspective of parents and students that education is a product:**

Although many parents still send their children to Yew Tree Christian College for a Christian education, there has been a shift in focus, particularly in the Secondary department where some parents have begun to approach their child’s education through a transactional lens. This type of perspective was critiqued by John Collier (2018), the principal of the prestigious St Andrews Cathedral School in Sydney, who in an open letter to parents stated, “I am aware that some parents, because they are paying fees, see the relationship with teachers as a master/servant relationship, such that they are entitled to make extravagant demands” (n.p.). Dr Collier went on to respond to this perspective by encouraging members of the school community to engage in a partnership where parents and teachers work together for the good of the child. Indicators of a transactional perspective toward schooling by some parents and students at Yew Tree Christian College were suggested by:

- Students leaving the school at the end of Year 10 to commence their senior schooling at education facilities that were more highly ranked. In 2016, six students cited ranking as the reason for leaving the school.
- Increased complaints by parents regarding elements of schooling such as:
  - Design of assessment
  - Marking of assessment
  - Unfairness of discipline
  - Incompetency of teaching staff

- Lack of classroom discipline.

The perspective of a disenfranchised parent who, in speaking with a Head of Curriculum, made the comment, “I am paying for this education!” summed up a growing attitude that education is a product that is purchased by families who expect to receive their money’s worth. This was compounded by parents who, concerned that the ranking of the school was lower than what they would have desired, relentlessly questioned how the school would lift its placement in comparison with other schools.

Reflecting Figure 2.1, which visually depicted the narrowing of curriculum and less focus on spiritual development; an increased focus on testing; and a distortion of the purpose of education, which should be about human flourishing, Section 2.4 has suggested that traces of all of these by-products of a market-driven context were becoming evident at Yew Tree Christian College.

## 2.5 The Wrestle for Christian Schools

Chapter 2 has considered the conflict that exists for schools that desire to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. The wrestle between the City of God and the city of this world is, however, highly complex. In Australia, independent Christian schools receive government funding in order to educate their learners.

Furthermore, many parents enlist Christian schools to educate their children with the expectation that their children will in return receive an education that will enable them to be successful in their navigation of life as citizens of the world, albeit with a Christian perspective. In the current context, schools can hardly operate within a framework that is devoid of the market or its associated expectations. So how might Christian schools that desire to be Kingdom-shaping operate in a model that reflects the prayer of Jesus Christ as recorded in John 17: 15 – 17 (New Living Translation):

I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

The ability of a narrative to frame—and even to shape—one’s epistemological understanding of and ontological relationship with the world has been well-documented (Brown, 2017; Fink & Yolles, 2012; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; L. McAlpine, 2016; Sandelowski, 1991). Subsection 2.2.1 explored the potential of worldview to afford a framework for our lives “on which we live and move and have our being” (Sire, 2004, p. 122). Paradigms, operating through cultural values, connect meaning and knowledge, and thereby provide a framing base for attitude. Narratives then contribute to the embodiment of knowledge in the form of stories (Fink & Yolles, 2012). Christian schools have the capacity either to embody a story that is consistent with the Kingdom of Babylon, where knowledge, identity and action are focused on acquiescing with the enculturation of students into the city of this world or, alternatively, to present a divergent narrative that is indicative of distinctive citizenship in God’s City—the Kingdom. The stability of one’s narrative paradigm in the face of what Fink & Yolles (2012) termed “antenarratives...a constellation of conflicting paradigms [that] result in a cacophony of voiced narratives” (p. 200) can be disrupted and consequently create instability within the narrative. School boards, executives and teachers at a Christian school must be clearly aware of the distinctive nature of the narrative of the Kingdom—as opposed to the narrative of Babylon—, aware of what it looks like to inhabit this story of the Kingdom and then intentional in practising a corresponding way of **knowing**, **being** and **doing** if a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom is to be imbued in the school.

Furthermore, it is important to note that it must be the aim for a Christian school, as an education provider, to facilitate all students in their learning, and to pursue the best results for their pupils possible. The reason, however, for pursuing excellence is not bound by the narrative of Babylon, to enable students to focus on the acquisition of goods paid for by a high salary career in order to live a comfortable life in the city of this world. Nor is the reason to be found in the ranking that high results give to a school. Rather, students of a Christian school should be achieving the highest results because it is a reflection of their doing and saying everything “as a representative of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17, New Living Translation) and of their worship as they “give [their] bodies to God...a living and holy sacrifice” (Romans 12:1, New Living Translation). Moreover, students of a Christian school should be encouraged to pursue their best academically (but authentically) in order to use their vocation to set about restoring a broken world, bringing Good News to the poor, and



proclaiming freedom for captives, sight for the blind and liberation for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). The ensuing conceptual framework offers an alternative paradigm that imbues **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that are integrous with the story of God's Kingdom.

## 2.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has focused on exploring the literature that underpins key concepts in this research: a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom and a market-driven context. It has considered the nature of a Christian education through an examination of a variety of models that have been utilised in other contexts, and some of the shortcomings of these. An alternate concept of Christian education was then proposed under the title of a "Kingdom-shaping" Christian education. Accordingly, the nature of the Kingdom was unpacked, and how this was significant for the purposes of an authentic Christian education was articulated. In order to understand the challenges that have been faced in imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in a market-driven context, the nature of the market was then considered, along with its propensity to hinder a Christian education. The following chapter, Chapter 3: The Conceptual Framework explores the conceptual framework for this research project. This framework has been significant for providing a lens that has furthered understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

## Chapter 3: The Conceptual Framework

### 3.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 3 focuses on unpacking the conceptual framework that scaffolds this research. Rather than using a pre-existing conceptual framework, I have devised my own which has been titled “the Tripod of Shalom”. The reasons for this choice will be explored here, and the ways that the framework has been applied to the research are articulated. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to exploring the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom—**The Word**<sup>12</sup>, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**—and how these are significant for a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

### 3.2 Introduction to the Conceptual Framework

The study’s overarching conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 3.1: The Overarching Conceptual Framework.

---

<sup>12</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

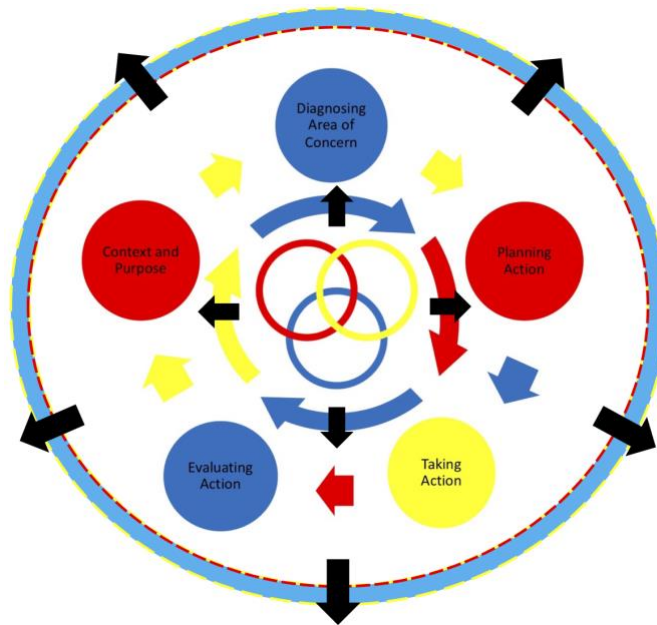


Figure 3.1: The Overarching Conceptual Framework

The various elements of Figure 3.1 are unpacked throughout Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis as they pertain to the focus of the chapter. In summary, these are as portrayed in Table 3.1: The Elements of the Conceptual Framework Diagram and their Corresponding Chapters.

Corresponding Chapter of Thesis	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 4
Element of the Conceptual Framework Diagram			
Explanation of the Element	The Tripod of Shalom—the framework for a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom	Caine and Caine's (2010) four phases of Process Learning Circle (PLCs) meetings colour coded to reflect their alignment with the Tripod of Shalom	Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) Action Research (AR) cycles colour coded to reflect their alignment with the Tripod of Shalom

Table 3.1: The Elements of the Conceptual Framework Diagram and their Corresponding Chapters

Shalom is central to this study's conceptual framework because it is pivotal to the purpose and life of the Kingdom of God. The Tripod of Shalom, portrayed below and explored in Chapter 3, organises the elements of the conceptual framework. It is used to:

- Identify the three elements of Shalom and their relation to Kingdom-shaping practice;

- Structure the study’s research methods: Process Learning Circles (Caine & Caine, 2010), Action Research (Kemmis, 2007), communicative action theory (J. Habermas, 1987) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2010);
- Provide a lens for the analysis of data; and
- Guide ethical ways of relating and acting throughout the research.

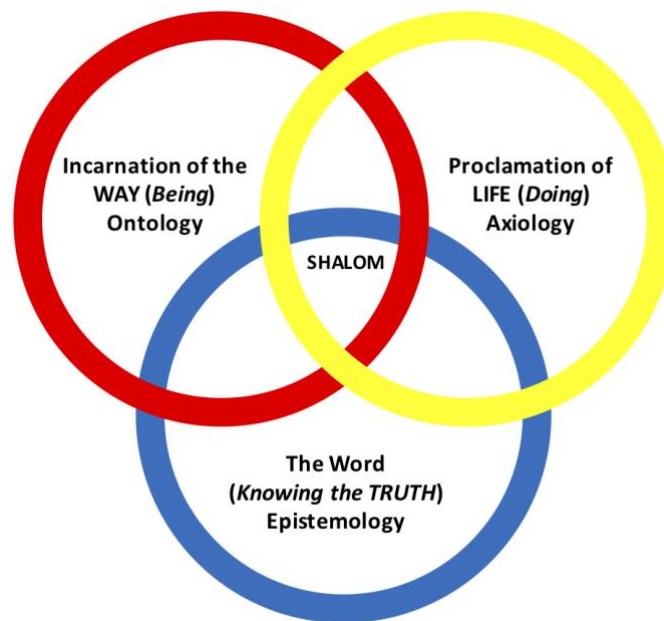


Figure 3.2: The Tripod of Shalom

Chapter 2 contained a list of possible models for Christian education. Seeking<sup>13</sup> to understand the practical nature of a holistic Kingdom-shaping Christian education is imperative to avoid the colonising impact of the kingdom of Babylon that insidiously creeps when education becomes solely centred on cognitive knowledge and self. Also explained in Chapter 2 was that the purpose of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is to equip the next generation “to govern well over the planet through various occupations as God’s appointed Earth-Tenders” (Overman, 2016, p. 20). It is therefore crucial that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom includes **being** and **acting**, as well as **knowing**<sup>14</sup> that

<sup>13</sup> The word “seeking” is intentionally used here rather than “an understanding of” because it recognises that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is an ongoing journey that must be taken actively by its participants in order to engender it in one’s practice. This becomes clearer through the data analysis in Chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> In contrast to cognitive “knowledge” that is about the objective acquisition of information, the term “knowing” here refers to a deeper process that “draws not only on our senses and our reason, but [also] on

moves beyond cognition, and that teachers are adequately trained so that they understand that teaching is more than providing cognitive knowledge that will be acquired by students. A Kingdom-shaping Christian education posits that knowing should be transformational in terms of both students' being and their doing as they learn practically "to walk as disciples of Jesus Christ" (Van Dyk, 1985, p. 75). Rather than focusing on the mere acquisition of knowledge from a different perspective, the purpose and goal of a Christian education are "the restoration of the image of God in each student and the reconciliation of students with God, their fellow students, their own selves, and the natural world" (Knight, 2006, p. 210). Such an education is redemptive and focuses on imbuing Shalom. Purpel and McLaurin (2004) argued that aiding students to understand and inhabit our collective responsibility to "help other people's lives become whole" and from a practical perspective to "participate in the healing process" of a broken world is an important factor in preventing the feelings of "rage, guilt and dehumanisation" (p. 56) that arise when there is no opportunity given to outwardly put their learning into practice and meaningfully participate in the healing process of a hurting world. Moreover, when a Christian education becomes centred on the holistic development of students who use their knowledge to respond actively to the moral wounds of humanity (Wolterstorff, 2004), rather than concentrating on academic attainment and generating results, there is less likelihood of a school drifting towards "winking lights" (Wong, 2017b, p. 5) only to find that "like ships of old...[they are] wrecked on the treacherous rocks of the shore, far afield from what [their] true destination ought to be" (Wong, 2017b, p. 5).

As Chapter 2 identified, the emphasis in many models of Christian education has tended to be on the attainment of knowledge, thereby marginalising the importance of **being** and **doing** in a holistic Christian life. Such a focus leads to a schism between head and heart, and to a faith-learning praxis that is not completely biblically authentic (Iselin & Meteyard, 2010). Moreover, the idea that a school leadership may simply choose a model of Christian education off the shelf and employ it in their context is a simplistic myth, as has become clear to me through participant individual interviews and group discussion. Authentic

---

our intuitions, our beliefs, our actions, our relationships, and on our bodies themselves" (Palmer, 2010, Introduction, para. 4). *Knowing* is spiritual, relational and holistic.

Christian education is far too complex and dynamic to package in a neat bundle and to “sell”. Rather, its essence rests in a fragile alchemy of biblical **knowing**, incarnational **being** and radical **doing** that proclaims freedom for captives that is Kingdom focused. As a result, a new model—the Tripod of Shalom—that operates as a lens for, rather than a package of, Christian education has been developed here. The Tripod of Shalom was inspired by the work of Wolterstorff (2004) and Purpel and McLaurin (2004), and it has formed the conceptual framework for this research. Shalom’s placement at the centre of the Tripod and its appearance in each of the three components of the lens reflect that Shalom is not only the goal of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education but also the means of attaining that goal. Unlike the concentric circles of a market-driven view of education that are progressively narrowing, placing emphasis on an epistemology that is designed to train a person for a career, the Tripod framework of interlocking rings sees a broader, holistic view of life that is focused on imbuing a life of flourishing under the rule of God. Furthermore, the Tripod of Shalom, instead of embodying a complete package of Christian education, provides a lens that guides practice and decision-making that may lead to an authentic Christian outcome for staff members, students and a school community. The Tripod of Shalom afforded the focus of Research Question 3: How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice? Using the Tripod as a lens illuminated the understanding and subsequently shaped the practice of the research participants as they sought individually and collectively to engender Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their undertakings at Yew Tree Christian College.

The Tripod of Shalom utilises the Borromean Rings that are an arrangement of three interlinking circles; the nature of the rings is such that, if one were to be excluded, the two remaining rings will disengage. The symbol of the three rings has been used by Christians to represent the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Highbaugh, 2015). Furthermore, because of its acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit in the godhead, the number three is deemed to reflect that which is “solid, real, substantial, complete and entire” (Bullinger, 1921, p. 103), and therefore the number three is taken as “the number of *Divine fullness*” (Bullinger, 1921, p. 105; *italics in original*). Reflecting this unified structure, all three tripod elements are dynamic and, working in tandem, they are deemed to be essential elements of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that echoes Shalom.

The use of the Tripod of Shalom to represent Kingdom-shaping Christian education demonstrates that a Christian education is education for all of life. Overman (2016) termed this a “wholistic” view of education, where he justified spelling holistic with a “w” by quoting Miller and Moffitt’s definition of “wholism”: “speak[ing] of the whole of God’s Word to the whole [hu]man in the whole world” (p. 8). This is crucial in an environment where high-stakes testing threatens to reduce learning to a set quota of knowledge that is then tested, measured and publicised, limiting students’ access to a wide and varied curriculum (Polesel, Rice, & Dulfer, 2013). Kingdom-shaping Christian education challenges this reductionist view of schooling and sees Shalom at the centre, envisioning a broader view of schooling that equips young people to pursue an education that they will use to enact justice and mercy in the world.

### 3.3 The Components of the Tripod Framework

The identity and mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are central to Shalom because the mission of Jesus was about launching God’s Kingdom – God’s worldwide sovereignty on earth as in heaven (Wright, 2011a)—that would culminate in “a rich and satisfying life” (John 10:10, New Living Translation). Such a life that Jesus described in John 10 is indicative of the vision for creation as it was meant to be, a life of flourishing and prospering (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008) where people live in thriving, harmonious and life-giving relationships (Nessan, 2010) “with God, themselves, each other, and nature – and ...tak[e] delight in such relationships” (Joldersma in Wolterstorff, 2004, Introduction, para. 7; see also Wong, (under contract), n.p., reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan). In His time on earth, Jesus Christ identified himself using the words, “I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6, The New International Version). The Way, the Truth and the Life reveal an ordered creation that exemplifies the wholeness of Shalom (Bible Study Tools, 2018b). These three elements of Jesus’ identity can be reflected through [Knowing the Truth \(Word\)](#), [incarnating the Life \(Being\)](#) and [Proclaiming the Way \(Doing\)](#). The capacity of an integrated relationship among these three elements—[knowing](#), [being](#) and [doing](#)—to frame work that is focused on understanding the authentic embedding of spiritual worldview into practice was endorsed by research that was previously conducted by Bartlett, Bennett,

Power and Sunderland (2014). Their study into the incorporation of Aboriginal worldviews in a higher education art curriculum revealed that such a framework could resonate with practice, provide a way of organising rich data and guide “what people came to know, how they related to others, and where and when this was done” (p. 45).

Outlined below is a discussion of each of these three elements of the Tripod of Shalom and how they relate to the three parts of Jesus’ identity, “Way”, “Truth” and “Life”. Although the three elements of the Tripod, expressed in the Borromean rings, are equally important, **The Word** has been deliberately chosen as the starting place because it provides the foundational epistemology on which the other two elements are based. Consequently, in the arrangement of the Borromean Rings, **The Word** element is placed at the bottom reflecting its foundational role.

### 3.3.1 Element 1 – The Word

#### ***Knowing<sup>14</sup> above the Truth – Epistemology***

All elements of the Tripod of Shalom, while distinctive in their own right, are tightly interlinked with the other two elements. Here, for example, **The Word** is explicated for its own discrete characteristics but, as the following subsection demonstrates, it must also be considered in the light of its dynamic relationship with **incarnation** (being) and **Proclamation** (doing). As a result, while this subsection explores **The Word** (knowing), the nature of the tightly knit connection among the elements has meant that it is necessary to draw on and connect with the other elements of the Tripod as well. This discussion of the interrelationships among the three elements is also evident in the subsections on **incarnation** and **Proclamation**.

The apostle John, in his Gospel account, personified the term “Word” by stating that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1, The New International Version). John’s personification of the term “Word” suggested that Jesus was a living message sent by God. This was ratified by Jesus Himself, who stated, “Don’t ever think that I came to set aside Moses’ Teachings or the Prophets’. I didn’t come to set them aside but to make them come true” (Matthew 5:17, GOD’s Word Translation). Moreover, John’s use of the Greek term for “word”, “Logos”, with which his first century



readers would have been familiar, enabled his explanation of the identity of Jesus to consider “...a collection both of things in the mind, and of words by which they are expressed...both the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and the inward thought itself” (Vincent, 1889, p. 25). The outworking of Logos was seen therefore as Jesus, the Word, practically exemplifying the written teachings of Moses and the Prophets through his daily life in community.

Consequently, this element of the Tripod, [The Word](#), gives the basis for a biblical view of epistemology in a Kingdom-shaping education. This is because [The Word](#) provides knowledge of God’s relationship with creation and an understanding of the foundational precepts by which God structured the world (Percy, 2004). To know [The Word](#) is to comprehend that [The Word](#) is more than mere letters that are arranged to form words on a page. Rather, [The Word](#) is a living schema, a grand story—a metanarrative—by which followers of God are anchored in knowing that “God is *before* all things...the *cause* of all things...*above* all things, and...the *goal* of all things” (Fee & Stuart, 2002, p. 14; *italics in original*). This story, told in four chapters: Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration, is therefore not a static, objective biblical knowledge. Rather, it is the vibrant story by which the lives of God’s followers are shaped through the epiphany that this very story is their own story and the place in which they must find their home (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 5).

For the Christian school, ensuring that this element of the Tripod—[The Word](#)—provides the foundation for all teaching and the story by which members of the community frame their lives requires that there is navigation between two types of knowing. These are cognitive biblical knowledge *about* [The Word](#), and knowledge that is spiritually inhabited—or imbued *within*. Wilber (2001) explicated these two types of knowledge through using the terms the “eye of reason”, by which we come to knowledge of philosophy and logic, and the “eye of contemplation”, by which we “rise to a knowledge of transcendent realities” (pp. 2-3). It is therefore essential to delineate between these two types of knowing, and to explore how they are relevant in the Kingdom-shaping Christian school context. Ideally, the Christian school would desire that students have knowledge *about* [The Word](#) that is then spiritually infused *in* their person, shaping both their ontology and their axiology.

### 3.3.1.1 Knowledge about the Word (Cognitive)

As a cognitive framework of knowing, **The Word** provides understanding of an alternative vision of life, a flourishing existence based on a distinctive set of values and symbols, and on radical ways of being in community (Brueggemann, 2015). Hermeneutically, as is outlined in Figure 3.3: The Hermeneutical Spiral, **The Word** element of the Tripod ideally sees students being equipped with a cognitive **knowledge** of biblical truth, founded on the Word, and then facilitated beyond this surface knowledge towards a deeper convergence of praxis *and* truth where biblical **knowing** may inform all of life.

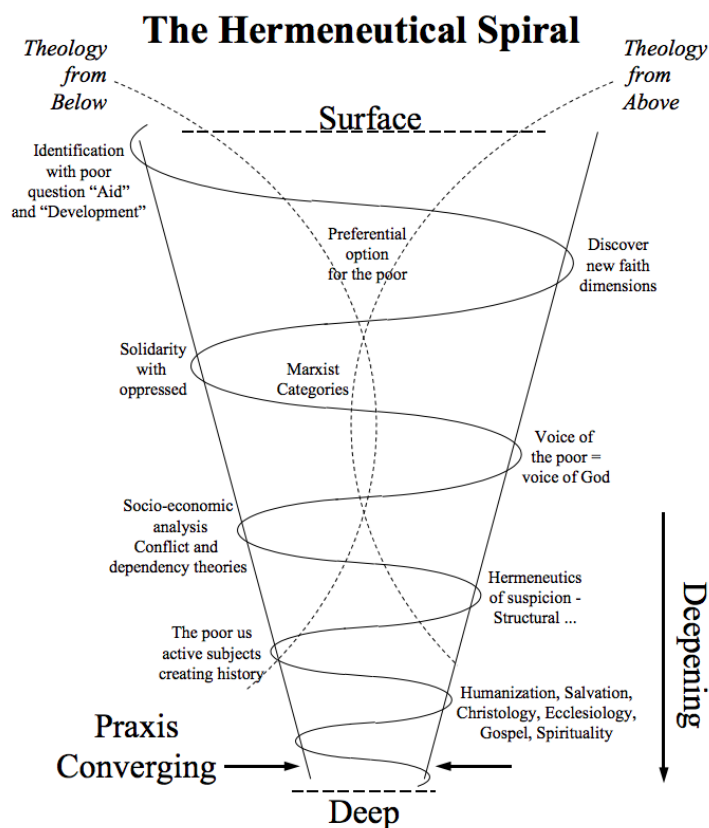


Figure 3.3 The Hermeneutical Spiral (Van Engen, n.d., p. 26)

Hermeneutics is concerned with interpreting human actions, texts and other meaningful material (*The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2016). A hermeneutic approach to biblical epistemology considers knowledge of the biblical text in order to understand and apply its significance today. Goldsworthy (2001) defined this process as “showing the significance of the text in the light of the Gospel” (p. 123), which is the good news of the coming of God’s Kingdom (Alexander et al., 2000) exemplified through the life of the

Word—Jesus. Such a process of applying biblical knowledge to life today is meaningful to this research and to [The Word](#) element of the Tripod of Shalom because it ensures that [knowing](#) becomes central to [doing](#) in a Kingdom-shaping life rather than remaining static and detached from a vibrant lived experience. Students/readers must firstly be engaged in hearing the Word and attempting to understand “what was said to them *back then and there*” (Fee & Stuart, 1993, p. 19; *italics in original*). In Van Engen’s (n.d.) representation of the hermeneutical spiral, this was represented as a surface layer entitled “Theology from Above”. “Surface” is the word that Van Engen used to describe this layer of the spiral because it includes only a cognitive knowledge of biblical truth (theology) without its practical application. Secondly, students/readers must “...learn to hear that same Word in the *here and now*” (Fee & Stuart, 1993, p. 19; *italics in original*). Hermeneutically, this process is represented in the spiral by the surface layer “Theology from Below”. The word “surface” was applied by Van Engen (n.d.) to this layer of the spiral because in his model it included only an identification with the poor without considering its deeper theological and epistemological foundations. It is in the convergence of the two processes, Theology from Above and Theology from Below, that deep praxis is achieved as epistemology acts to inform axiology.

In the Christian school context, students need to develop an appropriate interpretation of biblical text (exegesis) in order to understand rightly its application to the present (hermeneutics). Failure to begin with an attempt to comprehend the original intent of the biblical text, instead bypassing to the here and now, may see “biblical texts...[being] made to mean whatever they mean to any given reader” (Fee & Stuart, 1993, p. 25). Goldsworthy (2001) proposed that the biblical text be approached as one unified story. He stated that:

The logical conclusion to be drawn is that, if the unity of the Bible has any meaning at all, the real context of any Bible text is the whole Bible. Any given text is more meaningful when related not only to its immediate context, but also to the entire plan of redemption revealed in the whole Bible. (p. 31)

Together with an exegetical reading that is based on Bible commentary by reputable scholars, Goldsworthy's (2001) unified story approach provides a way for teaching and understanding *The Word* that could be utilised within the Christian school. If students at a Christian school are to be more than a generation "who know more than they choose, who understand things they never act upon, who discern ideas they never use..." (Frost, 2014, p. 14), they must be taught to understand the Bible and to apply it meaningfully to their own contexts in a way that is dynamic and that reflects *knowing* that shapes their *being* and *doing*. Hence teachers at a Christian school must be well-versed and equipped in interpreting the Bible in the light of the entire plan of redemption. Biblical Studies as a subject at a Christian school should thus be taught as a subject in its own right by trained teachers rather than as a "fill in" for those who are under the allocated teaching load. Furthermore, teachers must also be aware that the way that biblical truth is hermeneutically interpreted and, most importantly, communicated has the potential to be oppressive and marginalising. Apple (2006), for example, has been very critical of the narrow views of "conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists" who believe that "only through a return to inerrant readings of the Bible can we save ourselves..." (p. 137). In a study such as this one that used critical pedagogy as a research paradigm, it is essential to highlight that teachers at Christian schools need to consider how their own denominational contexts and upbringing may have influenced the way that they personally place emphasis on elements of biblical text that may not be hermeneutically and/or theologically valid. An emphasis such as this would potentially limit an authentic and biblically accurate engagement with the world for their students.

### *3.3.1.2 Knowing the Word (Spiritual)*

As was noted above, a distinction must be made between cognitive *knowledge* about the Word and spiritual *knowing* of the Word through "the enlightening action of God from within" (Augustine, 1968, p. 54). Augustine recognised that the difference between a cognitive<sup>15</sup> understanding based on the signified reality of words and a spiritual

---

<sup>15</sup> Note that Augustine (1968) did not use the word "cognitive". His treatise on teaching, however, which explored how mental processes work to signify the meanings of words and knowledge, reflected the meaning of "cognition" as defined in the Oxford Dictionary ("Oxford Dictionary", 2018): "The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses" (n.p.). Augustine referred to this type of knowledge as "carnal" (p. 52).

enlightenment of truth from within occurs through the labour of Christ, who is the Teacher working within a person (King, 1998). This contrast between an external knowledge about the Word and a dynamic internal knowing of the Word was encapsulated in the writing of the biblical prophet Jeremiah, who prophesied that there would be a new covenant relationship between God and His people:

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord’, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.  
(Jeremiah 31:33-34, New International Version)

Unlike the old covenant where God wrote His laws *to* the people, the new covenant would see God write His laws *in* the people. The old covenant relationship between God and the people depended on knowledge about and obedience to an external law that was written on tablets of stone. By contrast, the new covenant was to be written upon the hearts and minds of people through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. People would obey God “not because of the terror of punishment, but because they loved him...because the desire to obey him was written on their hearts” (Barclay, 1956-1959, n.p.). This type of knowing as described in the passage from Jeremiah, “...they will all know me”, describes the type of knowing epitomised in [The Word](#) element of the Tripod of Shalom. It is a knowing based on relationship with God and rooted entirely in God’s love that was epitomised in the life and death of Jesus, and that is realised through the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The engraving of the Word on the hearts of the followers of Jesus thus leads to a [knowing](#) that is imbued in every aspect of life where the follower hears the call “to take up the vocation of being fully and authentically human, and to [be](#) a community and people who image God to the world” (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 162). As a result, students are encouraged to “make connections between reality, their real world experience or context, their hearts and God” (Starling, 2013, p. 140), and to consider how they may actively engage in their world as agents of change, and thereby illustrate the good news of God’s Kingdom reign. The fulfilment of such a call exemplifies Shalom because it demonstrates a flourishing life in

community that is lived under the sovereign reign of God where God’s creational purpose for His world is being restored.

For the Christian teacher, this concept of education for **knowing** may present a sense of disempowerment. Teachers know how to disseminate knowledge—facts, ideas, concepts—but educating for spiritual **knowing** occurs in a realm that is outside a teacher’s control. Palmer (2010, p. 11) understood that, for the teacher, a mind immersed in prayer may transition educational thinking from its traditional paradigms that are anchored in division and domination, manipulation and control—where the focus of schooling is on a transaction of content—towards love and awareness of the common threads that bind the teacher and the learner together in their shared journey. Learning therefore becomes focused on the development of the whole child, cognitively, spiritually, physically and emotionally, with an “eternal perspective” where the teacher proclaims that the work “is God’s work undertaken in God’s name, for God’s people, in God’s world” (Blamires, 1978, p. 70). The goal of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom is about students “being restored to the task...given in the beginning...[that is] the restoration of all God’s creation...” (Colson, 1999, p. 296).

On a final note in this subsection, and with reference to the opening of this subsection that discussed the apostle John’s personification of the term “Word”, submitting that Jesus was a living message sent by God, it may be understood that, in knowing and relating to the Word through Jesus Christ, one can know and relate to God. This element of the Tripod reflects Shalom through humans living in right relationship with God and, as a result, with one another (Wolterstorff, 2004). Based on a knowledge of God’s redemptive story throughout the Bible and on a deeper **knowing** of God Himself—the Word—students are equipped to develop their own spiritual relationship with God that should then, empowered by the Holy Spirit, go on to inform their **being** and **doing**.

### *3.3.1.3 A Note on the Symbolic Nature of the Colours of the Rings in the Tripod of Shalom*

Each of the rings within the Tripod of Shalom is symbolically colour coded based on colour theory. The decision to colour code each element of the Tripod was partly pragmatic in that it facilitates understanding of the complexity of Shalom. Although Shalom comprises three

discrete elements (rings) – **The Word**, **Incarnation** and **Proclamation** – each element (ring) contains characteristics from both of the other elements. Therefore, Shalom is characterised by the interplay of each of the elements and their inseparable relationship with one another. Much research has been conducted into the theory of colour (A. J. Elliott, 2015). Research has demonstrated that colours do have the ability to influence psychological functioning in humans (Meier, D'Agostino, Elliott, Maier, & Wilkowski, 2012). Consequently, to give the Tripod of Shalom depth through symbolic meaning, an emblematic primary colour has been chosen to represent each of the elements.

#### *3.3.1.4 The Use of the Colour Blue to Symbolise The Word*

The colour Blue was selected to represent **The Word** element of the Tripod of Shalom. This is because it signifies the Word and represents the eternal presence of Yahweh<sup>16</sup> (Stewart, n.d.). It also exemplifies traits such as truth, depth and wisdom ("Color wheel pro: See color theory in action," n.d.). In addition, Goethe (1840) in his foundational work on the theory of colours, argued that the colour blue "draws us after it" (p. 311). The distinctive ability of the colour Blue to invite reflects the statement of Jesus Christ that "My sheep listen to my voice [the Word]; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27, New International Version), echoing that biblical epistemology must beckon students to follow Christ and then to undertake dynamic action (Fernhout, 1997). While Goethe was not making a theological comment in his theory of colours, his insights provided depth to the symbolic application of colours in The Tripod of Shalom.

#### **3.3.2. Element 2 – Incarnation**

##### ***Being the Way – Ontology***

The etymological origin of the word "incarnation" was derived from the Latin *in + caro*, which means "flesh" (Alexander et al., 2000; "Merriam-Webster Dictionary," 2018, n.p.). Furthermore, incarnation has been defined as "a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit or quality" ("Oxford Dictionary", 2018, n.p.). In the statement, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us..." (John 1:14, The New International Version), the apostle John was recognising that Jesus Christ was God in flesh, or the Incarnation of the

---

<sup>16</sup> Yahweh is the ancient Hebrew name for God (Douglas & Tenney, 1987).

triune God. Reflecting that incarnation also applies to the embodiment in flesh of “a spirit or quality” (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018, n.p.), the principle of incarnation can be applied to followers of Christ who should incarnate, or imbue the spirit or quality of Christ in their own lives through embodying His way of life<sup>17</sup>. The principle of **incarnation** when applied to the followers of Christ is different from the doctrine of Incarnation of Christ himself, because, unlike Jesus who *was* God in flesh, His followers do not *become* God. The term “**incarnation**” as applied to the followers of Jesus encapsulates a life that reflects the apostle Paul’s description in his letter to the Colossians, “Christ lives *in you*” (Colossians 1:27, The New Living Translation; *italics added*). **Incarnation** for the followers of God describes a process of transformation whereby Christ’s way of life and teachings (**The Word**) are brought to life—or fleshed—in his or her being through the power of the Holy Spirit. **The incarnation** element of the Tripod thus exhibits Shalom through “the webbing together of God [and] humans” (Plantinga, 1995, p. 10).

There are two main aspects of **incarnation** that are critical to the Tripod of Shalom. Firstly, the principle of **incarnation** is an important element of being Kingdom-shaping because it is the source of transformation as **The Word** moves from cognitive head **knowledge** to heart **knowing**, ontologically shaping character and leading students—and teachers—in their response to the Gospel to develop “habits of righteousness and holiness” (Burggraaf, 2014, p. 60). The work of the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, as disseminated by Cockayne (2017), who believed that Kierkegaard thought of Christ as a living person, is useful for exploring the connection between **The Word**—knowing the Truth—and **incarnation** of the Way for the followers of Christ. Academic knowledge of historical testimony regarding Christ that is thousands of years old is alone insufficient for faith (Cockayne, 2017). Kierkegaard’s doctrine of contemporaneity<sup>18</sup> claimed that being contemporary with Christ was central to one’s religious faith (Cockayne, 2017). Kierkegaard was therefore able to bridge knowledge about God—**The Word**—with an **incarnational** way of life through arguing that a believer could gain contemporaneity with Christ through “an engagement with Christ as a living

---

<sup>17</sup> To distinguish between the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the Incarnation of God and the principle of incarnation as applied to the followers of Jesus Christ, a capital “I” has been used when referring to Jesus Christ’s Incarnation and a small “i” has been used to refer to incarnation as applied to His followers.

<sup>18</sup> Contemporaneity is existing or happening at the same period of time (“Collins Dictionary,” n.d.)



person, rather than as a merely historical one” (Cockayne, 2017, p. 52). The process of such an engagement for the believer with Christ as a living person thus involves [The Word](#) becoming ontologically embodied as an **incarnational** way of life, distinguishing “the admirer who stands at a historical distance from Christ, [from] the imitator, who seeks to become like Christ, even in his suffering and abasement” (Cockayne, 2017, p. 46). In his book, *Not a Fan*, Idleman (2011) made a similar distinction between fans of Jesus, who know all about Him and admire Him from a distance, and followers of Jesus who have a deep commitment “that will interfere with [their] life” (Chapter 2, “Selling Jesus”, para. 2.). Highlighting the difference between the preposition “with” and the preposition “in”, Idleman (2006) distinguished between the Bible’s Old Testament wording that portrayed “God being *with*” His people and the Bible’s New Testament wording that described “God *in*” (Chapter 6, “Diagnosing Fandom” Question 5, para. 6; *italics in original*) His people. Drawing on examples of Jesus’ disciples as described in the Bible, Idleman (2006) argued that it was the power of God *in* His followers as a result of Jesus’ Incarnation that allowed them to change the world. This empowerment was supported by some of the final words of Jesus that were recorded prior to his ascension to heaven:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 18-20, New International Version)

The capacity to be followers who are transformed—because “[they] no longer live but Christ lives in [them]” (Galatians 2:20, New International Version)—and who go on to live transformational lives, through their interactions with others and with the world, was found in the authority of Jesus that He bestowed on His disciples through His indwelling presence (incarnation) that would be with them to the end of the age.

In addition to the ensuing ontological transformation that takes place in individuals as they incarnate Christ’s way of life, **incarnation** is also an intrinsic element of the Tripod of Shalom

because of the way that it shapes a person's ontological engagement with others and with the world. The Incarnation of God "is about re-creation and redemption" (Okwuosa, Nwaoga, & Uroko, 2017, p. 165) as was demonstrated by Jesus who, in His life on earth as God Incarnate, engaged in acts of re-creation through His ministry to the people around Him. For those with whom Jesus personally interacted through the healing of sickness, blindness or death, there was an embodied redemption that represented an act of creation (Poythress, 2016). Using similar language to the Genesis description of God creating Adam "from the dust of the ground" and "breath[ing] into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7 New International Version), the Gospel accounts described Jesus healing a man born blind by "spit[ting] on the ground, ma[king] mud with the saliva, and put[ing] it on the man's eyes" (John 9:6, New International Version). Also, in the spirit of God's speaking creation into being, as was described in Genesis 1, the account of Jesus healing a deaf and mute man by looking up to heaven and, with a deep sigh, saying, "Be opened!" (Mark 7:34, New International Version), alludes to an act of re-creation that echoes the first creation through the spoken word (Twelftree, 1999). There are many more such examples of Jesus' miracles that suggested God speaking creation into being, such as Jesus commanding Lazarus to "Come out" of the tomb (John 11:43, New International Version), and Jesus raising Jairus' daughter with the words, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" (Mark 5:41, New International Version). The death of Jesus on the cross and His subsequent resurrection were the pinnacle acts of redemption that ushered in the "renewal of the whole creation order" (Poythress, 2016, p. 233). Hence, Jesus Christ, as God Incarnate, tangibly demonstrated to humanity "what it looks like to undertake that creational mission of being God's image bearer to and for the world" (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 163), a mission that was originally given to Adam and Eve, who were to tend the garden and to take care of it (Genesis 2).

In turn, through **incarnating** Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, His followers have the great privilege of ontologically taking up that vocation given to humanity at creation. Unlike Adam and Eve, though, they have the perfect exemplar, Jesus Christ, who embodied for them what it means to be human and what was meant by the command to tend the garden—the world—and watch over it (J. K. Smith, 2009). Such a task is, however, enormously messy and difficult. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ came at a significant cost to God and through the intense suffering of Jesus. Followers of Christ must therefore expect

that being a people who **incarnate** the way requires a similar degree of sacrifice (Frost, 2014; J. K. Smith, 2009; Wright, 2011a). C. S. Lewis (1971) eloquently described this interference in the life of a person who imitates God, saying, "...our model is the Jesus, not only of Calvary, but of the workshop, the roads, the crowds, the clamorous demands and surly oppositions..." (p. 6). As with Jesus, **incarnation** is the breath of God in His followers that allows them to engage in redemptive acts of creation that relieve the world from injustice and oppression. Becoming a student of the Rabbi, Jesus, "who teaches how to love" (J. K. Smith, 2016, p. 2), assists the follower in navigating the difficulties that an **incarnational** life entails. The acts of **Proclamation** that ensue from an **incarnational** life are explored further in the next element of Shalom: **Proclamation**.

**Incarnation** has significant ontological implications for how teachers at a Christian school view their vocations as teachers, for how they see the content (epistemology) that they teach and for how they teach it (pedagogy). To begin with, this element of the Tripod of Shalom—**incarnation**—views the primary vocation of a Christian teacher as bringing people back to "'at-one-ness' with God, other people, their own selves, and the natural world" (Knight, 2006, p. 213). This vocation as described by Knight echoed Wolterstorff's (2004) definition of Shalom. Thus a transformational view of education encourages the importance of teachers and parents working together to model a life that is reflective of a relationship with God through **incarnational** living (Wong, 2008). In particular, it is important for teachers to view their relationship with students as being more than a simple transaction of delivery and reception (Freire, 2005; Groome, 1980). Rather, a Christian school education is purposed in leading students towards their own ontological journey of **incarnating** the way (Schultz, 2002), and this is more likely to occur if the underlying attitude of the teacher is "to [view themselves] as brother or sister pilgrims with [their] students" (Groome, 1980, p. 137). The potential for the Christian teacher to play a significant role in this ontological journey for the student through being "the ministry of God in Christ" (Russell, 2009, p. 15) may be realised through the teacher envisioning the classroom as a place where a spirit of hospitality may permeate **knowing**, **being** and **doing**. Hospitality is "the practice of God's welcome, embodied in our actions as we...participate with God in bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis" (Russell, 2009, p. 2). Hospitality is not a singular action, but rather "a way, an orientation that attends to otherness, listening and learning, valuing and

honouring” (Oden, 2001, p. 14) that acknowledges that the student may have as much to offer to the relationship as the teacher, and that learning that takes place is not all about acquiring subject content. It is the teacher’s own incarnational relationship with “the Master Teacher” (Knight, 2006, p. 213) therefore that provides a vision for how an **incarnational** approach to the role of teacher and student may facilitate flourishing and redemption, for the teacher, for the student and for the broader world.

**Incarnation’s** placement in the Tripod of Shalom also reflects that there are epistemological implications for what is learned and pedagogical implications for how it is learned in a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. The view that through **incarnation** “the Word continues to become flesh” (Anderson, 1983, p. 240)—as **knowing** is embodied in a person’s ontology—indicates that learning is more than an objective, analytical and experimental acquisition of subject matter (Palmer, 1993). In fact, Palmer explored the danger of objective knowledge devoid of ethics, pointing to a history that is littered with the collateral damage of objectivity in the form of events like the holocaust and nuclear bombing. An epistemology that is based on the view that schooling is about the transmission and acquisition of technical knowledge fails to understand that a different type of knowledge—transformational—has the capacity to breach the impasse of schooling where knowing has become lifeless (Palmer, 2010). Explicating the etymological roots of the word “truth”, Palmer (2010) articulated a powerful vision for how knowing may be ontologically enlivened when he explained that its origin was found in the Germanic word “troth” (p. 30). Therefore, an understanding that “to know in truth is to become betrothed, to engage the known with one’s whole self [and]...to allow one’s self to be known as well...” (Palmer, 2010, p. 31) allows the teacher and the student to move beyond an obsession with static, objective knowledge. Instead, together the teacher and the student move towards an epistemology that is about **being**, because truth is inhabited and practised in community relationships where **knowledge** is about understanding the world, living in harmony with it and therefore living in harmony with ourselves (Palmer, 2010). A vision for **incarnational** epistemology envisions that teachers allow their words to “emerge from the truth of [their] life” (Palmer, 2010). Encouragingly, Palmer (2010) suggested that being truthful is also about sharing the challenges that are faced in living it out. In such a way, “education” has the capacity to be informed by its Latin meaning: “to bring up, rear, or train...to lead” (“Collins Dictionary,”

n.d.), and teachers are able to journey with their students throughout a holistic spiritual life that exemplifies the integration of **knowing**, **being** and **doing**.

### *3.3.2.1 The Use of the Colour Red to Symbolise Incarnation*

The colour red was used to symbolise **incarnation**—meaning flesh—in the Tripod of Shalom because this colour is significant for its connection with biblical forms of the words “humankind” and “blood”. For example, the word “oudem” is one of a number of Hebrew words that mean “red”. Translated, the word “oudem” means “red clay” (Ramsay, 2017, p. 56; Stewart, n.d., p. 1), and is the root of the word “Adam”, meaning “humankind” (Alexander et al., 2000) or “flesh”. Furthermore, it is thought that the Semitic equivalent of the word “ādām” may be connected with “dām” which means blood (Alexander et al., 2000, p. 374). Through the Incarnation of Jesus, the colour red is highly representative of the blood that He spilled in His death on the cross that “cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, New International Version).

Moreover, describing red as conveying an impression of “gravity and dignity, and at the same time of grace and attractiveness”, Goethe (1840, p. 314) encapsulated many of the characteristics of the Incarnational life of Jesus Christ as described by the Apostle Paul, who stated:

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross. (Philippians 2: 6-8, New Living Translation)

The vision of Christ that Paul portrayed through attributes of humility and obedience is reflective of dignity (nobility), grace (honour) and attractiveness. Additionally, Paul’s argument was that Christ’s attraction should be a model for His followers as they “shin[e] like bright lights in a world of crooked and perverse people” (Philippians 2:14, New Living Translation).

Goethe's (1840) explanation of colour is also useful for exploring the connection among the elements of the Tripod of Shalom. Please refer to Figure 3.4: Goethe's Colour Wheel.

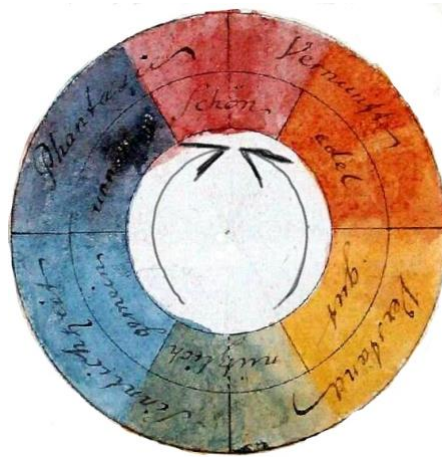


Figure 3.4: Goethe's (1840) Colour Wheel (Book Cover)

Red, yellow and blue form a triad—a triangle of opposite colours—on the colour wheel. Figure 3.4 demonstrates Goethe's (1840) view that red, "this highest of all appearances of colour arises from the junction of two contrasted extremes which have gradually prepared themselves for a union" (p. 314). Similarly, in the Tripod of Shalom, it is the union of **The Word** (knowing) and **Proclaiming** (doing) that is the essence of **incarnation** (being) as **knowing** the Truth then leads to a **practical** embodiment of the Way.

### 3.3.3 Element 3 – Proclamation

#### ***Doing Life – Axiology***

The third element of the Tripod of Shalom—**Proclamation**—represents practical doing that is an outworking of **The Word**—Knowing the Truth—and **incarnating** the Way. This element is grounded in Jesus Christ's public declaration of His earthly mission as being "to proclaim good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19, The New International Version). To proclaim literally means, as it is derived from the Latin, "to cry out", from pro – "forth" + clamare "to shout" ("Oxford Dictionary", 2018, n.p.), and may be realised both through words and through physical actions that are a response to one's crying out. **Proclamation** in the Tripod is underpinned by axiology because it is

concerned with understanding what is of value or what ought to be (Tomar, 2014). Its branch of ethics focuses on the provision of right values to underpin right action (Knight, 2006). Considering that there can often be a dislocation between what one might say that one values and the actions that one actualises (Morris, 1956), this element of the Tripod reflects that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education should inspire school executives, teachers and their students to have integrity between knowing and understanding what is valued in God's Kingdom and acting so that those values are effected in their domain. Thus, school leaders should see that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is about giving students an epistemological foundation based on [The Word](#) that would, by the power of the Holy Spirit, inform their ontology ([incarnation](#)), and in turn enable students to envision themselves as being active participants in a wounded world, responding to bring about ([proclaim](#)) justice and mercy. This final element of the Tripod demonstrates Shalom through living in right relationships with others and with nature (Wolterstorff, 2004).

[Proclamation](#) that is about freedom for "captives" and "good news for the poor" (Luke 4: 18-19, The New International Version) has been linked with "Life" in the Tripod of Shalom, reflecting Jesus Christ's statement, "I am the...Life" (John 14:6, New International Version). The Greek word for "life" as used in this declaration is "Zoe". Its meaning is "of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God...life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God" (Bible Study Tools, 2018a). This description of life echoes the vision of the Kingdom of God that was about Jesus' followers "bring[ing] the wholeness and abundance of life...into the lives of all human beings" (Aroney-Sine, 2001, p. 6).

Chapter 2 explored the nature of the Kingdom of God as it is related to a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. This connects with [Proclamation](#) because the Kingdom of God that was encapsulated in the four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus Christ reflected what it looks like for God to take charge right here on earth (Wright, 2011b). It depicts the rule of God "over creation, over all creatures, over the kingdoms of the world and...over his chosen and redeemed people" (Alexander et al., 2000, p. 620). A vision of restoration that pictures the destruction of God's enemies and the realisation of the blessings of God's reign (Douglas & Tenney, 1987) must be the aim of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education because followers

of Jesus are called “to make known God’s rule over all of human life, embodying it...demonstrating it...and announcing it” (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 60). This vision encapsulates the aim of **Proclamation** because it is about declaring and acting to bring about renewal and to establish God’s Kingdom—reign—on earth.

There are two parts in the process of Kingdom-shaping students who are about enacting **Proclamation**. The first is the reign of God **proclaimed** in the life of the student as he or she moves towards fullness in Christ based on a growing relationship with God, and the second is the outworking of this as the student becomes part of a community that embodies—**Proclaims**—the life of the Kingdom (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2004). From this perspective, the purpose of a Christian school education is “the educational and spiritual development of each individual child” (Christian Schools Australia, n.d., n.p.). Speaking out of his experience as principal of the St Andrews Cathedral School in Sydney, Dr John Collier (Goodlet, Collier, & George, 2017) asserted that “Preaching repentance and faith is an essential and ongoing part of our practice” (p. 178). He also cautioned, however, that the **proclamation** of faith to students, particularly at Christian schools like Yew Tree Christian College where there is a closed enrolment, should be done sensitively rather than aggressively in order to avoid resentment and “push back” from students (p. 181).

The second part of the process of developing Kingdom-shaping students who are **Proclaiming** Life is to direct their ongoing axiological and spiritual development towards a commitment, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to “serving others and the world” (Christian Schools Australia, n.d., n.p.). The dynamic interplay for the student among **knowing The Word, incarnating** the Way and demonstrating a practical commitment to **Proclaiming** Life suggests that **Proclamation** arises from a desire to express the wonder of a personal spiritual experience that then informs one’s axiology. The dynamics of this process were explicated by Twelftree (1999) as he explored the biblical account of the disobedience of the healed leper who was “stern[ly] warn[ed]” by Jesus not to tell anyone about his healing (Mark 1:43, New Living Translation). Despite the warning, “the man went and spread the word, *proclaiming* to everyone what had happened” (Mark 1:45, New Living Translation; *italics added*). Twelftree (1999) suggested that, for Mark, the proclamation of Jesus by the healed man arose out of the miracle, whereby the interaction was so significant that “it



could not be contained or hidden” (p. 63). In the biblical sense, salvation is “a newness of life, the unfolding of true humanity in the fullness of God...the salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, of humankind and the whole of creation”(Westly, 1988, p. 70). Reflecting this, the aim of Christian schooling that students would decide for themselves to follow Christ is not about brainwashing children regarding Christian precepts. Rather, spiritual formation of students in the Christian school aims to reverse the Fall and to address humanity’s fundamental need “for restoration of wholeness and meaning” (Roy, 2008, p. 41). Restoration is a process that begins in the life of the individual student who, stirred by his or her own journey of renewed wholeness, is inspired to action so that others may also experience healing. Freire (1997) articulated this explicit connection between the fundamental importance of his own faith and the axiological struggle for “overcoming an oppressive reality and for building a less ugly society, one that is less evil and more humane” (p. 104), arguing that it is difficult to claim faith without accompanying action.

If students at Christian schools are going to be inspired to act, there are implications for how teachers at Christian schools approach content and pedagogy. One implication is that students must be given the opportunity to consider the woundedness of others. This is because there is no sense of urgency to act if one is unaware of the *need* to act. Heschel’s (1999) concept of the prophet provided a metaphor that may be applied in order to understand the essence of what it means to recognise brokenness and then to **Proclaim** Life. According to Heschel, the prophet is a person “who feels fiercely” (p. 5). Beginning with a message of doom, the prophet concludes with a message of hope. The prophet, whose essence is an organic interweaving of personal life with the life of God, “is not a mouthpiece, but a person; not an instrument, but a partner, an associate of God” (Heschel, 1999, p. 25) who, in loving God with heart, soul and mind, acts above all out of “love, awe, and fear” (Heschel, 1999, p. 25). The student—like the prophet—therefore needs to be facilitated to see the world as it is, to ache at its brokenness, to criticise and to inspire through imagining and presenting “an alternative consciousness that can energise the community to fresh forms of faithfulness and vitality” (Brueggemann, 2001, p. 59). The challenge then for a Christian teacher is deliberately to approach the study of her or his subject so that it leads students “to see human reality and the world as it actually is—sinful and suffering, but not beyond hope and the redeeming grace of a caring God” (Knight, 2006,

p. 233). Beyond the study of content, experiences such as community engagement (George, 2017) through volunteering and local and global issue-based learning projects allow students to broaden their perspectives and to interact with the world in order to see the needs of others and to **Proclaim** Life.

Additionally, a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for **Proclaiming** Life needs to equip students with the skills that are required to set about actively restoring the world. Chapter 2 examined the overt focus on testing and success that has pervaded schooling, and the subsequent apathy with which many students face their learning. If students can be provided a vision to understand that education—both as formal schooling and as informal learning—enables them to be problem solvers, architects, engineers and surgeons who will address the fundamental fragmentation and the virulent cancer of the world, they may see a purpose to the study of Mathematics, Science and even the Arts and Music that have the important healing capacity to preserve beauty and to provide humanity with a sense of the transcendent (Turner, 2001). Despite the fact that they were not writing for the Christian school context, Fullan and Scott (2014) identified many traits of an education for deep learning that are highly relevant to a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, and that can provide an understanding of what an education that is about **Proclaiming** life might look like. Citing that “Ethical Entrepreneurialism”—or E Squared—is an education that is “not just about making money but also being able to identify and resolve complex personal and societal challenges locally and globally” (p. 3), they provided Six Cs for an education that is focused on sustainability, change implementation, invention and finding a voice. These competencies for deep learning, including character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking (Fullan & Quinn, 2016, pp. 83-84), are a very practical framework that can also assist Christian teachers in training students to be “kingdom-bringers” (Wright, 2011b, p. 145) with capabilities for **Proclaiming** Life.

For Christian school leaders, one implication of a Kingdom-shaping education that forms the catalyst for dynamic action—**Proclamation**—is that they must learn to criticise vigorously the materialism of the status quo, and to consider the idealism of what ought to be (McLaren, 2015, p. 45). Thus, the current focus of learning that sees school education as being about the acquisition of knowledge for personal gain must be robustly critiqued.

Rather, to enact the practical realisation of **Proclaiming** Life in a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is to set about repairing the ruins of our forebears (Milton, n.d.), and to equip students to “become men and women of independent mind, distanced from the conventional wisdom of their own time and with strength and skill enough to change what is wrong” (Postman, 1996, p. 60). Schools have the capacity to perpetuate the logic of the current system of schooling, and thereby to facilitate the integration of students into that system, or to envisage how they may contribute to a new way of being in the world that is transformative (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004).

Therefore, the development of and adherence to a radical and distinctive identity is crucial for a Christian school in order for its axiology to be about **Proclaiming** Life rather than about perpetuating the dominant ideology of Western culture that is “mindlessly committed to self-destruction” (Brueggemann, 2015, Preface to the Second Edition, para. 5). Such a radical and distinctive identity necessitates that school boards and school executives also be “men and women of independent mind” (Postman, 1996, p. 60) who consider how to navigate the tug of war between technical rationality that is founded on “what is effective and efficient” (Dantley, 2005, p. 509) and what is morally and spiritually right. What is imperative for transformation to take place is a revolutionary education that is based on the subversiveness of the biblical narrative that evokes an “alternative world of neighbourliness, and the nurturing of persons to live in, participate [in], and contribute to that alternative world” (Brueggemann, 2015, Preface to the Second Edition, para. 5).

In a climate where economic productivity is derived by packaging schooling into merchandise that may be bought and sold on the market (Davies & Bansel, 2007), and where schools increasingly face vast pressures to handle themselves like “profit-seeking firms” (Connell, 2013, p. 102), the idea that one would hold to an ancient story that has been around for millennia—such as the biblical narrative—is becoming increasingly unappetising. Indeed, at Yew Tree Christian College, a corporate model of schooling that perpetuates the idea that “businesses need to reinvent or fail” (Frary, 2018, n.p.) has been explicitly expressed to staff members. Yet, it is precisely an adherence to the unchanging biblical narrative that will enable Christian schools to find their distinctive identity, and to offer an alternative world to the one that summons the consumer and offers endless

technical fixes to human issues (Brueggemann, 2015). The essential nature of the biblical narrative that is about **Proclaiming** Life is to be found in the fact that it tells an alternative story that provides understanding of who we are and of our purpose. This story shouts that our identity is found in being “God’s handiwork and the highpoint of his creation, *being made in his image*” (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2004, p. 20; italics in original). By contrast, the story told by a market-driven narrative positions students as human capital, spewed out of a conveyor belt that assembles skills and attitudes designed to propel a productive workforce (Connell, 2013). The latter vision of life is axiologically dehumanising and antithetical to God’s vision for humanity that is about **Proclaiming** the fullness of life (Colossians 2, New International Version), and about His handiwork *doing* the good works that were prepared in advance for them to do (Ephesians 2:10, New International Version).

A second implication for Christian school leaders who are about a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that **Proclaims** Life consists of a need for them to possess a vivid imagination that is the thrust behind energising a new future (Brueggemann, 2001). Through education, this imagination is formed for and shaped so that its outworking is a response to the yearnings that are palpably visible everywhere in the world (Brueggemann, 2015). Without imagination, suffering that is a result of the status quo becomes despair rather than a spur that engages one in the relentless search for answers and the desire to work towards a practical commitment to social justice, equity and humility. To have a transforming imagination, therefore, requires that Christian school leaders are able to envision and pursue different goals from, and alternative ways of achieving those goals to, those of the secular organisation. If Christian school leaders consider that they are about God’s work, undertaking this work means that the method must be forged from a biblical perspective, even in the technical elements of running a school. Nancy Percy (2004) argued that the importance of method is often overlooked by Christians because “in their minds there is no distinctively Christian perspective in fields like marketing and management” (p. 367). Such a view, Percy posited, demonstrates an unbiblical view of success, and a failure to see that biblical perspectives must be applied both to the field of ideas—content—and to the practical areas of life. The greatest challenge for learning in our current age, according to Wilson (2017), is not epistemological. Beyond the acquisition of knowledge and the evaluation and synthesis of this knowledge is “the challenge to live [ontologically] as

integrated persons whose knowledge and beliefs shape our [axiological] response to the ‘life and death’ realities of our personal and global world” (p. 152). Perhaps this challenge rests most significantly on the shoulders of school executives who must navigate the difficult road of being Kingdom-shaping in all aspects of school practice from education to finance, staffing to enrolments, and who must discern how to view their core business as God’s business: His Kingdom being established “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, New International Version).

### *3.3.3.1. The Use of the Colour Yellow to Symbolise the Proclamation of Life*

The colour yellow has been chosen to symbolise the **Proclamation** of Life. This is because its qualities that are “eye... gladdened, the heart expanded and cheered, a glow seems at once to breathe towards us” (Goethe, 1840, p. 307), together with its “nature of brightness” (Goethe, 1840, p. 307), encapsulate the result that is effected when the Kingdom of God is translated into action. Jesus’ teaching about light is clearly connected with doing through his statement that:

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see... (Matthew 5: 14-16, New Living Translation).

## 3.4 The Tripod of Shalom and Prayer

Prayer is a mystery. This mystery was captured by Wright (1996) when he described it as depending on the assistance of God’s Spirit to catch “us up into the agonizing dialogue between the living God and the pain of the world, even though we don’t really understand what’s happening” (Prayer ii, para. 2). This section of Chapter 3 outlines my emerging comprehension of the mysterious role of God’s Spirit—through prayer—in Kingdom-shaping. It also demonstrates how prayer may both enable the elements of the Tripod of Shalom both to work dynamically together and also to be an example of the Tripod in vibrant action.

Shalom that is about right relationships among **self**, **others**, **God** and **the world** (Wolterstorff, 2004) has a deep resonance with and reliance on prayer. For example, this connection is apparent in a depiction of prayer that includes these same relationships that are indicative of Shalom in its three purposes: **inward prayer** that is about exploring and evaluating the self; **outward prayer** that engages with the needs of the physical world and others who are within it; and **upward prayer** that focuses on adoration of the divine (Ladd & Spika, 2002). These three purposes of prayer are evident in the Bible where there are examples of prayer as being inward—“be merciful to me, O Lord, for I give myself to you” (Psalm 86:3, New Living Translation)—outward—“pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16, New Living Translation)—and upward—“Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O Lord?” (Psalm 89:8, New Living Translation). Throughout 2018, I met regularly over a 12-month period with a group of participating teachers at Yew Tree Christian College. As we considered our practice through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom, prayer—that was inward, outward and upward—emerged as a pivotal factor in enacting a Kingdom-shaping, Christian education, and in seeing the Tripod making a difference in our practice.

In academic teaching, three functions of prayer have been identified that include Intellectual Enlightenment, Spiritual Discipline and Religious Instruction (Lynn, 2004). Reflecting on these functions of prayer and on the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom enabled me to realise that prayer allows each of these elements to work in dynamic unity. This occurs as a person looks to God for wisdom (Intellectual Enlightenment)—**The Word**—; as she or he articulates a sense of longing that things might be different (Religious Instruction)—**Proclamation**; and through a transformation that occurs through “divine illumination” (Spiritual Discipline)—**incarnation** (Lynn, 2004). These three functions of prayer are described in Lynn’s (2004) Table 1: A sampling of thought of prayer in academic teaching (p. 263). Table 3.1 below incorporates Lynn’s Table 1 and includes his descriptors of these three functions, together with Ladd and Spika’s (2002) three purposes of prayer. Please refer to Table 3.2 below, Prayer and its Connection with the Tripod of Shalom.

Corresponding Element of The Tripod of Shalom	Ladd & Spika (2002): The Three Purposes of Prayer	Lynn (2004): Functions of Prayer Connected to Knowledge	Description of Lynn's (2004) Three Functions of Prayer
The Word—Knowing	Upward prayer: Adoration of the Divine	Intellectual Enlightenment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is the source of true enlightenment, unlocking understanding and guiding toward higher wisdom</li> <li>• Learning comes through divinely-aided reflection on personal thought and experience</li> </ul>
Incarnation—Being	Inward prayer: Exploration of the self	Spiritual Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer humbles prideful scholars and emphasizes compassionate and worthwhile knowledge</li> </ul>
Proclamation—Doing	Outward prayer: Engagement with the needs of the physical world and those in it	Religious Instruction & Moral Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prayer and catechistic teaching witness to spiritual life beyond the discipline being studied</li> <li>• Piety, religious deference, and moral example complement academic learning with religious truths</li> </ul>

Table 3.2: Prayer (Ladd & Spika, 2002; Lynn, 2003, 2004) and its Connection with the Tripod of Shalom

Palmer's (2010) following description of prayer encapsulated the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom working together—although, of course, he was not specifically referring to the Tripod of Shalom:

Once we have been to the depths of prayer, we can begin to **know** as we are known. Our prideful knowledge, with which we divide and conquer and destroy the world, is **humbled**. Now it becomes a **knowledge that draws us into faithful relationship with all of life**. In prayer we find the ultimate space in which to **practice obedience to truth**, the space created by that Spirit **who keeps truth with us all**. (p. 125; **colour emphasis added**)

Firstly, prayer enables us to know as we are known, which relates to **The Word**—knowing. Being **incarnate**—becoming like Jesus—involves prideful knowledge being humbled through prayer and being drawn into a faithful relationship with all of life. **Proclamation**—doing—was revealed in Palmer's statement through practising obedience to truth.

Prayer is both individual and collective. Part of the power of prayer can be found in its capacity to **transform** the person who is praying. This is because it engages one in **releasing**

oneself to a higher power, and in acknowledging that suffering is a part of life (Donnelly, 2014). Prayer, for the individual, is the “readiness and willingness to receive and appropriate The Word, and...to accept it in one’s personal situation, particular tasks, decisions, sins and temptations” (Bonhoeffer, 1954, pp. 84-85; colour emphasis added). Beyond the individual, prayer as a collective community “belongs...to the whole Body of Christ....It means praying according to the Word of God, on the basis of promises” (Bonhoeffer, 1954, pp. 46-47; colour emphasis added). It was these promises of God—based on the Word—that undergirded Bonhoeffer and his community in Germany during the dark times of Nazi control—and that may continue to guide individuals and communities who live under oppressive circumstances.

Prayer therefore allows the individual to engage in an intimate and personal inward process (A. Smith et al., 2012) that removes focus from her/himself onto others. As a result, this refocusing prompts the individual to engage outwardly with others in Christian fellowship, thus burgeoning “the pulsing heart of all Christian life in unison” (Bonhoeffer, 1954, p. 86). Accordingly, prayer is pivotal to an upward knowing of The Word that sees an inward process of incarnation and an outward desire for Proclamation.

In Chapter 4, Research Methodology, the experiences of the participating teachers as they engaged in individual and collective prayer and the outcomes of this experience will be considered.

### 3.5 Critiques and Contestations of the Elements of the Tripod of Shalom

While in the Tripod of Shalom the word “incarnation” has been taken to mean both the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God in flesh and the application to Jesus’ followers who seek to incarnate Christ, there are a number of biblical thinkers and writers who contest whether the term can be applied to humans in the way that I have applied it in the Tripod. A variety of arguments has been posited in defence of reserving the term “Incarnation” solely for Jesus Christ. For example, Krycho (2014), while appreciating the sentiment of incarnation as being applied to Christians who ought to “incarnate” Christ, argued that applying the language of incarnation to believers is a serious mistake. Firstly, he



proposed that the Bible does not support the idea that ordinary men and women can mediate the presence of God. Secondly, he asserted that the “sheer shock of the event fades” (n.p.) when it is applied to anyone other than Jesus. Furthermore, Billings (2012) warned that “Incarnational mission” that seeks to appropriate the modern wording of John’s Gospel, “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood” (John 1:14, The Message Version), by immersing oneself in another culture, risks a distortion whereby followers of Jesus identify with a second culture rather than “testify[ing] to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus” (n.p.). Billings’ (2012) chief concern was that the uniqueness of Christ’s Incarnation becomes an afterthought, lost amongst the culture that the follower of God seeks to reflect.

While each of these opinions holds considerable merit for their caution regarding the use of the term “**incarnation**”, there is also a counter argument that provides—with care—a reasonable defence towards applying its use to followers of Christ. I seek here to recognise the risks of applying the term “**incarnation**” to people, but also to defend my choice of the term through explicating what it offers with regard to understanding being Kingdom-shaping. To begin with, it is worth restating that **incarnation** applies to the embodiment in flesh of “a spirit or quality” (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018, n.p.). Consequently, the term is not applied solely to God in flesh. Additionally, the term “**incarnation**” does not appear in the Bible (Alexander et al., 2000; Rushmore, 2006); it is a word that has been used in Christian theology with reference to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, becoming human without diminishing His divine nature (Douglas & Tenney, 1987). The permanent doctrinal formulation of Incarnation was determined at the council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451 (Alexander et al., 2000). As a result, to appropriate the term “**incarnation**” in a different way does not represent an alteration to the biblical text.

To distinguish between the doctrine of Christ’s Incarnation and the **incarnation** of His followers, Deffinbaugh (2004) offered terminology that I have found useful. He stated that in addition to incarnation being “a particular event—the coming of the Christ—it is also a principle...[that] is more general: God has chosen to manifest Himself **through** humanity”

(n.p.; **emphasis in original**). He went on to explicate that the principle<sup>19</sup> of **incarnation** can then be applied to followers of Christ personally through the idea that “God intends to bring His character to life through the godly lives of Christians” (n.p.). Thus, throughout the section on **incarnating** the Way, the use of the term “**incarnation**” to apply to followers of Christ has been referred to as a “principle” to delineate between the doctrinal particular event and the general term.

The objectification of knowledge—reduced to its bare bones—bought, sold, traded and acquired, provides an urgent basis for a stark contrast that breathes life into **knowing** and that enrobes **doing** within a pulsating and vibrant world. The term “**incarnation**” provides an education that trades in facts and abstraction to be reborn as “an organic body of personal relations and responses, a living and evolving community of creativity and compassion” (Palmer, 2010, p. 14) that is based on the love of Christ. A Kingdom-shaping Christian education is primarily about students embodying in flesh the Way of Christ through sharing in that life, loving God and allowing the Holy Spirit to rise in them. For “He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has....Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else” (Lewis, 2001, p. 177). Lewis, while not using the actual term “**incarnation**”, here encapsulated its meaning, encouraging that the believer is to share in the life of Christ, and that in this life the believer will find a “great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very centre of reality” (p. 176). Such a description vividly portrays the life of flourishing that exemplifies Shalom.

### 3.6 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 3 has provided the conceptual framework that has encapsulated the research focus, methodology and methods in this project. The reasons for creating my own framework were justified at the beginning of the chapter, and then the nature of the Tripod of Shalom was explored through considering the three elements—**The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**—, the use of the Borromean Rings and the three colours that imbue the elements. It was also important to note that the Tripod of Shalom has been applied to

---

<sup>19</sup> As opposed to doctrine.

Kingdom-shaping Christian education as a lens—rather than a package—because I recognised that a package tends to be static and fails to be malleable in different contexts. The following chapter builds on Chapter 3 through exploring the application of the Tripod of Shalom to the research methodology utilised in the project.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

*“Before the **real city** could be seen it had to be **imagined**, the way rumours and tall tales were a kind of charting.”*

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 31; **emphasis added**

*Imagination: imago, imaginary, imagination – in the Latin to picture oneself. The faculty or action of forming new ideas.*

### 4.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 3 further set the scene for understanding the distinctive nature of Kingdom-shaping for Shalom. This was achieved through the Tripod of Shalom that was applied to this research project as a conceptual framework. The Tripod of Shalom established that there are three elements of Shalom—**The Word**<sup>20</sup> (knowing), **incarnation** (being) and **Proclamation** (doing)—and that, when applied together, these exemplify Kingdom-shaping for Shalom. Accordingly, I posed the idea that the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom could be illuminated through applying the Tripod to teachers’ practice as a lens. This chapter considers how the Tripod of Shalom may also provide a framework for the methodology utilised in this research project. It unpacks the research decisions that were made throughout the process and how these were applied to the project as a whole.

My doctoral research project considered the imagining and the picturing of how a Kingdom-shaping Christian education may flourish and be a counter narrative to the dominant discourse in a market-driven context. The neoliberal setting assigns prominence to schooling

---

<sup>20</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

as a product, thereby commodifying teachers and students as cogs in an economic wheel where the primary mandate is the fabrication of a workforce that will propel the economy (Robertson, 2007). The resulting desire of school leadership to compete in the marketplace sees an increased emphasis on the image and branding of schools that is often manifested in their drive for results. Such a commercial focus for Christian schools is at stark odds with the heart of a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom that is about students “being restored to the task...given in the beginning...the restoration of all God’s creation...” (Colson, 1999, p. 296). The following three research questions have aided in guiding and shaping the methodology and methods of this research project that imagines an alternative vision for Christian education:

1. What were the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?
2. What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?
3. How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?

In a dynamic learning community with six research participants, these questions enabled us to wrestle with and to refine our understandings of: the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom; the mechanisms of self, community and context that interrupted and distracted us from imbuing such an education; and the practical engendering of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in our daily practice. As this chapter describes, this was an organic and dynamic process of discussion, reflection, critique, questioning, challenging, and trial and error that inspired us, frustrated us and enabled us to see that a Christian education that is about Kingdom-shaping does not come in a neat box that is furnished with a barcode and plucked from a catalogue. Far from it: a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is a highly complex phenomenon that is best realised in a community of like-minded individuals who understand that followers of God, intent on bearing His image to the world are “charged with the task of...cultivating [creation], unfolding and unfurling its latent possibilities through human making...” (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 163). Such a commission is complex and difficult, and it represents a life long journey that

is conducted in relationship with God, with self, with others and with the world and nature (Wolterstorff, 2004) that is indicative of Shalom.

## 4.2 The Research Design

### 4.2.1 The Research Paradigm

A critical theory research paradigm shaped the methodology and methods in this research because the project was focused on illuminating teaching practice at a Christian school and on understanding how education might be instrumental in the positive transformation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114) of a “wounded” world (Wolterstorff, 2004, “Shalom as a vision and call”, para. 2), rather than on contributing to an avaricious and soul-destroying marketplace that treats human beings as merchandise. Critical pedagogy has the capacity to illuminate practice because it is focused on questioning beliefs and assumptions that students and teachers have held without question, “to ask why these things are constructed the way they are; to ask who benefits from this construction and who does not benefit...and [to] work to implement alternatives” (Monchinski, 2011, p. 10). As a result, critical pedagogical research is engaged in identifying and exposing aspects of a hierarchical and distorted social order (Carr & Kemmis, 2004) that strangles any potential for envisaging God’s love for the world and the capacity for humans to be “both prince/ss and priest” (J. K. Smith, 2009, p. 163) in this divine sanctuary.

### 4.2.2 Critical Pedagogy for Shalom

Kincheloe (2008) argued that critical theory is dynamic in that it produces “undeniably dangerous knowledge, the kind of information and insight that upsets institutions and threatens to overturn sovereign regimes of truth” (p. 46). Kincheloe’s vision resonates with a Kingdom-shaping critique of the world because followers of Christ should live counter culturally, driven by their most “dangerous memories” (Frost, 2006, p. 11) of Jesus’ daring agenda for society that was exemplified during his daily interactions with people. Such a Kingdom-shaping life involves a “dangerous critique” (Frost, 2006, p. 19) of a culture that is caught up by the prevailing desires of Babylon that typify power and success. Instead, an alternative is invoked by enlivening “dangerous promises” (Frost, 2006, p. 15) that point to the Kingdom of God. The “undeniable” danger (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 46) of such a critique lies

in the fact that an abandonment of Babylonian culture, typified by consumerism, greed and the pursuit of the individual at all costs, in favour of an others-focused, Kingdom-shaping life, is a threat to those who derive benefit from the status quo (Frost, 2014). It was this potential of critical pedagogy for positive social transformation where “needless suffering is purged...and where justice and love reigns” (McLaren as cited by Kirylo, 2017, p. 593), imbuing Shalom, that was pivotal in its choice as a research paradigm in this study. Consequently, critical pedagogy gave the participating teachers in this research project the opportunity to question their practice and to consider possibilities for cultivating insight, the imagination and inquisitiveness, and to provide meaningful opportunities for risk-taking, for building social responsibility and for focusing on the struggle for justice (Giroux, 2014).

The folly of Babylon (Frost, 2006), to which a dangerous critique must be applied, is indicated in the oppressive neoliberal perception that the world is “a vast supermarket” where “education is seen as simply one more product like bread, cars, and television” (Apple, 2006, p. 32). As a result, humanity is removed from the classroom and the realm of education, instead being replaced by a narrow focus on measurement and quantification. In such a realm where output is the focus, students are coupled to a regime that proves a school’s worth, splashed on neon billboards and in glossy newsletters that spawn a school’s success. Who benefits from schooling when so much emphasis is placed on equipping students for a well-paying career (S. McAlpine, 2018)? It was in this context that I sought to explore and to critique how this narrow focus creates the grounds for an oppressive school education that wrests learning away from its capacity to inspire and its call to “serve a moral socialisation function in our society” (Dantley, 2003, p. 5), and instead replaces it with a suffocating and disengaging experience that spits out typecast citizens of Babylon.

Rather than mirroring the distorted and dehumanising image of an oppressive capitalist regime, critical pedagogy had the facility to empower teachers with an alternative paradigm of education that would focus on inspiring students to be transformational in the interests of justice and equality (McLaren, 2007). This exemplifies learning for Shalom. As was noted in Chapter 2, Shalom is a vision for creation as it was meant to be, a life of flourishing and prospering (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 45) where people live in thriving, harmonious

and life-giving relationships (Nessan, 2010, p. 10) “with God, themselves, each other, and nature – and...tak[e] delight in such relationships” (Wolterstorff, 2004, Introduction, para.7). Such an education is about love, yet love is rarely the focus of schooling. An education where students learn to imbue Shalom is a profoundly difficult task but vitally important to avoid a situation where knowledge is separated from an epistemology, ontology and axiology of love, thereby producing information that “remains partial and deformed” (Zajonc, 2006, p. 2).

### 4.3 Qualitative Research

Given the choice between a qualitative research approach that focuses on understanding how people within a particular context “interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 21), and a quantitative approach that is about testing theories objectively (Creswell, 2014), I selected a qualitative approach for this study. In a neoliberal context where the focus on measurement and productivity tends to place the assessment of systems in the realm of objective, rigorous analysis that is devoid of life (Feller, 2008), it was important to me as the researcher to choose a way of understanding Christian school education at Yew Tree Christian College that would allow capturing its intricate and ill-defined nature, the “mess and contradiction that characterises the real world” (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 7) and that was summed up by James in the third Process Learning Circle (PLCs) meeting through the words, “I’m realising that biblical perspective and Kingdom-shaping education is tangled....It’s a lot more subtle than I expected.” To narrow down Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom through the lens of quantification that focuses on reports and the measurement of behaviour (Clarke & Braun, 2013) would risk this project falling prey to the very paradigms that it sought to expose. A qualitative research approach was important because it recognises that the subjectivity of the researcher, including his or her perspectives and passions, adds vigour to the research rather than weakening it (Clarke & Braun, 2013). For this reason, a case study approach to qualitative research was utilised because it is especially useful in practice-oriented fields such as education (Starman, 2013), and because it allows a detailed examination of a particular issue in order to understand how and why things happen (Noor, 2008).



## 4.4 Method – The Action Research Design

### 4.4.1 Action Research is about Acting

Action Research (AR) has formed the methodological framework for this research. In a neoliberal context where the subtle—and at times not so subtle—tension for teachers is the pressure to produce students who are learning at peak capacity (Mockler, 2017), it was important to allow participants to develop understandings of the “rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices...” (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 1). In addition, AR was chosen because human flourishing—the desired outcome of Shalom—is often a goal of action research activities (Bell et al., 2011, p. 2).

AR has been described as “a means whereby research can become a systematic intervention, going beyond describing, analysing and theorizing social practices to working in partnership with participants to reconstruct and transform those practices” (Somekh, 2006, p. 27). It has a number of distinctive characteristics that were appropriate for its selection as this project’s research method, such as its focus on practical doing. Further, the importance of action has been highlighted through the proclaiming element of the Tripod of Shalom and is central to this research project. The fact that AR is “research *in* action, rather than research *about* action” (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 3; italics in original) meant that, for the other participants and me, ensuring that action was the focus rather than mere talk about action inspired us to search for and to experiment with a number of interventions to engender a Kingdom-shaping focus in our teaching. Additionally, critical AR is characterised by a collaborative, democratic partnership with the participating members of the research team (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005).

Of the different types of AR—technical, practical and critical (Kemmis, 2007, p. 7)—critical AR was selected. Critical AR was utilised because, through the group reflections and actions, it had the potential to lead participating teachers to emancipation from tradition, habits and self-deception (Noffke & Somekh, 2005, p. 90) that conflicted with being Kingdom-shaping by forcing participants to move beyond theoretical reflections into tangible action (Tripp, 1990). Moreover, critical AR had the potential to allow participants in this study to engage in

a social analysis of their school environment, together with a collective self-study of practice that was focused on transformational action (McTaggart et al., 2017, p. 22). Consequently, this method was central to understanding the difficulties related to imbuing a Kingdom-shaping education rather than focusing merely on undertaking change that may not then have aligned with the purposes of this research—a deeper understanding of and a more authentic practice of Christian school education. The next subsection of this chapter explores the process that was undertaken to select participants in this research project and the collaborative relationship that developed during the project.

#### 4.4.2 Action Research – A Co-Labouring Process

Three distinctive characteristics of critical AR informed the methods of this research project.

These were:

- The collaboration among participants;
- The research cycles; and
- The action that ensued from the research cycles (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010; Somekh, 2006).

This subsection of the chapter (4.5.2) considers the co-labouring, collaborative process of critical AR as it was applied to this research. Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1993) provided an etymological explanation of the term “collaboration” that is useful to describe the process of working together that occurred in this project. Drawing on the original Latin components of the word “collaboration”, Sumara and Luce-Kapler (1993) elucidated collaboration as toiling together, “exert[ing] body and mind in ways which are sometimes painful” (p. 393), and, as a result, they coined the term “co-labour”. The imagery of toiling and exertion in the context of community is very powerful, and is an apt analogy for the relationship that was built among the participants in this project over the process of a year.

##### 4.4.2.1 *The Number of Participants*

Nine teachers from the primary and secondary departments of Yew Tree Christian College were invited to participate in this critical AR. All four of the Secondary teachers who were invited accepted the invitation. Two out of five teachers from the primary department who were invited accepted the invitation to participate. These participants were my colleagues

at the school. The number of participants who were invited was based on Caine and Caine's (2010) model of Process Learning Circles (PLCs), explored below, where they suggested that the ideal number of participants in a PLCs is between six and 10 (p. 43). The PLCs served as one of two forms of data collection in the project. To preserve participant anonymity, a pseudonym was used to refer to each participant throughout the body of this thesis.

#### *4.4.2.2 The Selection of Participants*

The participants from Yew Tree Christian College were selected using purposive sampling because random sampling in a small qualitative site – such as a school – is not usually feasible (Wiersma, 2008). Furthermore, the purposive sampling of participants promised rich data for this project because it permitted the choice of participants who could contribute extensive knowledge that would reveal a great deal about issues of central importance (Patton, 2015), such as what hindrances teachers experience in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping education in their practice. Patton's (2015) view proved to be apt in Yew Tree Christian College's context. The dedication and intrinsic commitment of all six participants—indicative of co-labouring (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993)—were evidenced continually throughout their involvement in the PLCs during 2018. Exemplifying this was Andrea's attendance at two PLCs meetings that occurred during her long service leave. Another participant, Mary, read the materials prior to meetings—despite time being provided during meetings to do so. Further demonstrations of participants' dedication were provided via casual conversations that were instigated by the participants in the staffroom, where they generated descriptions of positive experiences and frustrations with regard to the implementation of action in the critical AR, as well as ruminations about other pertinent topics. James's email to me embodied the enthusiasm but also the burden of the participants:

“Last week, one of the pastors at my church preached a really good sermon...[that] got me thinking about your PhD and our action research. The main part that got me was the importance of persistent and earnest prayer for God's Kingdom work. We have talked a lot in our meetings about how prayer doesn't seem to be as prevalent in our staff/school anymore and I do wonder if this is actually a major part of a

kingdom shaped school and maybe something we actually need to look a bit closer at..."

James's concern about future meetings and his thought about the project outside the formal PLCs meeting time, together with his use of collective pronouns—"our action research"—demonstrated that the research project was intrinsically motivating for him, that he was personally invested in the process and also that he saw the importance of "toil[ing] together" (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993, p. 293) in community.

To provide data that may contribute broadly to school contexts, including that of Yew Tree Christian College, Maximum Variation Sampling was used because it could expand the range of variables in a small sample (Palinkas et al., 2015). Participants were therefore selected to achieve a cross-section of:

- Gender—an even male/female split—three males and three females, excluding the researcher;
- Primary and Secondary departments—despite efforts to achieve an even split, there were two Primary teachers and four Secondary teachers;
- Age and teaching experience—a range of ages and experiences from five to 16 years' teaching experience; and
- Teaching subject areas—a variation across humanities, sciences and the arts.

Based on the above selection criteria, six participants were chosen and asked to participate in the research through an emailed letter of invitation (located in Appendix B). This method of invitation was chosen as it allowed participants a safe avenue to decline involvement—or to ignore it as two did—if they chose to do so. Even though six participants, four from Secondary and two from Primary, accepted the invitation, a further two invitations were sent out. This was to attempt to equalise the Primary and Secondary numbers. On both occasions these teachers did not respond to the email.

#### 4.4.2.3 Brief Biographical Notes about the Participants

Pivotal to this research project—because they animated the Tripod of Shalom in their own lives and daily teaching practice—were the six research participants from Yew Tree Christian College. Their individual teaching experiences spanned from five years to 16 years of experience. There was a range of degrees and education that the participants brought with them to the research. A number had a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma of Education. In addition, amongst the participants there were those who had higher degrees such as a Master of Education degree and two had qualifications in Ministry or Theology. To preserve anonymity, this biographical description of each participant is brief and does not identify subjects taught or whether the participant was from the primary or the secondary department. I consider it important, however, to recognise them as individual people with vibrant personalities who together have deepened understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education. All participants' names are pseudonyms.

**Andrea** – had been teaching at Yew Tree Christian College for more than 10 years. While she was not one of the most vocal members of the PLCs meetings, her considered, reflective nature was exemplified in the recordings of meetings through a frequent “Mmmm” and through incredibly insightful thoughts that, when articulated to the group, often drove straight to the centre of the issue being discussed. On numerous occasions, these ideas leveraged the direction of the group. Describing the purposes of Christian school education, Andrea stated, “...grounding young people in what does the Bible say and how does that impact on all of life? It’s to show that...all of life is under God’s leadership. And I think also, it can hopefully train Christian kids to make an impact in the world”.

**James** – had taught at Yew Tree Christian College for just under 10 years. His desire to increase his own understanding of Christian school education generated a passion for the project that spilled over into the PLCs meetings. His enthusiasm to share ideas with me outside the formal meetings was an encouragement to me throughout the research. In his interview, James described the purposes of Christian schooling as being: “...to help children to see and young people to see the world in God’s eyes...to be able to see God in every part of [their] life, not just Church...it’s about helping kids to be critical and not just accept the way life is”.

**Kevin** – had been teaching at Yew Tree Christian College for under five years. His genuine love for his students, care for their families and profound desire for a Christian school education that is authentic were constantly evident through the way that he applied the Tripod lens to his teaching context. His awareness of what *was* current practice at Yew Tree and his wrestling with what it *should be* in terms of Kingdom-shaping education were often tangible in his input at PLCs meetings and in other interactions outside of these formal gatherings. In his interview, Kevin described the purposes of a Christian school as “encouraging people to grow in godliness...to push [the children] along with the journey...”, and that teachers and parents are “in this battle together”.

**Mary** – had taught at Yew Tree Christian College for over 10 years. She contributed a deep, theological understanding to the project, and her willingness to play ‘devil’s advocate’ at times allowed the PLCs group to grapple with a variety of perspectives. Mary expressed an intrinsic commitment to an authentic Christian school education, and her concern for areas of school life that were exhibiting colonisation by the Kingdom of Babylon was at times expressed emotionally. Her view of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education was summed up as follows in her interview: “...we are creating disciples who are thoughtful individuals who can interact with the world, who have the abilities to be creatively representing the ideas that they have for the purposes of bringing in God’s Kingdom into our world...”

**Philippa** – had been teaching at Yew Tree Christian College for just under 10 years. Her analytical mind and considered contributions to PLCs meetings—where she was not afraid to disagree with a thought or to question a viewpoint—allowed the group to mine for gold rather than being satisfied with the rubble on the surface. The fact that she was often ruminating about ideas that had been raised in the PLCs meetings was evident in her impromptu conversations at other times where she would raise questions and discuss ideas. Philippa described in her interview some of her ideas about Christian school education. Among these were the importance of “a love [for] and a connection to God’s world”; an appreciation for staff unity where “having everyone sing and worship together—that’s priceless”; and the need for every student “to have a clear understanding of the Gospel...providing that Christ-centred education”.

**Shane** – had been teaching at Yew Tree Christian College for between five and 10 years. His enthusiasm for Christian school education flowed beyond the walls of his classroom into his interactions with students at lunch time. Shane offered an exceptionally creative vision for how an education might be Kingdom-shaping, and he was unafraid to experiment in his practice and to share his successes (and challenges) in PLCs meetings. In his interview, he pictured a Christian school education as one where “the staff and the students are working together, to show the kids who Jesus is and why it’s important that they have a relationship with Him, and I think that’s definitely unique”. Outside the formal classroom, he encapsulated a picture of teachers “building relationships [with students] that you can’t necessarily do as much in the classroom” through spending time together, conversations and mentoring.

As a collective, the participating teachers in the PLCs were a unique group because, although they had all been teaching for a number of years, four out of six had taught only at Yew Tree Christian College. The other two participants had both taught in public schools, and one of them also had experience in other Independent and Christian schools. Despite this, half of the participants explicitly stated in their interviews that, prior to teaching at Yew Tree Christian College, they had been sceptical of Christian school education, stating that they had not understood its purpose and had not deliberately set out to teach in a Christian school. All of the participants, however, demonstrated throughout the PLCs meetings that a passion for Christian school education had developed intrinsically, and they all expressed this in various ways throughout the research. The ability to bring one’s whole self into the classroom was a theme that resonated in most of the interviews. Andrea encapsulated this through her statement that teaching in a public school meant that for her there was the possibility “to bring only perhaps part of yourself into the classroom”. This deep desire to be authentic was perhaps the reason why the participants were so invested in the research and contributed in ways that far exceeded my expectations.

#### *4.4.2.4 Interviews with the Participants*

Each selected teacher was briefed and then individually interviewed. The purpose of the briefing session was to outline the intentions of the research and to make commitments of

time and effort clear at the outset. These briefing sessions provided teachers with a further opportunity, beyond the signed consent form (located in Appendix E), to decline involvement. When the teacher stated verbal consent to participate in the research in addition to his or her signed consent, he or she was then interviewed to allow me to obtain data regarding the individual's (as opposed to the collective) understandings related to the first two research questions that focused on participant understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian education and the hindrances that prevented Kingdom-shaping Christian education from taking place in their practice. These interviews aligned with Patton's (2015) description of purposeful sampling.

An interview was chosen as a method of collecting data about participant understandings of Kingdom-shaping education because it allowed participants to "speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings" (Berg, 2007, p. 96). Because I wanted to compare participant responses while also allowing an in-depth exploration of issues that were considered important by the participants, a semi-structured approach to interviewing was utilised. This approach relied upon preconceived questions while also allowing individual probing of participants based on their responses to the set questions (Young et al., 2018). The list of interview questions is located in Appendix C. To provide the data that ensued from the participant interviews, each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The transcriptions of the interviews were then analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis, as described in Section 4.5. Prior to analysis, participants were provided a copy of their interview transcript for review and the opportunity to suggest revision if they deemed it necessary.

#### *4.4.2.5 The Process Learning Circles (PLCs)*

To facilitate the data collection in this critical AR, Caine and Caine's (2010) model of the PLCs was utilised. Caine and Caine's PLCs follows a formula of four phases:

Phase 1 – sharing;

Phase 2 – reflection (the list of readings in Phase 2 and their corresponding PLCs meetings is located in Appendix F);

Phase 3 – commitment to action and action research; and

Phase 4 – consolidation of learning from the meeting. (pp. 37-42)



The strengths of this model lie in its focus on participants' listening to one another, and the inclusion of an AR phase ensures that the research outcomes are focused on transformation. Each PLCs meeting was audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Transcriptions were then analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis, as described in Section 4.5. Prior to analysis, participants were provided a copy of the transcript of each meeting for review and the opportunity to suggest revision if they deemed it necessary.

The design of the PLCs was an important factor in mitigating potential power imbalances between the researcher and the participants. This is because the structured nature of the meetings meant that participants themselves could become facilitators of the meetings. Meetings 1 to 3 were facilitated by the researcher as participants became familiar with the format. From Meeting 4 onwards, the participants took turns facilitating the meetings and the researcher took the role of a participant. Participants were provided with the agenda for each meeting prior to the meeting taking place. The researcher devised the agenda for each meeting. While the Ethics Committee initially had concerns with regard to a potential power imbalance between the researcher and the participants, this concern was allayed by the fact that the rotation of the PLC meeting facilitator would limit the exercise of covert and latent power of the researcher.

Habermas' (1987) theory of communicative action contributed to effecting a Kingdom-shaping community through helping to ensure that the communication that took place between individual participants in the PLCs meetings was legitimate because there was mutual understanding (p. 2). His four elements contributed to the moulding of dialogue between the participants in the AR. These four elements were:

- Comprehensible expression – understanding between speaker and hearer;
- Communication of a true proposition – hearer sharing the knowledge of the speaker;
- Truthful expression of intentions – hearer believing the utterance of the speaker; and
- A right (morally appropriate) utterance – hearer accepting the utterance and speaker and hearer can agree with each other. (J. Habermas, 1976, p. 2)

These elements were explained to participants in the first PLCs meeting and then, along with the elements of the Tripod of Shalom, they formed the basis for communication throughout ensuing meetings.

#### 4.4.3 The Action Research Cycles

A second characteristic of AR, which is also evident in critical AR, is its distinctive cycles. Although McTaggart, Nixon and Kemmis (2017) pointed out that the cycles of critical AR are rarely neat (p. 21), and Somekh (2006) described the process as “a series of flexible cycles” (p. 17) rather than separate steps, in the AR phase of the PLCs participants were guided by Coghlan and Brannick’s (2005) AR cycles as depicted in Figure 4.5 below; please refer to Figure 4.5: The Action Research Cycle.

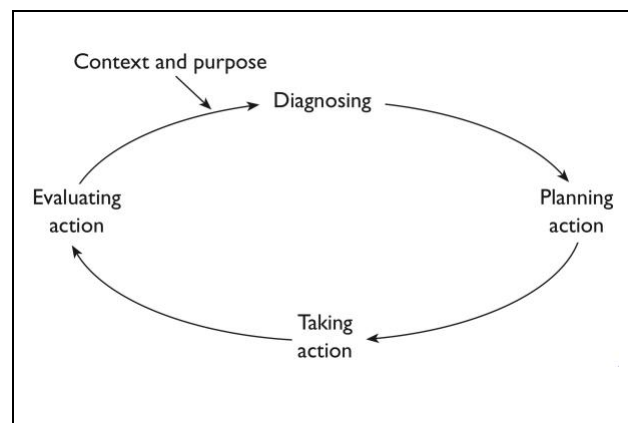


Figure 4.5 The Action Research Cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 22)

Coghlan and Brannick’s (2005) diagram was chosen, rather than the steps listed by McTaggart, Nixon and Kemmis (2017), because Coghlan and Brannick began with “diagnosing” (p. 33) the area of concern, whereas McTaggart, Nixon and Kemmis began with “planning a change” (p. 21). This important distinction meant that the participants in the research project were prompted in their discussion to consider explicitly what hindrances were obstructing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their practice before planning the action, thereby allowing a deliberately emancipatory approach. Using the structure of Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs, the four phases aligned with the cycles of AR and the elements of the Tripod of Shalom. Together, these three elements formed the Conceptual Framework Diagram; please refer to Figure 3.1: The Overarching Conceptual Framework.

The connection between the elements of the Tripod and the PLCs and AR is depicted in Table 4.10: The Alignment Among Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs phases, the AR cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) and the Tripod of Shalom.


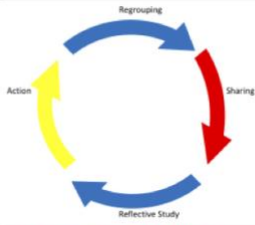
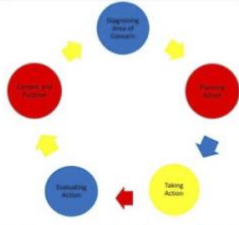
Corresponding Tripod of Shalom Elements	Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs Phases	AR Cycles (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005)
		
	Ordered Sharing to initiate a field of listening	Planning Action based on biblical ways of being
	Reflective Study to introduce and examine new material and to discuss	Diagnosing the Area of Concern in order to understand it
	Commitment to action and action research	Taking Action
	Regrouping to consolidate the learnings from the meeting	Evaluating the Action based on biblical ways of knowing
	Sharing (subsequent meeting)	Context and Purpose in which the research is situated (being)

Table 4.10: The Alignment Among Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs Phases, the AR Cycles (2005) and the Tripod of Shalom

The Tripod of Shalom in its three elements—**The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**—informed the AR cycles in two ways:

- Firstly, it operated as a framework for the process of the PLCs meetings, ensuring that Caine and Caine’s (2010) phases were governed by biblical **knowing** that informed reflection, **incarnational** being that informed the way that participants shared and **proclaiming** doing that drove the action; and
- Secondly, the elements operated as a lens through which the participants planned the action in the cycles. Accordingly, intervention was devised based on its capacity to incorporate **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. The coloured arrows in column three of Table 4.10 reflect that more than one element of the Tripod is often at work in the elements of AR.

It is important at this point to reiterate, in line with the view of McTaggart, Nixon and Kemmis (2017), that the process of the AR cycles as they occurred in this research—through the PLCs meetings and during the time in between where participants implemented action—was not as neat as is suggested in Figure 4.5. In utilising the AR cycles throughout this project, I found that it proved to be a challenging process. Tripp (1990) explicated this difficulty in undertaking AR by describing the representation of the AR cycle as “theoretical,

and hence general and idealized” (p. 160), and he stated that “it does not adequately allow for the inevitably more complex nature of the cycle as it actually proceeds in practice” (p. 160). There were a number of factors that contributed to the complex nature of implementing the AR cycles.

One factor that contributed to the lack of neatness in the AR cycles in this project was the difficulty in determining when one cycle was completed and another should begin. Coghlan and Brannick’s (2005, p. 24) clock metaphor was insightful for explaining the nature of AR cycles in that there are multiple cycles taking place concurrently throughout an AR project. Please refer to Figure 4.6: The Concurrent Cycles of Action Research.



*Figure 4.6: The Concurrent Cycles of Action Research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 24)*

Similarly to a clock where there are three hands concurrently circumnavigating the face at different speeds, Coghlan and Brannick (2005) suggested that the AR cycles could be seen to be multiple and simultaneous, with the short-term cycles contributing to the medium-term cycles, and the medium-term cycles contributing to the longer-term cycle (p. 24). This was an appropriate way to understand the experience of the AR cycles in this research project as I now describe. When the PLCs group first met and discussed the hindrances that they experienced that made engendering a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom difficult, there were many from which to choose. In Phase 3 of the first meeting, the group spent considerable time deliberating over what would be the initial focus for intervention. The long-term cycle—or focus—of the AR was imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. The PLCs group came to realise, though, that smaller—short-term—cycles were required in order to work towards the long-term cycle. Consequently, the first

AR cycle began with a focus on creating a spark that would address the apathy that they perceived was occurring in the classrooms of the participating teachers. This apathy was addressed because it was considered that it was counter to flourishing. The first cycle, therefore, was considered as a place to begin to understand how to intervene in our practice in order to engender Kingdom-shaping education, and the second medium-term cycle—an intervention that focused on engendering ownership over learning and life at school—built on the first short-term cycle, attempting to elevate students from an apathetic state. Both cycles then continued to occur concurrently. The third cycle that emerged from PLCs Meeting 5 was much more reflective of the long-term focus of the AR: Kingdom-shaping. This third—and last—cycle attempted to see action emerge from individual classrooms and into the broader context of Yew Tree Christian College. It centred on prayer and a concerted effort for participants to embody a Kingdom-shaping lifestyle in their daily actions and interactions with colleagues and students. Encouragingly, Reason (2006) and also Heron (1996) exhorted the messiness of the AR cycles, Heron describing the interdependent nature of inquiry that coexists with celebration and creativity: “For inquiry to be living inquiry, it needs to be vitalized by the celebration and the creativity which flow into it from beyond it” (p. 85). Hence, a preoccupation with the rigidity of AR cycles is misguided and may circumvent the broader possibilities for the research to encapsulate human experience.

There were many times throughout the AR cycles where I felt that I was lost amidst a deep bushland, unable to see the wood for the trees. It is, however, only through immersion in effecting change (and this immersion always lacks that bird’s eye view that makes sense of the world) that one comes to understand something (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 9). Additionally, Heron (1996) described that the process of inquiry that is “open, adventurous and innovative” (p. 148) may require all to be put at risk. The ensuing result, according to Heron (1996), at least early in the experience, might be for “divergence of thought and expression [to] collapse into confusion, uncertainty, ambiguity, disorder and chaos” (p. 148). Regularly within the AR cycles, participants in the PLCs were second guessing themselves, attempting to make sense of the process, whether the cycle had finished, whether it had been “successful” and whether it was time to begin a fresh cycle. The advice, however, that chaos—if researchers are able to navigate it “*awarely*” (Heron, 1996, p. 148; *italics in*

*original*)—has the capacity in its own good time to “become the seedbed for the emergence of some new, useful and illuminating bit of order” (Heron, 1996, p. 148) provided hope that at the end of the process there would be enlightenment. The counter-warning of the risk that no order would emerge, and that the whole project “may go down the drain” (Heron, 1996, p. 148), was also ironically encouraging, as it indicated that the trials that we were facing were a natural part of the inquiry process. Cook’s (1998) view that “if we miss out the ‘messy’ bit, if we tidy everything up to fit in a system, the creative part of our work can be lost” (p. 106) also indicated that the untidy parts of AR are actually an important part of the process, and reflect that, if researchers desire to gain a truly organic view of life, they cannot insist on squeezing moving situations into rigid linear models.

The AR cycles afforded another level of complexity for me in my capacity as researcher. The fact that there were two levels of AR—firstly, the project that was undertaken by the participating teachers in order to engender Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom; and secondly, the research project that would form the centre of this thesis—meant that for me as the researcher there was another layer of cycling that was occurring, superimposed on the cycles that were experienced by the other research participants. In addition to the micro reflection in which I was engaging as a participant in the PLCs that focused on how our interventions were mitigating the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Christian education, I was also engaging in macro reflection on the processes of the critical AR and how the cycles were reflecting an understanding of implementing critical AR in practice. This complex, multilayered process of AR cycles is depicted in Figure 4.7 below. Please refer to Figure 4.7: The Experiential Learning Cycle in Action Research Projects.

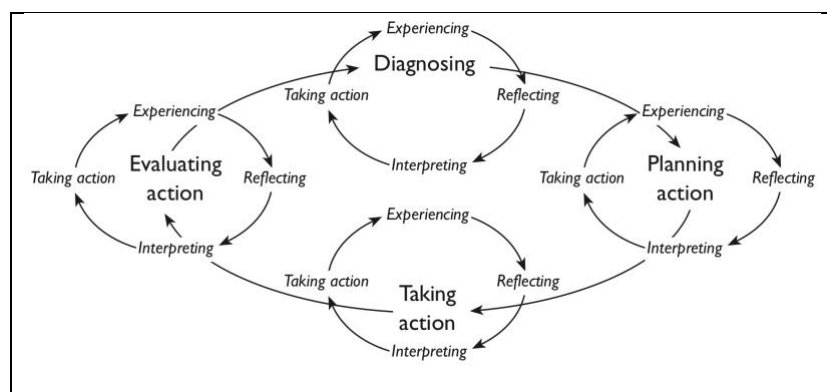
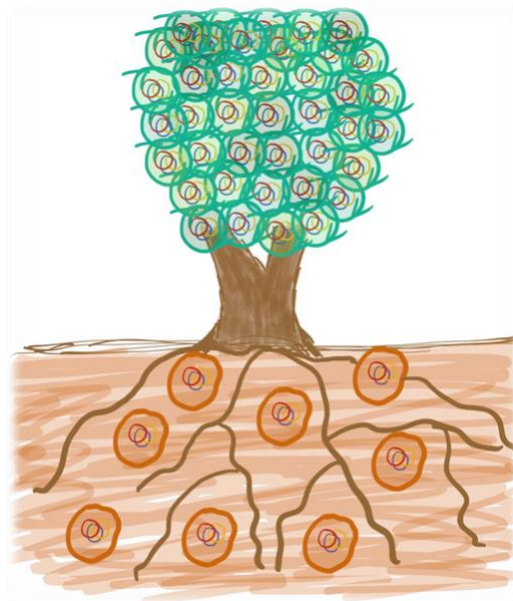


Figure 4.7: The Experiential Learning Cycle in Action Research Projects (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p. 35)

I found Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) description of the research process enlightening and useful for ensuring that essential and adequate reflection occurred during and between the cycles of the AR. Recognising that participants in the AR process were learners, utilising visible thinking routines (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011) in the reflection phase of the cycles worked as a kind of mortar that solidified the components in the project, and that helped to make sense of where we had been and where we were going. Coghlan and Brannick's (2005) model demonstrated the ongoing nature of reflection for the researcher and the taxing nature that for me often included second guessing the process and wondering whether or not we were on the right track.

The experience of journeying through the untidy nature of the AR cycles is illustrated in the figure below; please refer to Figure 4.8: The Tree Metaphor.



*Figure 4.8: The Tree Metaphor*

The leaves of the tree, composed of the AR cycle encompassing the Tripod of Shalom, are overlapping and are non-linear, depicting the messiness of the experience. Collectively, however, the AR cycles when viewed together allowed a deepening and broader understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education to be illuminated for the

participants that could not be seen in the separate, individual AR cycles. Furthermore, it was as the AR cycles occurred that tangible doing emerged that reflected the Kingdom of God.

#### 4.4.4 The Ensuing Action in the Action Research

Utilising the elements of the Tripod of Shalom as a lens, the participants in the PLCs collectively and individually embarked on a transformational journey that was designed to engender a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom. The collective and individual balance of research cycling was helpfully depicted by Heron (1996) in his fourfold interaction model (p. 134). Please refer to Figure 4.9: The Fourfold Interaction Model.

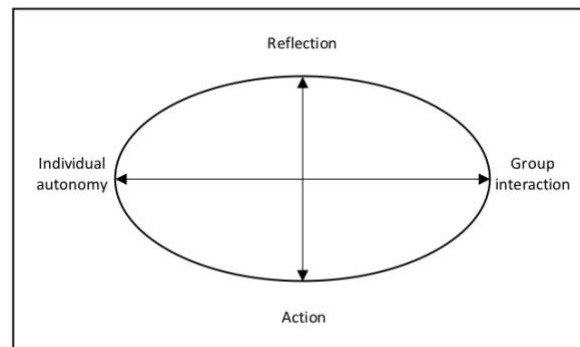


Figure 4.9: The Fourfold Interaction Model (Heron, 1996, p. 134)

Figure 4.9 depicts the process of action that can be undertaken in AR cycles. According to Heron (1996), it is optimal to achieve a balance between individual research cycling and collective research cycling. As a result, he described a process whereby one or more separate individual cycles of action and reflection could then be followed by collective reflection, in which the findings of individuals are shared in the group context and discussed. Heron's (1996) description of the fourfold interaction, which in practice is a delicate waltz among action, reflection, the individual and the group, was an insightful way of understanding the method of the PLCs in this research project. Consequently, while the group collectively revised literature, collectively reflected on the literature and collectively interacted to devise interventions based on the literature, each individual had autonomy to determine how that intervention would take place according to his or her teaching context and the needs of his or her teaching practice. The collaborative nature of AR, described as "individuals finding ways to improve what they are doing in the company of others" (McNiff



& Whitehead, 2010, p. 21), and a process of improving practice, claiming the improvement and then checking against the critical feedback of the group (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010), further exemplified the process that took place. Moreover, Heron (1996) argued that reflection and action can enhance each other, and that individual autonomy and group interaction can empower each other, leading to a “potent and effective” (p. 134) outcome if “the distinct individual effect and the collective reciprocal effect” (p. 134) are amplified by the dual influence of reflection and action working together.

In a neoliberal context where the focus is on “smart production” (Reynolds & Szerszynski, 2012, p. 6), action is about making output more efficient and adaptable (Reynolds & Szerszynski, 2012). Productivity here is quantitatively measurable (Otto, 1997), and based on what achieves the greatest return. This concept of action, however, was unhelpful for this project that was underpinned by a spiritual response to the dehumanisation and the objectification of people. It was therefore a challenging process to implement the notion of action for the participants and me because we had been so enculturated by an expectation that our doing should be measurable in order to ascertain its effectiveness. How could we measure Kingdom-shaping education?

Aristotle’s (350 B.C.E) concept of *phronesis* encapsulated the type of motivation for action that would address the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping education that were faced by participants in this project. *Phronesis* is concerned with practical wisdom, or bringing about that which is virtuous through action. Another way of understanding *phronesis* is as “a prudent understanding of what should be done in practical situations” (Carr & Kemmis, 2004, p. 132). *Phronesis* implies ethical decision-making, and involves thought that is underpinned by values, concerned with practical judgement and shaped by reflection. Oriented towards action, it is “pragmatic, variable and context-dependent” (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 2), but it is not the action itself (Kemmis, n.d.). Kemmis’s (n.d.) view encapsulated action by the term “*praxis*” that emerges in “sayings”, “doings” and “relatings” (p. 4), guided by intentions for humanity that are based on ethical considerations—*phronesis*—and shaped by traditions of thought with regard to practice. In the spirit of *phronesis*, therefore, the action that was undertaken by the participants and me in this AR project focused on perceiving an understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping. We then

considered how this might be actioned at Yew Tree Christian School so that we could tangibly practise a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. This process of praxis was described by Coulter (2002) as “Determining what is the right thing to do in the right way at the right time – and actually doing it...” (p. 191). However, the PLCs found that, just as “phronesis is a slippery concept” (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 2), it was difficult to pin down and define which elements of Kingdom-shaping should be the focus of the ensuing action. Moreover, as Kemmis (n.d.) described, the PLCs found that its praxis did indeed begin “to affect the uncertain world in uncertain and indeterminate ways” (p. 4), but the “uncertain” and “indeterminate” aspects of this action made it difficult to ascertain exactly how far we had made a difference, and whether this difference were in anyway significant in terms of contributing towards “the good for humankind” (Kemmis, n.d., p. 5).

The work of Kemmis, however, was encouraging to me in two ways as I, the leader of this project, constantly engaged in reflection on the larger AR cycles that were being implemented by the PLCs. To begin with, Kemmis’s (2008) description that the person who is acting does so in the messiness of day-to-day decision-making, and consequently “they do the best they [can] do on the day, the best they [can] do under the circumstances” (p. 5), was heartening because it provided an avenue whereby action did not have to be the prisoner of rules and regulations that dictated speech, response or attitude. In fact, Kemmis’s (2008) argument that “praxis demands creative thinking, care, compassion and critical consciousness—thinking outside or beyond the rules” (p. 5)—resonated with the words of Shane who blurted out in PLCs Meeting 5 that “we’re becoming much more robotic”, and of Philippa who pronounced in the same meeting that “we just become automatisms”. While it was therefore challenging to consider just what was meant by being Kingdom-shaping and how Kingdom-shaping could be applied to our daily practice, and also to conceive of how to break out of the web that was increasingly trapping us as educators in a complex weave of policy, expectations and regulations, it was comforting to know that there was scope for mess and a degree of “fuzziness” in our implementation of intervention in this research project. Secondly, Kemmis’s (2007) concept of a unitary praxis in AR of “saying, doing and relating” (p. 3) validated the use of the Tripod of Shalom as a lens to guide the implementation of action in this project. This is because the three elements of the

Tripod—**The Word** (saying), **incarnation** (relating<sup>21</sup>) and **Proclamation** (doing)—resonated with Kemmis’s three elements of action. As a result, as the PLCs deliberated about Kingdom-shaping and Kingdom-shaping action through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom, it was no surprise that Kemmis’s (2007) view that it is a “morally committed action...that comes together and coheres in a way of life” (p. 3) was echoed in the words of James who questioned in Meeting 3

... do I need to gain a better understanding of the Word and Incarnate and action in my own life before I can see it in my classroom and my school, so do I need to think about a Kingdom-shaped James before I can grasp how it works with others as well?

The same idea was also expressed by Andrea in Meeting 5, pondering “to what extent am I taking ownership for my own incarnation of the Kingdom?”

In spite of the messy nature of the AR journey undertaken by the participants and me during this project, by the end of the process greater clarity and transformation did emerge. Reflecting Kemmis’s (2007) understanding of AR that it aims at changing three things—practice, understandings of practice and the conditions under which practice takes place—the participants in this research did emerge with transformed doing, a deeper comprehension of that doing and an inkling that they had made a difference in the conditions for students and colleagues at Yew Tree Christian College. Derived from Phase 1—the open sharing—of Meeting 5—AR Cycle 2—and Meeting 7—AR Cycle 3—snippets of the three changes outlined by Kemmis (2007) are evident. A demonstration of how selecting AR as a research method facilitated transformed practice in Cycle 2 is revealed in the tables below; please refer to Tables 4.11 to 4.13: Changed Action, Understanding and Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a result of AR Cycle 2.

---

<sup>21</sup> **incarnation** reflects “relating” here because relationship occurs through connection with our being and the being of others.

Changed Action	Participant
Not being prescriptive [with my students in Year 7] and allowing choice and design	Philippa
I have given [students] the option if they would like to lead devotions in any kind of way...that they would like to share with the rest of the class	James
Assignments that require students to make connections between their learning and take ownership over their impact on the world	Andrea
I have been giving [a little person in Year 5 who does not complete homework] opportunities to come to my room and do her homework	Kevin
I have been linking what the syllabus tells me to talk about with trusting in God and working with God. ...trying to remove that sense of this is study and this is life...and it's sort of been inspired by this, to just go and say what am I doing, why am I doing these topics, why am I teaching the way that I'm teaching	Mary

*Table 4.11: Changed Action (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2*

Changed Understandings (or realisations that were not evident before the research)	Participant
On the whole, they have been created with the desire to engage as we see this when they are young. It is other factors that generally shut this down	Philippa
Taking ownership is risky and can expose you. You actually have to think about your knowledge and form and opinion which links knowledge and incarnation	James
With more planning, every concept in [my subject] can be explored through the Tripod	Andrea
In some cases, I have insufficiently explained the purpose for students' lives and Kingdom Living of these ownership actions—this may contribute to their failure to continue	Andrea
When the relationship is strong, students are more engaged	Kevin
Students are ready to be challenged to seek more significance and meaning in what they are learning	Mary

*Table 4.12: Changed Understandings (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2*

Changed Conditions	Participant
Sometimes very much breathless excitement in Year 7. They are telling me what's going on with their experiment so excited that I can't tell what they are saying	Philippa
Has sometimes led to more open discussions	James
Some students have continued to enact their changes while others saw it as merely a task to complete	Andrea
Change in student body language as she enters/leaves the classroom	Kevin
Increased relationship and trust between teacher and student	Kevin
Movement towards incarnating ideas expressed in the classroom	Mary

*Table 4.13: Changed Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 2*

My (somewhat naïve) expectation as I embarked on this AR was that the PLCs would implement the Tripod of Shalom in their daily practice, and that visible evidence of the Tripod in action would be evident. Reflecting this expectation was my original third research question that asked “What happens when participating teachers use the Tripod of Shalom to frame and implement a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?” (Wong, 2017a). Furthermore, I intended to audio record classroom observations of

participating teachers using the Tripod of Shalom in action, and to transcribe this audio and analyse it using Scollon's (2001) Mediated Discourse Analysis. Accordingly, early cycles of the AR—Cycles 1 and 2—focused on intervention that was very practical, and that occurred within individual classrooms. Using the Tripod of Shalom to devise Kingdom-shaping practice, participants considered how **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation** could inspire their students to take greater ownership over their learning. The perceived apathy of students and their lack of motivation were deemed as troubling by the participants because it lacked flourishing, and therefore did not exemplify Shalom. While this intervention that was focused on increasing student ownership over their learning did instigate change for students and participating teachers that was reflective of Kingdom-shaping, as was depicted in Tables 4.11 to 4.13, there was a sense among participating teachers that we were not really capturing the essence of Shalom or Kingdom-shaping education. Shane's question in Meeting 4 exemplified this:

I wonder, the whole focus is Kingdom-shaping education, and so I think it's great that ...we're wanting [our students] to take more ownership but how is that different to even if we were secular teachers so how can we actually now be bringing it into being more Christ-centred? That's probably where I would encourage us to head.

Meeting 5 of the PLC was a turning point for the focus of the AR, and saw the beginning of Cycle 3. The reading on which participants focused for Phase 2 of Meeting 5 was from *Philosophy and Education* (Knight, 2006). The striking disparity between what was occurring at Yew Tree Christian College in 2018 and what was described about Christian school education in the reading caused the participants to re-evaluate their focus. This was encapsulated in the words of Mary, who stated: "...I'm feeling pretty negative....I just felt very confronted by that article and...it isn't the direction that we are seemingly taking in lots of decisions that have been made, or at least messages that have been presented [at the school]." Shane's articulation that "I think it's almost like we're pushing back against the direction that, well, I guess the executive, or the school, is taking" was the catalyst for devising an intervention that spilled beyond the individual classroom and into the broader

school. Cycle 3 therefore focused on intervention that was related to prayer and that involved participants:

- Committing to set time aside regularly, intentionally and deliberately to pray for
  - The executive and school board members;
  - Teachers and all staff members;
  - Students;
  - Families;
  - Enrolments; and
- Committing to making and utilising opportunities to speak with colleagues about Christian education.

The resulting action and transformation are encapsulated in Tables 4.14 to 4.16. This intervention was broadened after Meeting 6 to include an intentional focus for participants on living a Kingdom-shaping life. Please refer to Tables 4.14 to 4.16: Changed Action, Understandings and Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a result of AR Cycle 3.

<b>Changed Action</b>	<b>Participant/s</b>
More intentional about devotions with my Family Group [considering] what does living God's way look like?	Andrea
I've been more focused and intentional about praying for the bigger picture/more spiritual aspects of our school	James
Making prayer more visible in the classroom	Shane
Focused on encouraging a colleague – it has worked I think to some extent	Philippa
Conversations and time with Family Group [are more focused on] welcoming others	Shane

*Table 4.14: Changed Action (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3*

<b>Changed Understandings (or realisations that were not evident before the research)</b>	<b>Participant/s</b>
I still find myself focusing on curriculum content more readily than Kingdom-shaping	Andrea
Students have [their own] ideas about Christian Schools	James
[There is] an interest from students in a Kingdom-shaped school	Collective
It is hard to remember to encourage and speak of Kingdom things when I am task focused (reports and assessment)	James
There is a ministry as such to be done among our colleagues	Philippa
I have learned that I need to keep relearning [humility] because I haven't learned this lesson as well as I thought I had	Kevin

*Table 4.15: Changed Understandings (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3*

Changed Conditions	Participant/s
The number of students [in the joint staff and student prayer group] on the basketball court is growing	Collective
Students are willing to ask and be involved	Collective
Biblical Studies conversations that go beyond the lesson into lunch	Shane
Prayer focus – answers to prayer – [there are] many changes on the horizon	Philippa
The more we pray, the more our focus changes. God answers	Collective

Table 4.16: Changed Conditions (Kemmis, 2007) as a Result of AR Cycle 3

Reflecting the discussion on Prayer in Chapter 3, it was found that prayer required a deeper engagement with the Tripod of Shalom than the intervention that had been at the centre of Cycles 1 and 2. Consequently, the intrinsic and dynamic interrelationship among **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that occurred in this cycle meant that the transformation occurred within the participating teachers, and then burgeoned into their classrooms and the broader arena of the school. A visual manifestation of this prayer intervention was a weekly prayer meeting that began on the basketball court every Tuesday morning that was open to staff members and students. Frequently students outnumbered staff members and there was a sense of community relationship as collectively attendees prayed for the needs of the school as a whole. James reflected on this during Meeting 6, saying, “...I think that I’m more aware [that I’m stepping into my mission field today] now that we have been praying more and being a part of the Tuesday morning prayer, I feel like I am thinking more about that each day.”

After Phase 1 of Meeting 8—sharing—there was a greater sense of hope among the participants as they were able to see the journey that they had undertaken over the year, and the way that this was changing the school as a whole—beyond individual classrooms. It became evident that our understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping was developing as we attempted to change our practice to *be* more Kingdom-shaping. Moreover, as the Tripod of Shalom moved from being a framework—around which the participants and I tried to structure our intervention—to a lens through which we explored the nature of Kingdom-shaping education in our practice, our focus shifted from intervention that would achieve documentable evidence of the Tripod in action to intervention that was authentically Kingdom-shaping.

The participants finished the AR with a sense that individually and collectively their understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education had grown. Their interest in maintaining their own individual discoveries of Kingdom-shaping and in collectively developing more of a Kingdom-shaping culture in Yew Tree Christian College was evident in the questions that they asked during Meeting 8:

- “Are the things that we are seeing in our classes through our focus on Kingdom-shaping happening in other classes throughout the school? Are other teachers aware of it?”
- “How can we share these things more broadly, for encouragement of other staff members?”
- “How can we have an opportunity to develop a unified culture that we want to create?”

There was a sense therefore that, after a year of working together, a desire to see more of a Kingdom-shaping culture had infiltrated the hearts and minds of the participants, and would continue to shape their practice in coming years. This was encapsulated in this final meeting by Kevin who expressed the desire to “gather with colleagues to share ideas, stories and growth.”

## 4.5 Method – Data Analysis

### 4.5.1 – Critical Discourse Analysis

The discourse view of language is that language is a form of “social practice” (Fairclough, 1996, p. 22) because it operates within society and is a product of society. Consequently, when people engage with language through speaking or reading, they do so in ways that reflect assumptions about the world that are largely embedded within social constructs. These constructs, or social conditions, according to Fairclough (1996) have two parts: social conditions of production; and social conditions of interpretation (p. 25). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is thus a deconstruction of the relationships between the production and the interpretation of discourse (Fairclough, 2010) to illuminate the ways in which discourse is couched in ideological power mechanisms that can lead to a lack of flourishing in and between people in a society. The critical element of CDA operates to examine what is wrong—or deficient—with a society based on an understanding of human well-being. Through the building of an awareness and the questioning of these wrongs that are often



intrinsically and implicitly buried within ideologies of language, CDA thus aims to produce knowledge that could then contribute to emancipation and flourishing (Fairclough, 2010). CDA was therefore used to analyse the data that were generated from the transcriptions and the recorded minutes of interviews and PLCs meetings with participants because it is concerned with analysing these “structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 2). Through the analysis of their discourse that made implicit viewpoints explicit, participating teachers were empowered to explore how their practice had been shaped and constrained by the narrative of Babylon and the continuing pressure for academic success. As a result, the participants were able to consider how they may release themselves from these constraints (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005), thereby creating space for an alternative narrative (way of life)—such as Shalom—to become the focus outcome for Christian school education.

There are a number of models of CDA from which to choose, such as Teun Van Dijk’s (1993) Socio-cognitive model, Wodak’s (2001) Discourse-historical approach and Fairclough’s (1992) discourse as social practice. As there is a synergy between this study of Shalom and the work of Fairclough (2010), who also desired to explore how human well-being and flourishing are prevented or limited by capitalism (p. 2), Fairclough’s model of CDA was used as a framework to guide the data analysis. Fairclough (1996) identified three dimensions or stages of discourse analysis to be used by the researcher in CDA. These three dimensions—Text (description), Discourse Practice (interpretation) and Sociocultural Practice (explanation)—were depicted by Fairclough in three concentric boxes to reflect that social structures not only govern social practice, but also are a product of social practice. A diagram is located in Appendix A. Therefore, it may be said that discourse shuttles back and forth between the determination and reproduction of social structure (Fairclough, 1996). It is here that flexibility is to be found in this approach because it allows the researcher multiple entry points for data analysis and to move back and forth among these three dimensions, from text to discourse practice to sociocultural practice and sociocultural practice to text, as necessary (Janks, 1997). The three concentric boxes that represent Fairclough’s model of CDA reflect the three dimensions—or steps—in the process of CDA. The steps have been depicted in a linear table below to enable clarity in conceptualising the process that I undertook to analyse the data in this research project. The arrow at the

bottom of the table reflects the fluid nature of the process. Please refer to Table 4.1: The Three Dimensions of Fairclough's CDA.

<i>Text</i>	<i>Discourse Practice</i>	<i>Sociocultural Practice</i>
Description – concerned with examining the formal and grammatical properties of the text	Interpretation – concerned with the meanings of the language (text)	Explanation – concerned with the implications of the meaning for social practice




Table 4.1: The Three Dimensions of Fairclough's CDA – Based on Fairclough's (1996) Concentric Diagram (p. 25)

A critical analysis of the discourse (talk) was important to this research project because it focused on emancipating Kingdom-shaping education from the influences of the market that seek to centre attention on competition and career success. Habermas (1987) termed the influence of the market the “colonisation of a lifeworld”, arguing that elements of “a private way of life” are split from “the symbolic structures of the lifeworld” through commercialisation (p. 322). CDA enabled me to gain the understanding and the recognition of patterns regarding how and the degree to which the lifeworlds of the participating Christian school teachers had been colonised by the systems of material production. These colonising systems were largely identified by the participant teachers in their interviews as hindrances to a Kingdom-shaping Christian education.

#### 4.5.2 The Process of CDA

##### 4.5.2.1 First Dimension: Text Analysis

The first dimension, text analysis (or description), requires the researcher to engage in a close analysis of the formal properties of the text (Fairclough, 1996, p. 26). Based on the first two research questions that focused on participant understanding of Kingdom-shaping Christian education and of the hindrances that they faced in engendering a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice, the transcripts of interviews and of PLCs meetings were encoded using NVIVO. The nodes that were used to organise the transcripts are listed in Tables 4.2 and 4.3:

Question 1: Understanding of Kingdom-shaping Christian education
Community relationships and ways of being
Incarnation—being
Clarity of understanding
Proclaiming—doing
The reign of God and His supremacy
The Word—knowing
A holistic view of life

*Table 4.2: Nodes Used to Organise the Transcripts of Participant discourse as Part of the First Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA Related to Research Question 1*

Question 2: Hindrances
Emphasis on academic achievement and metrics
Overcrowded curriculum requirements
Interruptions to learning because of the discipline and welfare needs of students
Student disengagement from learning
School structures that are reflective of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century
Conflict caused by spiritual beliefs and expectations
Lack of teacher education
Lack of time

*Table 4.3: Nodes Used to Organise the Transcripts of Participant discourse as Part of the First Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA Related to Research Question 2*

Subsequently, I explored the transcripts of the interviews and of PLCs meetings that had been coded in NVIVO, identifying specific discourse patterns as identified in Halliday's (2014) Functional Grammar and in the work of Fairclough (2003). A sample of the discourse patterns that were utilised for the analysis in this research project are listed in Table 4.4; please refer to Table 4.4: discourse Markers and Their Interpretation.

discourse Markers <sup>22</sup>	discourse Interpretation <sup>22 above24</sup>
Repetition of words, pauses and use of "um"	Suggests hesitation and difficulty in formulating a response (V. L. Smith & Clark, 1993, p. 26)
Nominalisation	Objectifies the subject of discourse and removes the initiators of processes from the text (Fairclough, 2003, p. 13)
Systems of transitivity in clauses such as mental, verbal, relational and material processes	Reveals intrinsic motivations and thought (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 245)
Semantic relations	Suggests relationships among ideas such as causal, consequential and additive (Fairclough, 2003, p. 89)
Metaphors	Suggests concepts and an understanding of social reality (Musolff, 2012, p. 302)
Rhetorical questions	Suggests an assessment of good/bad on a continuum (Rohde, 2006, p. 157)
Second person pronoun	Indicates emotional depth, particularly with regard to relationships characterised by intense emotional rifts and tensions (Fludernik, 1994a, p. 466)

*Table 4.4: discourse Markers and Interpretation in the Second Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA*

<sup>22</sup> A small 'd' has been used in the heading to reflect that this discourse is referring to talk (Gee, 2005)





provided an idea of the underlying assumptions that participants held about their practice. These underlying assumptions could then be explained in the third dimension.

#### 4.5.2.3 Third Dimension: Sociocultural Practice: Explanation

To recognise the multilayered nature of this research project, applying Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional discourse analysis required a transdisciplinary approach. Using two different lenses embedded in the third dimension—sociocultural practice—allowed a deep explanation of the discourse that was relevant to both the social context and the Kingdom-shaping focus of the research. This multi-lens process resonated with Fairclough's (2003) view that a transdisciplinary approach develops the capacity to analyse texts as elements in social processes (p. 6). The two lenses used in the third dimension and their correlation with the research questions were the Tripod of Shalom and the Lacanian Discourse Theory. Please refer to Table 4.7: The Transdisciplinary Lenses Applied to the Third Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA. These lenses are explored in the following paragraphs.

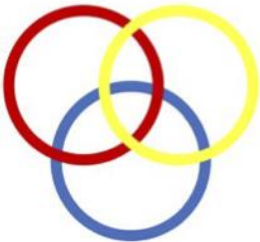
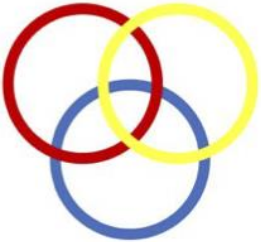
<b>Third Dimension: Sociocultural Practice: Explanation</b>	<b>Question 1:</b> What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?	<b>Question 2:</b> What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaped Christian education in their daily practice?	<b>Question 3:</b> How were the participating teachers' deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?	<b>Question</b>
	 <b>The Tripod of Shalom</b>	<p><u>Agent</u> → <u>other</u>  <u>Truth</u> // <u>product</u></p> <p><i>Lacanian Discourse Theory</i></p>	 <b>The Tripod of Shalom</b>	<b>Transdisciplinary Lens</b>
	Consideration of <u>balance</u> between <u>The Word (knowing)</u> , <u>Incarnation (being)</u> and <u>Proclamation (doing)</u> in participant talk	Consideration of <u>assumptions</u> of "truth" that undergird the agent and the subsequent product of that agent's actions in participant talk	Consideration of <u>balance</u> between <u>The Word (knowing)</u> , <u>Incarnation (being)</u> and <u>Proclamation (doing)</u> in participant talk.	<b>Explanation</b>

Table 4.7: The Transdisciplinary Lenses Applied to the Third Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA

In relation to the first of the study's three research questions, as is elaborated below, the Tripod of Shalom was used as a lens through which to interpret Fairclough's (2010) CDA in

the third dimension, Sociocultural Practice, so that the analysis reflected the elements of Shalom, Knowing **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**, that were heard in the discourse. Please refer to Figure 4.1: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and the Tripod of Shalom.

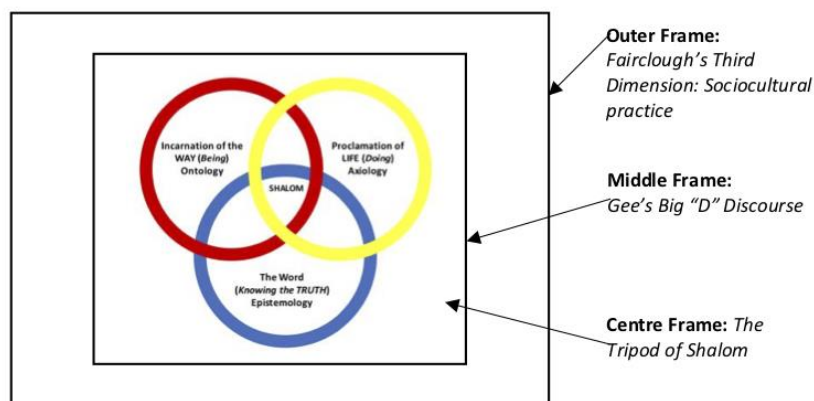


Figure 4.1: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and the Tripod of Shalom

In this approach, Fairclough's (2010) third dimension provided the outer frame indicating that sociocultural practice—an explanation of Fairclough's first two dimensions—provided the broad understanding of this layer of the analysis. Moving inwards to the middle layer, Gee's (2005) classification of Discourses (with a big "D") was broadly useful for discriminating between discourse that was used (talk) and Discourse that represented socially "acceptable" ways of seeing the world in terms of language, thinking, valuing, acting and interacting "in the 'right' places and at the 'right' times with the 'right' objects" (Gee, 2005, p. 26). Applied to the explanation of sociocultural practice in this research, the work of Gee prompted me to search for traces of Discourse in the participant teachers' discourse that revealed their ways of seeing the world and of which they were unaware. These latent traces of Discourse were important because, in the spirit of critical theory, it allowed a critique of the legitimated constructions of reality that are inherent in the dominant culture (McLaren, 2007), and it enabled these constructions to move subsequently from subconscious reality to conscious awareness in order to liberate the "lifeworld" (J. Habermas, 1987, p. 322) from its colonising power.

Central to the explanatory analysis in this dimension was recognising and noticing patterns among the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom—**The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**—in the talk of the participants. It was possible to explore the latent assumptions that participants held about Kingdom-shaping and Christian education through using the Tripod as a lens. It highlighted where the participants had a holistic view of Kingdom-shaping and Christian school education that encompassed **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**, and it identified connections among the three elements in their talk. It also allowed me to ascertain where participants decoupled the elements of the Tripod, instead seeing **knowing**, **incarnating** and **Proclaiming** as separate entities. An example of the explanation of participant discourse in the third dimension—Sociocultural Practice—through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom is depicted in the table below. In order to make the explanation in the third dimension clear to the reader, all three dimensions have been included in the table. Please refer to Table 4.8: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, Using the Lens of the Tripod of Shalom.



Participant	Text Analysis Description	Discourse Practice Interpretation	Sociocultural Practice Explanation/Implication - The Tripod of Shalom as Lens
Mary	<p><i>Okay, -I think - that - one space is actually - increasing the number of - teachers within Christian education that really understands what it means to be a Christian educator and not just an educator. Or not just a Christian who is an educator um so I think there's a lot of work to continue to be to be put into place because we often have discussions about that we are actually primarily an education facility um and then that sort of sometimes stands counter to who we are - we are part of God's kingdom with a particular purpose with the lives that we're given for a particular short period of time in terms of our um developing Christians and relationships and um and growing disciples as well...</i></p>		
Text 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of adverbs – ‘actually increasing’, ‘really understands’, ‘are actually primarily an education facility’, ‘sometimes stands counter’.</li> <li>• Relational processes: Being – ‘teachers...that really understands what it means to be a Christian educator...’, ‘stands counter to who we are – we are part of God’s kingdom’.</li> <li>• Material Processes: actor + goal (doing) – ‘part of God’s kingdom with a particular purpose...in terms of developing Christians and relationships and um and growing disciples as well’.</li> <li>• Mental processes: Senser + phenomenon – ‘I think’</li> <li>• Semantic relations – Elaboration: ‘what it means to be a Christian educator and not just an educator. Or not just a Christian who is an educator...’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary’s use of adverbs to clarify terms such as ‘increasing’, ‘are an education facility’ and ‘stands counter’ suggest a desire to communicate clearly the facts or truth of the situation. This is particularly so in terms of the use of ‘actually.’ Therefore, one could conclude that she earnestly desires to understand the nature of Christian education and to see that it is done in an authentic way. This analysis is congruent with the way that Mary expresses herself and goes about her role at the school daily.</li> <li>• Elaborative semantic relations suggest Mary’s desire to articulate clearly her understanding of Christian education. This perhaps indicates her investment in being a Christian educator and understanding what that involves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary demonstrates here the view that Christian education includes <u>incarnation</u> – being – and that a Christian educator has a particular role – doing/purpose – developing and growing disciples (<u>proclaiming</u>).</li> <li>• The use of the adverb ‘really understands’ when tied to the relational process ‘be a Christian educator’ suggests that Mary sees that <u>incarnation</u> is a rare – or lesser part – of Christian education and that this is a concern to her.</li> <li>• Purpose, when related to <u>proclaiming</u>, is understood by Mary to be ‘developing Christians and relationships and...growing disciples’. This is then related to <u>incarnation</u> by the words ‘who we are – we are part of God’s kingdom with a particular purpose...’ This suggests that Mary’s perspective of Christian education sees <u>incarnating</u> and <u>proclaiming</u> as intrinsically related.</li> <li>• A need to increase ‘the number of teachers...that really understand’ suggests that there is a deficit in <u>Knowing the Word</u> that then impinges on Being and Doing.</li> </ul>

Table 4.8: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, Using the Lens of the Tripod of Shalom

Related to the second research question, the data that were connected broadly with Christian school education and the corresponding hindrances that the participating teachers faced—time pressures, assessment and syllabus requirements—were explicated through applying the discourse method of Gee (2005) and Lacan’s (1969) scheme of the four discourses (Zizek, 1998). Please refer to Figure 4.2: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough’s (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and Lacan (Neill, 2013).

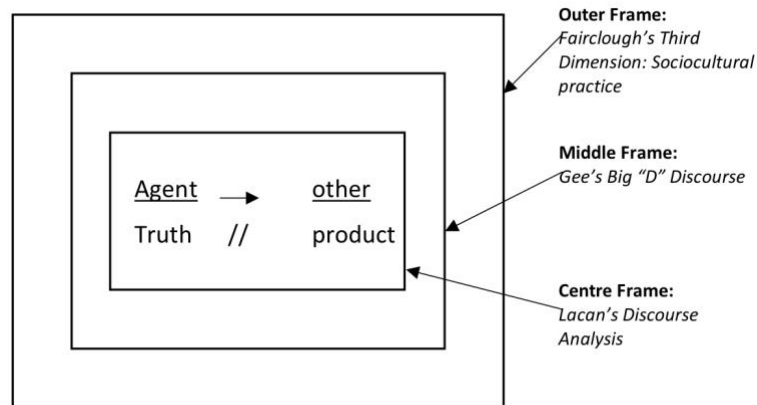


Figure 4.2: A Multilayered Analysis in the Third Dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA Using Gee (2005) and Lacan (Neill, 2013)

Lacan's (1969) scheme of four discourses, explored by Žižek (1998) and Neill (2013), as the centre frame provided a magnifier for closer social elucidation of the Discourse that was apparent in the participant teachers' talk about the hindrances that they faced in Christian education. The application of Lacan's scheme to the explanation of the third dimension of Fairclough's (2010) CDA provided a way for me to understand the relationships between the agent and its underlying ideology, whom the agent addresses and the subsequent product (Neill, 2013). As a result, it was possible to locate the gesture of the Master (Žižek, 1998) that is "the dominant ordering and sense giving signifier of a discourse as it is received by the community or audience" (Neill, 2013, p. 13). When the Master signifier becomes the agent, underpinned by the alienated subject who believes in it, the Master directs the knowledge and the product/meaning is interpreted accordingly. Please refer to Figure 4.3: The Master Discourse:

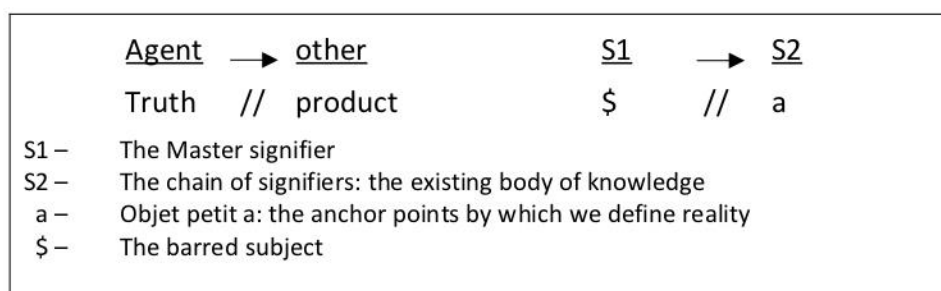


Figure 4.3: The Master Discourse (Neill, 2013, pp. 12, 13, 15)

Applied to my research, it was therefore possible to identify latent Master signifiers that were presenting a plausible interpretation of the world (Zizek, 1998) for the participant teachers, and to consider how the positions of agent, other, truth and product might be rearranged to allow the subject to question the authority of the Master and in so doing to negate acceptance of the status quo. Such a move, stated Neill (2013), allows the subject to ask: “Why must it be like this? Can it not be otherwise? What grounds these claims? Why? Why? Why?” (p. 16). The ensuing result is new knowledge and new possibilities that may lead to an education—as opposed to schooling—that is about flourishing rather than suffocation for the teacher and the student community. An example of the third dimension—Sociocultural Practice: Explanation—as applied to the same discourse extract attributed to James in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 appears in the table below; please refer to Table 4.9: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, when Applied to Data in this Research.


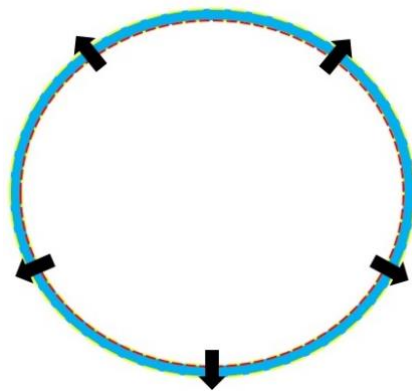
Participant	Text Analysis Description	Discourse Practice Interpretation	Sociocultural Practice Explanation/Implication
James	<i>I feel tremendous pressure to have absolute proof of what grade I am giving my children and if then and so there's so much more diagnostic testing coming out and so when you see kids in the red for reading or not writing enough that becomes your focus to get them to an ability where they can write and they can can read and um - yeah. You need the hard proof which is really hard in infants because - like a lot of it is an observation and I don't feel I do that well either but um, there is that pressure just to keep referring back to the pen and paper tests just so that I've got their pencil mark to prove that that's what they've they've done type of thing, yeah. And I guess it's maybe a lack of confidence in my judgments as well. Yeah yeah.</i>		
			
Text 3	<p>In terms of Habermas’ theory of the colonisation of a lifeworld, James’s discourse signifies the colonisation of the life world by systems of material production (underpinned by goal attainment and adaptation) so that the focus moves from dynamic teaching and learning to assessment and gaining proof of education attainment.</p> <p>The discourse James uses in terms of legitimising his actions demonstrates that he has become the project of neoliberalism. This then alienates him. The impact on James can be explained by Lacan’s barred subject.</p> <p>Based on Lacan’s four discourses, the master signifier is competition and success. This is placed in the position of truth through the idea that competition and testing promotes educational success for students and individual success leads to a better schooling product. This perpetuates the knowledge or way of understanding the world that the role of the teacher is to measure students and to prove progress. James’s legitimisation, rather than challenging of this view suggests that he accepts this perspective of his role – it has become reality. The product of this is the divided teacher who sees what education should be but is restrained by expectation and demands.</p>		

Table 4.9: Sample Analysis in Fairclough’s (2010) Dimension, Sociocultural Practice: Explanation, when Applied to Data in this Research

Finally, the explanation of the data that arose from the third research question—“How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?”—occurred through a comparison of participant discourse. Data collected through interviews and the early PLCs meetings were contrasted with participant discourse that was collected in the final PLCs meetings. Through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom, it was possible to see how understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian education had deepened because this was evident in how participants were balancing the focus of **knowing The Word**, **incarnating** and **Proclaiming**, and in the way that participants were connecting **knowing The Word**, **incarnating** and **Proclaiming** with their practice. This is explored in greater detail in the analysis section.

CDA is depicted through the outer blue ring in the Overarching Conceptual Framework; please see Figure 3.1 and Figure 4.4: The CDA Component of the Overarching Conceptual Framework.



*Figure 4.4: The CDA Component of the Overarching Conceptual Framework*

The blue, bordered by two broken lines—one red and the other yellow—represents CDA and the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom that permeate one another as they work together. The outward pointing black arrows indicate that the participant discourse that occurred through the relationship among **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, and that was framed by the PLCs and the AR cycles, had the capacity to filter outwards into the broader community and to be an influence on a Kingdom-shaping community for Shalom, particularly as the participants became more aware of their latent beliefs and understandings.

## 4.6 Ethics

This subsection of Chapter 4 outlines the ethical considerations of the research project. This includes the biography, position and roles of the researcher and the factors of quality that have been organised within the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom. These factors of quality are based on Tracey's (2010) eight "Big Tent" criteria for excellence in AR.

### 4.6.1 The Biography, Position and Roles of the Researcher

In 2016, when I began this research project, I had been teaching at Yew Tree Christian College for 12 years. During that period, I had undertaken a variety of leadership roles—both in student welfare and in curriculum—and I had developed a strong affinity with the school, its staff members and its students. It was between 2009 and 2016, during my time as a Head of Curriculum, that I began to feel the first rumblings of concern regarding the influences of a market-driven context on this Christian school. I was noticing an increasing dialogue from "above" regarding the preparation of students for high stakes tests—together with the critique of results—and I was also becoming aware of an increasing disenfranchisement and stress amongst students at Yew Tree Christian College. The students were in danger of becoming the merchandise in a Faustian transaction that had turned education into a commodity. Increasingly, the complicit part that I was playing in this transaction became clear. I was no longer happy to continue as things were, and I began to consider how I might contribute to a more holistic vision for education at the school and in the broader school community.

In considering how I would place myself in this research, the position of the insider/outsider researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Kerstetter, 2012; Milligan, 2016) was one that I took into account. The benefits of dissolving the gap between the researcher and the participants in order to engender deeper community involvement (Kerstetter, 2012), and to create an environment where participants would be more open with me as the researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), were both contributing factors to the decision to undertake research in my own school. Moreover, the capacity for "an insider researcher" to allow for reflection, and the search for solutions and improvement from within—rather than seeking direction from

an outside influence—(Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 2005), were important in a research project that was about emancipation to effect human flourishing.

Initially, it was my intention to engage in Participatory Action Research (PAR). The importance, however, in democratically empowering the research participants with an equal role in decision-making (Bergold & Thomas, 2012) was potentially going to create a conflict given the centrality of the Tripod of Shalom to the research. While it was indeed my intention to participate democratically and equally with the research participants, it was also my desire to ensure that the focus of the participants on Kingdom-shaping was positioned through the lens of the Tripod. As a result, the decision was made to utilise the research method of AR—instead of PAR—and to participate as equally as possible as researcher/participant. The paradox in this role as researcher, where one is immersed in the context of one's own people while also maintaining the role of "researcher", has been defined as "a third space, a space between, a space of...ambiguity and ambivalence, as well as conjunction and disjunction...the space between" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60). Throughout 2018, when I met with the PLCs, it was difficult at times to sit back and to allow the participants to take ownership over the project, particularly with regard to the AR intervention and the Tripod of Shalom. Utilising Caine and Caine's (2010) PLCs with its prescriptive four phases aided in mitigating this difficulty. Allowing the participants to take turns in facilitating meetings enabled them to engage democratically. There were times when I was worried that the Tripod of Shalom was awkward and artificial as a lens, but, in reviewing transcripts and the final reflections of participants, it became clear that it had indeed provided a framework that had deepened participant understanding of Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom; and this is evident in the following discussion and extracts regarding the authenticity of the research. Furthermore, in the ensuing discussion, my role as the insider or "space between" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60) researcher becomes apparent as it played out over the 12 months when the PLCs meetings took place.

There has been concern regarding the quality and dependability of research that takes place in a researcher's community. This is because of the difficulties that exist with regard to maintaining neutrality and detachment (Kerstetter, 2012). However, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argued that being an outsider in one's research does not provide immunity to bias,

and that there are positive and negative elements of both insider and outsider research. While undertaking my research relationship with the participants, it was my focus to avoid as much as possible projecting my opinions or influencing their points of view. Encouraging the participants to lead the meetings, and limiting engagement about the research outside of meetings to incidents that were initiated by the participants, helped to enable the authentic voices of the teachers to be heard.

#### 4.6.2 The Authenticity of the Action Research Practice in this Project

It was my desire to avoid quantitative research terminology such as “rigour” or “validity” in this project. These are terms that are used in positivist and postpositivist research (Bradbury-Huang, n.d.), and that have raised concerns when applied to qualitative research. This is because quantitative research terms have been used as a basis by which to critique a perceived lack of rigour in AR (Khan & Tzortzopoulos, 2016), and because the different epistemological and ontological assumptions under which qualitative researchers operate from those of quantitative researchers mean that each orientation—quantitative and qualitative—has a distinctive way of approaching the world and data (Ochieng, 2009). Positivism is undergirded by the premise that there exists an actual, single reality, and requires scientists therefore to be objectively detached from the subject of their study. By contrast, qualitative research can focus on understanding “the meanings that human beings attach to events, situations, and persons in their effort to impose order on social interaction” (Lincoln & Guba, 1989, p. 230), rather than on pursuing that one single knowable truth.

Reflecting Lincoln and Guba’s (1989) aforementioned understanding of qualitative research, the term “quality”, which was used by Reason (2006) and Bradbury-Huang (2010), underpinned the discussion of the AR processes and the significance of the outcomes in this research project. This was because the focus of this research project was on a single Christian school and on the various perspectives held by the teacher participants from that particular school and how Christian school education was realised there. Reason (2006) defined “quality” in AR as resting “internally on our capacity to see the choices we are making and understand their consequences; and externally on whether we articulate our standpoint and the choices we have made transparently to a wider public” (p. 190).

Bradbury-Huang (n.d.) explained quality as thinking broadly about time, practice and voice, and how these are coordinated with “mutually agreeable action” (p. 2). There is a myriad of criteria that can be used to explore the quality of AR (J. Elliott, 2007; Khan & Tzortzopoulos, 2016; Lincoln, 1995; Martí & Villasante, 2009; McKay & Marshall, n.d.; Northcote, 2012). Instead of attempting to cover all of these criteria, of greatest importance is for the AR researcher to be aware of which choices have been made and of the consequences of those choices, and to be transparent about the limitations that are resultant from these choices (Bradbury-Huang, 2010).

Applying Reason’s (2006) and Bradbury-Huang’s (n.d.) perspectives on quality to this research project, I needed to consider the specific outcomes that I had planned to achieve and the choices with regard to methodology throughout the research that I had made in order to facilitate these outcomes. In essence, the study’s three research questions offered a framework for the intended outcomes of this research. It was my desire that the participating teachers and I would deepen our understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping, Christian education, and that the development of the Tripod of Shalom would provide a lens that would frame our understanding and enable us to engage in authentic, Kingdom-shaping practice. It was also my intention that we would become aware of the hindrances that were preventing us from achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping education in our daily practice in order to mitigate those factors. I expected that the market-driven context may play a significant role in these hindrances. Using the criteria described in the following paragraphs, the quality of this research project was examined in view of the fulfilment of the intended outcomes described above.

As AR requires its own quality criteria (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005; Northcote, 2012), and because this research project centred on AR that was undertaken in a faith-based context, it was my desire to explore the quality of the research from a faith-based perspective. Consequently, and in light of the view that faith and Kingdom-shaping should inform all of life (Pietsch, 2018), I have developed my own criteria that were organised through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom. Reflecting Bradbury-Huang’s (n.d.) concern, however, that thesis examiners often expect to see conventional forms of rigour in the research, and that conventional validity may as a result be included within a broader framework, I used Tracy’s



(2010) eight “big tent” criteria—which were designed to be flexible depending on the goals of the study—to underpin the criteria that I employed to examine the quality of the research project. Furthermore, reflecting my desire that this research would contribute to Kingdom-shaping ways of **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that are inherently integrated, I utilised the term “authenticity” rather than “quality”. This is because authenticity reflects both quality and genuineness (“Collins Dictionary”, n.d., n.p.), and thus allowed my criteria to reflect both Tracy’s eight criteria of research excellence—quality—and the integrity—or genuineness—of Kingdom-shaping. Please refer to Table 4.17: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research.

Tripod of Shalom Element: Authenticity	Explanation of Tripod Element	Guiding Questions that Apply the Tripod Element to the Authenticity of the Research	Tracy’s (2010, p. 840) “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research	Description of Tracy’s (2010, p. 840) “Big Tent” Criteria
The Word— <b>Knowing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cognitive <b>knowing</b> of biblical truth—founded on the Word—moving towards a state where biblical knowing may inform all aspects of life</li> <li>Spiritual <b>knowing</b> based on a relationship with God that is imbued in every aspect of life and that inspires the follower to “image God to the world” (Smith, 2009, p. 162)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the research contribute to an understanding of how <b>the Word</b>—cognitive knowledge of biblical truth and spiritual knowing based on a relationship with God—may be imbued in everyday life?</li> <li>Is there coherence between the ethos of the researcher and of the participants and the methods and procedures that they used in the research?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant Contribution</li> <li>Meaningful Coherence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research provides a contribution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conceptually/theoretically</li> <li>Practically</li> <li>Methodologically</li> <li>Heuristically</li> </ul> </li> <li>The study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieves what it purports to be about</li> <li>Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Incarnation— <b>Being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal transformation as cognitive knowledge moves from head to heart, leading to the development of “habits of righteousness (Burggraaf, 2014, p. 60)</li> <li>The breath of God in His followers that allows them to be redemptive in their focus and actions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the research demonstrate an engagement with the topic that evokes revelation and transformation for the researcher and the participants?</li> <li>Is the research focused on redemptive practice through engaging authentically with relevant and significant issues?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worthy Topic</li> <li>Sincerity</li> <li>Resonance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The topic is relevant, timely, significant and interesting</li> <li>The study is characterised by self-reflexivity and transparency</li> <li>The research influences, affects or moves readers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetic, evocative representation</li> <li>Naturalistic generalisations</li> <li>Transferable findings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Proclamation— <b>Doing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity between knowing and understanding what is valued in God’s Kingdom and acting so that those values are practically effected in one’s domain</li> <li>A commitment, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to declare and act to bring about renewal and to establish God’s Kingdom reign on earth</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the research processes demonstrate attention to rigour and therefore professional integrity?</li> <li>Have the processes that have been used throughout the research engendered freedom and flourishing for the research participants and the subjects/locations involved?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich Rigor</li> <li>Credibility</li> <li>Ethical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study uses sufficient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theoretical constructs</li> <li>Data and time in the field</li> <li>Data collection and analysis processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>The research is marked by detail, multivocality and member reflections</li> <li>The research considers procedural, situational and relational ethics</li> </ul>

Table 4.17: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research.

Each of the three elements of the Tripod of Shalom—**The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**, as outlined in Table 4.17—provided the organisation for the following subsection that explored the authenticity of the AR in this study.

#### 4.6.2.1 The First Criterion for Authenticity: The Word—Knowing the Truth

The first criterion—**The Word**—allowed an exploration of authenticity with regard to the following two questions:

1. Does the research contribute to an understanding of how **The Word**—cognitive knowledge of biblical truth and spiritual knowing based on a relationship with God—may be imbued in everyday life; and
2. Is there coherence between the ethos of the researcher and of the participants and the methods and procedures that they used in the research?

Underpinned by Tracy's (2010) eight "big tent" criteria, the exploration included her points for consideration such as the significance of the contribution and meaningful coherence.

Chapter 3 of this thesis explored two ways of knowing **The Word**. The first of these ways of knowing was cognitive knowledge about **The Word**, and the second of these was spiritual knowing of **The Word**. Cognitive **knowledge** is located in a person's epistemological understanding of what **The Word** says and how it applies to all of life. The second element of **The Word**, spiritual **knowing**, considers that a person's vibrant relationship with God that leads to knowing **The Word** (as opposed to knowing *about the Word*) is then imbued in the life of the follower of God. This criterion when applied to the assessment of authenticity in this research considered how **The Word**—biblical precepts—underpinned and formed the basis of the practices that took place throughout the research. It was therefore the footing for exploring how the research demonstrated that **The Word** had been applied to life in the decisions and actions of the researcher and the participants. The combination of cognitive **knowledge** and spiritual **knowing** in this first criterion also reflected Reason and Bradbury's (2006) perspective that knowing in AR includes both academic understandings and knowing that is the result of "the everyday practices of acting in relationship and creating meaning in our lives" (p. 10).

During 2018, when I met regularly with the participating teachers, there was a concerted effort to ensure that our cognitive **knowledge** of **The Word** was aligned with our spiritual **knowing**—practice—of **The Word**. Examples of how Knowing **The Word** was integral to our research practice as we related together as a PLCs, and as it relates to authenticity in this research, are described in the following paragraphs. These have been organised under the two guiding questions for **the Word** that were presented in Table 4.8.

**Question 1: Does the research contribute to an understanding of how the Word—cognitive knowledge of biblical truth and spiritual knowing based on a relationship with God—may be imbued in everyday life?**

Conceptually, this research sought to contribute to knowledge about how Kingdom-shaping may be applied to all of life and, in particular, to Christian school education. Consequently, the development of a new lens—the Tripod of Shalom—through which to understand the nature of Kingdom-shaping contributed to conceptual and theoretical knowledge of:

- What it looks like for a follower of Christ to engender practically a Kingdom-shaping life;
- The nature and elements of a Kingdom-shaping, Christian education;
- How these elements—**The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**—may provide emancipation from hindrances to engendering a Kingdom-shaping life;
- How participating members of a PLCs might relate to one another in a way that demonstrates distinctive Kingdom-shaping;
- An additional lens through which CDA may be applied to data; and
- The assessment of quality—authenticity—in relation to AR.

As a result, through the application of each one of these above-mentioned conceptual considerations, the research provided an understanding of how our cognitive **knowledge** of biblical truth and our spiritual **knowing** can be applied to our everyday lives. The research participants and I learned that, as we deepened our cognitive **knowledge** of **The Word**, through the personal reading and discussion that took place in our PLCs meetings, and as we held one another accountable for applying that cognitive **knowledge** in our lives and to our daily teaching practice, a Kingdom-shaping narrative emerged out of which the teacher participants critiqued the world of Yew Tree Christian College and developed new understandings of practice. The process of this emergence took time, and heuristically required that the group continually grappled with the questions, “What does it truly mean to be Kingdom-shaping?” and “How does this apply to our everyday practice?” Early PLCs meetings indicated a shallow understanding of Kingdom-shaping as we attempted to apply the Tripod as a framework—or recipe— rather than as a lens, for devising intervention in

our AR. The first AR cycles were thus more technical in their focus, attempting to address problems such as an absence of student engagement and ownership. Over the duration of our PLCs meetings, I began to realise that the Tripod was more powerful as a lens through which to understand the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice than as a framework that could be applied rigidly as a prescribed recipe. As a result, our focus changed, exemplified in our final cycle that had a broader focus—prayer—beyond the boundaries of our individual classrooms, and that therefore had a more significant impact on the participants in the research and on Kingdom-shaping practice at Yew Tree Christian College.

From a methodological perspective, this research made a meaningful contribution through the application of the Tripod lens to Fairclough's (2010) CDA. Using the Tripod as a lens for CDA allowed a vivid explication of the research participants' understandings of the nature of Christian school education, and also demonstrated how their comprehension had grown over the year during which we met. This deeper illumination of participant understandings occurred because the Tripod as a lens in CDA enabled me to see how the participants were talking about **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, and to track the balance between these three factors in their verbal contributions to their interviews and the recorded PLCs meetings. For example, applying the Tripod as a lens in the analysis of Kevin's interview, where he described Kingdom-shaping education as being about "looking to build a knowledge of God's plan, a knowledge of God, a knowledge of salvation into our kids...", allowed me to see that the focus of Kevin's definition of Kingdom-shaping education was on **The Word** and knowledge. By contrast, in his final reflection, while it did also mention the importance of encouraging his colleagues "to grow in their knowledge of Christ", there was more emphasis on **being** and **doing** as Kevin now described the concept of Kingdom-shaping as "growing our students for a higher purpose". In his reflection, Kevin also emphasised the **incarnational** importance of relationships and the need to sustain these relationships with students. Using the Tripod to understand the balance among **knowing**, **being** and **doing** therefore allowed me to gain insight into how teachers understood Christian school education at the beginning of the research project, and how this changed throughout the PLCs meetings. As a result, the first research question, "What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?", catalysed rich information that contributed to the authenticity of this research project.

## Question 2: Is there coherence between the ethos of the researcher and of the participants and the methods and procedures that they used in the research?

In addition to developing an understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping Christian education, it was my desire to ensure authenticity in this research project by undergirding the methods and procedures undertaken in this research with Kingdom-shaping ways of **knowing**, **being** and **doing**. The definition of a Kingdom-shaping education that was encapsulated in Section 2.2.2 of this thesis may thus be applied to the ethos of the researcher and participants, and also to the choice of research methods and procedures in this research project. This definition of Kingdom-shaping—to meet this end—may be appropriated as follows: “Conducted recognising the **Creator God’s intents and authority**, **patterned on the ministry and life of Jesus Christ (the Son of God – the Lord)** and **led by the Holy Spirit**—individually and together as the community of God, **to usher God’s rule through actively setting about restoring and transforming the world.**” Demonstrating that the Tripod of Shalom was the overarching framework for this definition of Kingdom-shaping, the three elements of the Tripod have been highlighted in the corresponding Tripod colours.

One example of research methods and procedures was chosen for discussion in this section. This is the PLCs meetings and the ensuing engagement among the research participants. Examples of interactions among research participants are explicated for their coherence based on the above definition of Kingdom-shaping and the Tripod of Shalom.

The Tripod of Shalom played a pivotal role in shaping group interactions throughout the PLCs meetings. To demonstrate this pivotal role, colour coding was used in the conceptual framework diagram. Please refer to Figure 3.1. The colours of the arrows corresponded to the related elements of the Tripod: **The Word**; **incarnating**; and **Proclaiming**. The Tripod of Shalom guided participant interactions in the PLCs meetings because it provided a framework of **biblical knowledge** and **spiritual knowing** that shaped the participants’ understanding of **incarnational ways of being** that inspired the implementation of **action that was about Proclaiming freedom**. As a result, for Yew Tree Christian College, the PLCs

meetings became an example of a Kingdom-shaping Christian community that was about understanding and imbuing Shalom in daily life and research practice.

Recognising God’s intents and authority—as articulated in [The Word](#)—provided a guideline for interactions among the participants in the PLCs meetings. The Word—the Bible—framed for participants the understanding of relating through its articulation that fellow Christian believers should undergird their relationships with one another with love that is “patient and kind...not jealous or boastful or proud or rude...not demand[ing] its own way...not irritable...but rejoice[ing] whenever the truth wins out” (1 Corinthians 13:4-6, New Living Translation). Consequently, there was a development of empathy and resonance with one another that emerged throughout the duration of 2018, and that was indicative of Kingdom-shaping ways of being that were based on a cognitive [knowledge](#) and spiritual [knowing of The Word](#). Indicative of this growing resonance among participants was how they engaged with one another when there was a conflict in the PLCs meetings. The fact that they were willing to disagree with one another and to do so in a respectful manner may be claimed to demonstrate Kingdom-shaping in practice. The dialogue that follows was one such example from Meeting 6. It was a discussion between participants Shane and Mary who, using the Tripod as a lens, were attempting to understand what Kingdom-shaping may look like in practice at Yew Tree Christian College.

Mary: [From a long time being involved, not recently, in student activities in \[Christian groups\], there is always a risk with that space.](#)

Shane: [How so?](#)

Mary: [The Christian risk of “We’re doing Maths and then we’re doing the Christian group at lunch time”, and those things are not, there’s a disconnect....This idea of proclamation and action, groups that are active, like that are actually working towards something, can be the most amazing groups that operate rather than...another devotion time....I’ve seen in the past that kids can really just phase](#)

out of their Christian walk and sometimes we might be like helping that process a bit by going, “This is now the Christian time, now we’re going to Maths...”

Shane: Oh, I’m not saying we get rid of it for Maths, etc.

Mary: Oh no, no, no, I’m not suggesting that at all, but I’m suggesting it might be a confusing picture that we sometimes present.

Shane: Yeah, I don’t know if I fully agree.

The willingness of Shane and Mary to understand each other’s perspectives, to gain deeper understanding rather than winning the argument and to be respectful was evident in their dialogue. They listened to each other’s points of view without interrupting; they used modal verbs such as “can be”, “suggesting” and “might be” that indicated that there could be alternative explanations; and Shane’s statement that “I don’t know if I fully agree” suggested that he was open to a change of opinion. As a result, communication that took place in the PLCs meetings over 2018 was frank, open and robust because participants based their interactions on mutual love and respect that were indicative of Kingdom-shaping. The importance of open and respectful interactions between participants in AR was articulated by Cook (2004), who credited unguarded discussion between participants in AR with the ability to make meaning of concepts; to uncover both explicitly and implicitly held beliefs and assumptions; and to enable participants to see that there were other perspectives. The use of Kingdom-shaping principles to guide the interactions among participants in this research project thus elicited a deeper commitment from the participants to the research, indicated by their collective attendance at almost every meeting, and also stimulated deeper understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping as it applied to Yew Tree Christian College because participants had allowed themselves to be open to and respectful of the opinions of others, thereby deepening their own comprehension.

For the participating teachers and me, the spiritual [knowing](#) that emerged from our involvement in the research project was important. Therefore, in terms of the intention to



deepen the participating teachers' and my own understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, significant development was evident as the participants re-read their interview transcripts and saw how their concept of a Christian school education had deepened and changed throughout the year in which they had been involved in the research. Their new understandings then began to form a new narrative on which they based new ways of being in a Kingdom-shaping culture, thus exemplifying the authenticity of the research that had emerged through the element The Word, Knowing the Truth.

#### 4.6.2.2 The Second Criterion: incarnation—Being the Way

Tripod of Shalom Element: Authenticity	Explanation of Tripod Element	Guiding Questions that Apply the Tripod Element to the Authenticity of the Research	Tracy's (2010, p. 840) "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research	Description of Tracy's (2010, p. 840) "Big Tent" Criteria
incarnation—Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal transformation as cognitive knowledge moves from head to heart, leading to the development of "habits of righteousness (Burggraaf, 2014, p. 60)</li> <li>The breath of God in His followers that allows them to be redemptive in their focus and actions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the research demonstrate an engagement with the topic that evokes revelation and transformation for the researcher and the participants?</li> <li>Is the research focused on redemptive practice through engaging authentically with relevant and significant issues?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worthy Topic</li> <li>Sincerity</li> <li>Resonance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The topic is relevant, timely, significant and interesting</li> <li>The study is characterised by self-reflexivity and transparency</li> <li>The research influences, affects or moves readers through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aesthetic, evocative representation</li> <li>Naturalistic generalisations</li> <li>Transferable findings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 4.18: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy's (2010) Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research – *incarnation*

The second criterion—*incarnation*—allowed an exploration of authenticity with regard to the following two questions. The numbers correspond to those in Table 4.17 and 4.18:

- Does the research demonstrate an engagement with the topic that evokes revelation and transformation for the researcher and the participants; and
- Is the research focused on redemptive practice through engaging authentically with relevant and significant issues?

With reference to Tracy's (2010) eight "big tent" criteria, the investigation in the second criterion—*incarnation*—included her points for consideration such as the worthiness of the topic, self-reflexivity and transparency, and the impact of the research on readers.

The importance of this research topic that sought to examine the conflict between a market-driven context and Kingdom-shaping Christian education was evidenced in the fact that, prior to my undertaking this project, there had been no dedicated research in this area. While I found incidental and passing comments in the literature that mentioned how



allowing academic results and school branding to become a motivational driver may impact adversely on a Christian school's adherence to its values, there was no body of research that explored this idea in detail. Its timeliness was demonstrated in the rapidly transforming nature of Yew Tree Christian College that had once been proclaimed a "light house example of Christian school education<sup>23</sup>". By half way through 2018—during Meeting 5—however, participants were expressing deep concern that Yew Tree Christian College was shifting in its motivation. These concerns were related to elements of the school that were associated with:

- Executive vision and implementation of that vision;
- New reporting requirements that were perceived as dehumanising by participants; and
- The erosion of community.

**Question 3: Does the research demonstrate an engagement with the topic that evokes revelation and transformation for the researcher and the participants?**

To begin with, one of the aims of this research was the development of insight into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom. Many of the participants expressed in their interview the hope that their involvement in the research would give them a greater knowledge of Christian education and, in particular, of how to incorporate a biblical worldview in their daily teaching. Looking back on his interview, James realised that "my thinking was very...me focused and program focused". Shane also expressed that his interview was "quite teacher focused". As a result of their engagement in the PLCs meetings, the participants came to understand that Kingdom-shaping education was as much about *being* the Way as it was about *knowing* the Truth. This was reflected in Shane's articulation of the purpose of education to be "shaping [students] to be people with integrity, who show respect and who listen to others and engage with people who are different to themselves". James also came to understand that Kingdom-shaping education is ontologically "the development of foundations and kingdom-shaping culture", and that the

---

<sup>23</sup> This statement was made by the chair of the registration and accreditation team that visited the school in 2012 in order to audit its processes on behalf of the New South Wales Board of Studies.

other elements of schooling, such as curriculum, flow out of this. Accordingly, the focus of participants moved from what they should *do* to effect a Kingdom-shaping education to what they should *be*. This was indicated in Andrea’s reflection where she described that “there is more potential than I realised for students to be Kingdom-shaping in their whole being, including stepping up and being vulnerable against a complacent culture” .

Furthermore, Mary grasped that being authentically Kingdom-shaping entailed a potential sacrifice, articulating that there was “an emerging challenge to authentic Christian education from external and internal forces”, and “I don’t think I understand what the cost would be to make a stand for authentic Christian schooling”. The challenge that did emerge throughout 2018 when the PLCs meetings occurred was surprising to both the participants and to me, and was derived from the fact that we were no longer satisfied with a knowledge of Truth without imbuing it in our daily lives. We realised that the desire to **incarnate The Word** sometimes meant calling to account aspects of practice that did not align with a Kingdom-shaping way of life. As a result, I personally came into conflict with executive members of staff who found my views negative, and who became unwilling to listen to my concerns about the changing motivations at the school. The willingness of the participants to be challenged about their transforming views demonstrated their engagement with the research topic and exemplified this element of authenticity as outlined in Question 3.

**Question 4: Is the research focused on redemptive practice through engaging authentically with relevant and significant issues?**

Redemptive practice can be defined as action that emerges from a crisis—using the crisis as a catalyst for envisioning something new—and that leads to transformation or flourishing (Gaffney, 2011). Authentic AR resonates with redemptive practice because AR requires forging a link between knowledge that is intellectual and social action “so that inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the ecosystems of which they are a part” (Reason, 2006, p. 188). Accordingly, it has been important for the scope of this research project to forge a new vision for human flourishing through developing an understanding of Kingdom-shaping education and through identifying the hindrances to that Kingdom-shaping as it was understood by research participants at Yew Tree Christian College. Beyond this knowledge acquisition, however, it

was also important to ensure that attention was given to social action that could emerge from participant understandings. Using the Tripod as a lens through which the participants and I could devise more authentic Kingdom-shaping practice that would mitigate some of these identified hindrances, the PLCs thus designed and implemented intervention through the AR cycles.

Following the structure of Caine and Caine's (2010) PLCs meetings that included Phase 1: a time of sharing, Phase 2: reading and reflection and then Phase 3: a devoted period of time that considered transformative action that would be implemented as a result of the reading and reflection that had taken place in Phase 2 of the meeting, the PLCs considered how a vision for Kingdom-shaping practice may be imbued at Yew Tree Christian College. For some of the meetings, and particularly early in the research process, this was a laborious and difficult task as we struggled to articulate how we would go about intervening in the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping. Extracts from Phase 3—Commitment to action and Action Research—from Meeting 1 that demonstrated the process of determining the initial action that took place may be found in Appendix D.

The main hindrance to Kingdom-shaping that was highlighted by the research participants in Meeting 1 was student apathy. This hindrance was deemed as impinging on Kingdom-shaping because Shalom reflects right relationships among God, one another, ourselves and the world around us. It exemplifies flourishing. Apathy, through its detachment, is a lack of relationship and is thus a lack of flourishing. For the participants, the relevance and significance of the issue were demonstrated in the ways that they discussed their concerns about student apathy and its ensuing lack of hope. The length of discussion and of the accumulated questioning as participants deliberated about the intervention, and Shane's concern that the proposed intervention did not really "point to the Kingdom", suggested that they were invested in devising meaningful action that would authentically address a lack of flourishing in the students.

In the ensuing meeting, Phase 1 required participants to report on their intervention and the impact that it had made on Kingdom-shaping in their sphere of influence. Kevin reported that his intervention involved building a relationship with three students whose

“behaviour was atrocious”. He described an experience at their school camp, which he attended, that was transformative for this relationship: “I sat with them at dinner and just talked to them about their world and then after dinner we went outside and they were playing some soccer and I played with them...” While the behaviour of the students did not change at the camp, on their return there was a vast difference. Kevin reflected:

So whatever it was that happened in that mealtime, at that soccer game, has made it easier for me to connect with them in class and I think it was that I was willing to come and meet with them in their space, rather than expecting them to come and meet me.

For Kevin, his intervention that was to build relationships with students with difficult behaviour in order to “break into” their apathy contributed to his knowledge of Kingdom-shaping, and also led to transformational, redemptive action. The importance of relationships in Kingdom-shaping became a theme for Kevin and, in his final reflection, he questioned, “If good teaching comes from relationships, how do we sustain our relationships with our students when classes get a new teacher every year?” For Kevin, the intervention in the first AR cycle was built upon in the ensuing cycles and led to significant knowledge and redemptive practice that contributed to the flourishing of his students and of himself.

Kevin’s experience with the AR intervention and the ensuing action was one example out of the six participants. All participants were able to share meaningful understandings that had grown out of their implementation in the AR cycles, and they were also able to share that there had been transformation in their daily practice as a result. These are explored further in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. As was noted above, in the final cycle that focused on prayer, one of the most significant transformations that occurred was a weekly prayer meeting that involved both students and staff members congregating on a Tuesday morning. The group that gathered changed weekly and included staff members from across Yew Tree Christian College, not just the research participants. Please see Figure 4.10 and 4.11 below: Gatherings of Staff Members and Students to Pray 1 and 2.



Figure 4.10 Gatherings of Staff Members and Students to Pray Photograph 1



Figure 4.11 Gatherings of Staff Members and Students to Pray Photograph 2

The weekly prayer group contributed to redemptive practice because it built relationships between staff members and students at the school. In the process of prayer, participants were able to envisage something new that instilled a sense of hope in the midst of disillusionment that had been expressed by research participants in Meeting 5. The ensuing hope created buoyancy for the participants throughout the remainder of 2018, and this was reflected throughout Meetings 6 – 8. Moreover, in 2019, after I had left Yew Tree Christian College, the following email communication was sent to secondary staff members by the Deputy Principal of the secondary school: “Staff are welcome to join Prefects on the Basketball Court today and every Tuesday from 8:00am for prayer. They would love to pray with you and for you.” The ongoing connection between staff members and students for prayer on the basketball court—even after the PLCs had ceased meeting and I had left the school—demonstrated that authentic change had been effected at Yew Tree Christian College as a result of our AR intervention.

#### 4.6.2.3 The Third Criterion: Proclamation—Doing the Life

Tripod of Shalom Element: Authenticity	Explanation of Tripod Element	Guiding Questions that Apply the Tripod Element to the Authenticity of the Research	Tracy's (2010, p. 840) "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research	Description of Tracy's (2010, p. 840) "Big Tent" Criteria
Proclamation—Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrity between knowing and understanding what is valued in God's Kingdom and acting so that those values are practically effected in one's domain</li> <li>A commitment, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to declare and act to bring about renewal and to establish God's Kingdom reign on earth</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the research processes demonstrate attention to rigour and therefore professional integrity?</li> <li>Have the processes that have been used throughout the research engendered freedom and flourishing for the research participants and the subjects/locations involved?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich Rigor</li> <li>Credibility</li> <li>Ethical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study uses sufficient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theoretical constructs</li> <li>Data and time in the field</li> <li>Data collection and analysis processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>The research is marked by detail, multivocality and member reflections</li> <li>The research considers procedural, situational and relational ethics</li> </ul>

Table 4.19: The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy's (2010) Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research – Proclamation

The third criterion—**Proclamation**—focused on the authenticity of the research project with regard to the following two questions. The numbers in Table 4.19, *The Authenticity of the Action Research—The Tripod of Shalom as a Framework for Tracy’s (2010) Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research—Proclamation* correspond to those in Tables 4.17 and 4.18:

5. Do the research processes demonstrate attention to excellence and therefore professional integrity; and
6. Have the processes that have been used throughout the research engendered freedom and flourishing for the research participants and the subjects/locations involved?

Tracy’s (2010) eight “big tent” criteria were exemplified in the investigation of authenticity in the third criterion—**Proclamation**—through the inclusion of her points for consideration such as the rigour of the research process, credibility and the adherence to ethics.

**Question 5: Do the research processes demonstrate attention to rigour and therefore professional integrity?**

Rigour, as applied to qualitative research, is best understood with regard to the quality of the research process (Saumure & Given, 2008). The following description of the processes that were undertaken in this research project is designed to demonstrate the tight connections that existed among the research paradigm, the conceptual framework and the methods, thus contributing to the authenticity of the research. Underpinning the processes for this research project has been the Tripod of Shalom. Behind the devising of the Tripod was a perspective—driven by critical pedagogy—that the influence of the market potentially castrates the capacity for a Christian school education to be about Kingdom-shaping that engenders flourishing. This is because the drive to achieve success in order to attract enrolments, and thus to safeguard the financial viability of the school, distracts from the true heart of education that is about Kingdom-shaping and equipping students to be agents of transformation and redemption in a world that is incarcerated by suffering. Critical pedagogues such as McLaren (2015), Giroux (2014) and Freire (1997) have also critiqued the insidious impact of the market on schooling. A study of critical pedagogy can be incredibly nihilistic, however, unless it leads to hope. On this topic, Freire (1997) wrote:

It is imperative that we maintain hope even when the harshness of reality may suggest the opposite. On this level, the struggle for hope means the denunciation...of all abuses, schemes and omissions. As we denounce them, we awaken in others and ourselves the need, and also the taste, for hope. (p. 106)

Consequently, the formulation of the Tripod of Shalom, which sought to anchor Christian school education in a Kingdom-shaping paradigm that is about **knowing** the Truth, **being** the Way and **doing** life, was intended to “awaken” an alternative to the hopelessness that would pervade if there were no alternative vision. Accordingly, as a response to a research paradigm based on critical pedagogy, the Tripod of Shalom became central to the conceptual framework in this project. The research processes thereby arose out of a desire for integrity among **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that responded to the “harshness of reality”. The collection of data occurred within a 12 month period and utilised interviews and PLCs meetings that were audio recorded and transcribed. The use of a PLCs as a research method enabled the Tripod of Shalom to become a model for the development of a Kingdom-shaping community that was in sympathy with the aims of this research because it guided our **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, and it became a unifying lens that inspired cohesion in our interactions and our devising of AR intervention. Further to this, the Tripod of Shalom provided a lens through which CDA was utilised in order to understand how participants viewed Kingdom-shaping education and the hindrances that they faced in their practice. As a result, the central role that the Tripod of Shalom played in both the Research Methodology and the Research Methods contributed rigour to the project.

**Question 6: Have the processes that have been used throughout the research engendered freedom and flourishing for the research participants and the subjects/locations involved?**

The structure of and the overarching guidelines for relationships in the regular PLCs meetings that took place with the participants were intrinsic in guiding ethical processes that engendered freedom and flourishing throughout the period of the AR. The importance of relationships in the research process was indicative of Reason’s (2006) concept that a

pivotal contributor to the quality of AR is to facilitate, maintain and embolden opportunities for open communication and dialogue. In sympathy with Habermas' (1987) communicative action theory as was outlined at the beginning of Chapter 4—and one of the overarching guidelines for relationship in the PLCs,—the interactions among the participants in the group were indeed based on a desire for “truth”, but also hinged on mutual respect that was derived from our shared desire to be **incarnational** and to **proclaim** freedom. Frequently during the meetings, the words “**This is a safe space to say this**” were heard, indicating that participants felt empowered and were willing to be themselves authentically throughout the process. The subsequent importance of community that developed for the participants was reflected in Kevin’s musings during the final meeting that one change for him that had emerged from his involvement in the research was the importance of gathering “**with colleagues to share ideas, stories [and] growth**”.

Procedurally, ethical guidelines that considered respect for persons, beneficence and justice (Vanclay, Baines, & Taylor, 2013) were adhered to throughout the research project by me as the researcher and also by the other participants. We were discreet in sharing information, largely using digital methods to communicate outside meetings to avoid the loss of sensitive information. Participant details such as consent forms (located in Appendix E) and interview transcripts were stored digitally in password protected files on my computer, and meetings were held in a discreet location that was out of the main thoroughfare of Yew Tree Christian College. These meetings were also held at a time that was after the close of the school day when most staff members from the school had gone home. The attention to anonymity, confidentiality and privacy (Akaranga & Makau, 2016) engendered trust in the participants, and led to the willingness to invest themselves deeply in the project.

There had been concerns by the USQ Ethics Committee that participants would feel coerced by my leadership position at Yew Tree Christian College. These concerns were allayed to the satisfaction of the USQ Ethics Committee prior to the commencement of the research. On the contrary, participants demonstrated that, because I also took part in the research activities and expressed similar challenges and frustrations to theirs, there was a high degree of trust and honesty throughout the whole experience. This was exemplified in the



following fragment from an email message that was sent after Meeting 5 by Kevin to me and to one other participant in the PLCs:

...Our meeting yesterday made me uncomfortable. I was not able to be completely honest with the group in a situation where others were sharing things from the heart. However, it also challenged me that I might be able to do some good....My deep desire is that [the school would] be a place where Christ and the Gospel are at the centre of everything we do. I would be grateful if you would pray for this...

For me as the researcher, Kevin's vulnerability and willingness to share were profoundly impacting as I began to realise how much the participating teachers had invested themselves in the research project, and also in the freedom that had been engendered to express themselves. Consequently, their frank participation contributed to the trustworthiness of the research process, and to ensuring that the data that were collected throughout the research were a true and comprehensive reflection of participating teachers' experiences. Furthermore, because the project became a personal investment for the participants, the desire for Kingdom-shaping practice became intrinsically motivated and extended beyond the scope of the research project.

Subsection 4.6.2 has used Tracy's (2010) Eight "Big Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research to explore how this research project has authentically reflected quality Kingdom-shaping research. The descriptions of the research process, examples and voices of the participants have been included in this section to exemplify how the six questions that were devised by me, based on the work of Tracy, to explore the authenticity of the research were fulfilled. The specific findings that answer the three Research Questions that were identified in Chapter 1 and at the beginning of Chapter 4 will be explored in the following analysis chapters.

#### 4.7 Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I systematically considered the research methodology and methods that undergirded this research project. These were scaffolded within the conceptual framework that I devised and named the Tripod of Shalom. Throughout this chapter, I have described the research design and the methods, articulated how CDA was applied to the data analysis, explored the AR and the place of the participants as they co-laboured in the research process, introduced the participants and considered the ethics and authenticity of the research as a whole. The following chapter—the first of three data analysis chapters—focused on the first research question that considered the participants' understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian education.

## Chapter 5: Analysis – Participants’ Understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian Education

*...What comforted Rooke...was the knowledge that ...whatever he was, he was part of a whole, one insignificant note within the great fugue of being.*

Kate Grenville, *The Lieutenant*, p. 14

### 5.1 Chapter Introduction

In Chapter 4, I described the methodology and methods that were applied in this research project that was about the challenges of imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. Throughout the chapter, the reasons for choosing critical pedagogy as a research paradigm were justified, and then the methods that emerged from this paradigm and applied to the research project were considered and evaluated for their authenticity. Of significance in Chapter 4 was the articulation of CDA and how this was applied to the data that emerged from the PLCs. Furthermore, the importance of AR was also explained for its ability to effect Kingdom-shaping practice in the experiences of the participating teachers.


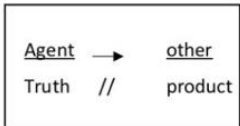

This chapter is the first of three that explores the data collected through participant interviews and PLCs meetings. Each of the three chapters—working in sequential order—is structured around one of the three research questions. These are arranged as follows:

**Chapter 5 – Research Question 1:** What were the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?

**Chapter 6 – Research Question 2:** What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?

**Chapter 7 – Research Question 3:** How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?

Guiding the analysis for each chapter was a transdisciplinary lens applied to the data that corresponded to the respective research question. The organisation of this analysis is outlined below in the following table. Please refer to Table 5.1: Lenses Applied to the Research Questions.

Question	Data Source	Transdisciplinary CDA Lens	Explanation of Lens
1. What were the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of Kingdom-shaping Christian education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcripts of audio recorded individual interviews conducted prior to the PLCs meetings</li> </ul>	The Tripod of Shalom 	Consideration of balance between <b>The Word (knowing)</b> , <b>incarnation (being)</b> and <b>Proclamation (doing)</b> in participant talk
2. What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcripts of audio recorded individual interviews conducted prior to the PLCs meetings</li> <li>• Transcripts of audio recorded PLCs meetings</li> </ul>	Lacanian Discourse Theory 	Consideration of assumptions of ‘truth’ that undergird the agent and the subsequent product of that agent’s actions in participant talk
3. How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcripts of audio recorded PLCs meetings</li> </ul>	The Tripod of Shalom 	Consideration of balance between <b>The Word (knowing)</b> , <b>incarnation (being)</b> and <b>Proclamation (doing)</b> in participant talk

*Table 5.1: Lenses Applied to the Research Questions*

In order to drill down into the richness of participant talk as it corresponded to the research questions, it was important firstly to analyse the discourse to reveal what the participants were actually saying. Fairclough’s (2010) CDA was utilised to decode the ways that participants were expressing themselves in order to reveal their perceptions about the topics that they were discussing. Within the CDA, a transdisciplinary lens was employed to highlight themes in the participant talk that related to specific research questions. As was noted above, this chapter focuses on Research Question 1.

## 5.2. Answers to Research Question 1

### What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?

Because this research project was undertaken to explore the conflict between a market-driven context and a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom, it was essential for me to understand how the participating teachers understood Christian school education, whether Kingdom-shaping were a term with which they were familiar and if they had ever considered their practice as Kingdom-shaping. The following subsections of Chapter 5 explore extracts from the participants' interview transcripts and, through the Tripod of Shalom as a lens, examine their understandings of and emerging themes about Kingdom-shaping Christian education. In the interviews with the participants, there were a number of questions that were used to probe their understanding of Christian school education and of the term "Kingdom-shaping". These questions were unseen by the participants prior to the interview. The following table demonstrates the alignment of the interview questions with Research Question 1. Please refer to Table 5.2: Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 1.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Questions
What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?	1. What would you describe as the purposes of Christian schooling?
	2. What are some of the ways that you attempt to achieve the purposes of Christian schooling?
	3. What would be the characteristics of the "Kingdom"?
	4. What do you think that it would mean to be Kingdom-shaped?
	5. How could Kingdom-shaping be applied to the purposes of Christian education?
	6. Have you ever thought about your own practice here in terms of Kingdom-shaping?
	7. Have you seen examples of Kingdom-shaped teaching practice here?

*Table 5.2 Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 1*

I now unpack some of the themes and ideas that emerged in the participant talk that indicated an understanding of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. These themes and ideas that are discussed in the following subsections are as follows:

- Participants' understanding that Christian school education is synonymous with Kingdom-shaping;

- Participants' perceived importance of **knowing The Word**<sup>24</sup>;
- The weight that participants placed on cognitive **knowledge** of **The Word** compared to spiritual **knowing** of **The Word**;
- The importance of **relationships** and **community**; and
- Participant talk about **Proclamation**.

### 5.2.1 A Christian School Education is Synonymous with Kingdom-Shaping

The participating teachers' talk about the purposes of a Christian school education when compared with *Kingdom-shaping* Christian education demonstrated that for all participants, except Mary, their understanding of Kingdom-shaping when applied to education was largely synonymous with their understanding of Christian school education. This was evident through the correlating themes that emerged in their talk that arose as a result of Interview Questions 1 and 2 and Interview Questions 3 to 7. The following extracts from Andrea, James and Kevin, taken from their individual interviews, demonstrated similarities in the language that they used to describe both a Christian school education and Kingdom-shaping.

Andrea:

Response to Question 1     *One that I think is important to me is certainly...grounding young people in what does the Bible say?*

Response to Question 7     *...we take that topic...and then start with what does the Bible have to say about this?*

---

<sup>24</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

In these two extracts, the repetition of “what does the Bible [have to] say?” in relation to the purposes of a Christian school education and also examples of Kingdom-shaping teaching practice revealed that, for Andrea, there was a correlation between Christian school education as an entity and Kingdom-shaping. This was further exemplified as follows in an extract from James’s interview:

James:

Response to Question 1     *I think the purpose is to help children to see and young people to see the world in God’s eyes...*

Response to Question 6     *How we actually intentionally and in a meaningful way help children to see through God’s eyes in the things that we teach...*

Again, the verbatim repetition of language that was common to both the purposes of a Christian school education and the description of James’s own practice of Kingdom-shaping through the words “God’s eyes” reflected a common understanding between the two entities throughout his interview. Lastly, the example from Kevin also revealed the use of common language to refer to elements of Christian school education and Kingdom-shaping, as shown in the extract below.

Kevin:

Response to Question 1     *...we can make sure that [the students] are taught well about the Gospel, taught well the message of salvation...*

Response to Question 4     *...looking to build a knowledge...of God’s plan, a knowledge of God, a knowledge of salvation into our kids...*

Similar correlating themes and repetitive phrases were evident in the interview transcripts of Philippa and Shane as they discussed the purposes of Christian school education and the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice. As I spent time with these participants throughout 2018, it became apparent that their synonymous language between the two entities was not really indicative that they thought that the two were the same thing. Rather, it was

reflective of the fact that Kingdom-shaping was largely a new concept, and one that they had not really applied to a Christian education in the past. For me, this realisation became evident in a number of ways. Firstly, it was clear in the way that the participants attempted to explain Kingdom-shaping. When I asked the questions about the nature of Kingdom-shaping and how it could be applied to life—as per Interview Question 4—the lack of cohesion in their responses suggested that this was not a concept that they had previously considered, and neither were they used to explaining life in these terms. This lack of cohesion was demonstrated through the repetition of “Um”, through disjointed thoughts, through repetition and also through pauses (-). While linguists have debated as to whether a filled pause demonstrates disfluency—as demonstrated by O’Connell and Kowal (2004) in their history of the research about the filled pause—two factors made this worthy of consideration in the context of this research. In their conclusion, O’Connell and Kowal (2004) listed amongst the understood functions of the filled pause “sometimes the announcement of preparedness problems” (p. 471). My conclusion that the manifestation of “Um” and pauses in participant speech were as a result of preparedness problems rather than other causes that were listed such as “the announcement of delay [and] the announcement of new information” (p. 472) was derived from the fact that in contrast to the participants’ responses to other interview questions—such as general elements of schooling like discipline—the filled pause was more prevalent in their responses to Kingdom-shaping. For example, the following table compares the prevalence of “Um” in sections of Shane’s interview transcript. Please refer to Table 5.3: Comparisons in the Prevalence of “Um” in Shane’s Speech.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Prevalence of “Um”</b>	<b>Percentage Within the Extract</b>
Discipline	8 occasions in 373 words	2%
Kingdom-shaping	17 occasions in 238 words	7%

*Table 5.3: Comparisons in the Prevalence of “Um” in Shane’s Speech*

The differences between the prevalence of “Um” throughout the variety of topics in Shane’s speech suggested that Shane was more comfortable discussing a topic such as discipline than he was in explaining Kingdom-shaping. In his discussion of Kingdom-shaping, “Um”



appeared more than three times as frequently as in his discussion of discipline. The following extracts from three participant interview transcripts exemplified the use of fillers, such as “Um”, pause (-) and disjointed flow. My conclusion based on the analysis of Shane’s discourse was that the use of fillers suggested that participants were not as confident in explaining their understanding of Kingdom-shaping as a concept as they were in the other elements of schooling that they discussed. This was demonstrated in the ensuing discourse of Philippa, Shane and Mary.

Philippa *-Okay, um-well, first of all, they on the very basic level they need to be in Christ, they need to be unified with Christ through his blood; that’s obviously that’s a given. They um. But of course, it doesn’t stop there. Because because they need to be in contact with his work, with God’s work, the our our Scriptures, the Bible. This needs to infuse everything that that’s revelation for us. So therefore, um, there needs to be that very close, err-so we need to read the Bible...*

Shane *...Um-I think being um Kingdom-focused is um not just being in our own bubble but actually sharing that Gospel with all people that we come upon, um, even though we don’t, um, but realising that, at the end of the day, it’s not about us and our um-um, you know, how good we look, but it’s all about people and their standing before God...*

Mary *So um I think it means-to be-thinking,-um, I guess it’s a worldly way of living or a human response to living is often self-centred and um focused on what we can get out of the world...and um and so I think Kingdom thinking is is thinking more um more along the lines about what we can give and what we can contribute...*

Tracking the lack of flow in the ideas in Philippa’s extract above, she described a Kingdom-shaping life as in Christ → in contact with God’s work → in contact with the Bible → infusing everything that is revelation → therefore we need to read the Bible. At the end of 2018, when Philippa re-read her transcript and was struck by her inability to articulate Kingdom-shaping clearly, she reflected: *“I have learnt a lot more (from some of the reading but also from our discussions) that a Kingdom-shaping education is more than what was*

said originally. This I think was the weakest part of the interview.” Philippa’s reflection, along with that of Andrea, who also stated in the last PLCs meeting: “‘Christian education’ is not quite the same as ‘Kingdom-shaping education’”, suggested that the similarities between the descriptions of a Christian school education and a Kingdom-shaping life in participant interviews may be explained by a lack of prior participant understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping life and of its relationship with a Christian school education. This assumption was also reinforced by comments that were made by participants in their interviews when questioned about Kingdom-shaping. These were statements such as that made by Kevin: “...I’m not sure what that means. I should have a better answer....This is a very hard question.” And also James, who answered with: “Um—Oh-I don’t know. I don’t know [laughing].” Furthermore, the use of the conditional mood “would”—indicating a lack of surety that the answer is correct—was used by participants in their descriptions of Kingdom-shaping. For example, Kevin stated: “So the Kingdom I would see as a community of people. I would see it as people from...all different types of backgrounds...” The use of the conditional mood suggested that, for Kevin, either he was uncertain of the correctness of his answer or Kingdom-shaping in practice was a hypothetical state of affairs or an uncertain entity in reality.

Therefore the first observation that might be made in relation to the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education is that this was not a term with which participants were very familiar, and that they struggled to be able to articulate the nature of Kingdom-shaping as it related to life and to Christian school education. However, in the transcripts of the participant interviews, clear themes did emerge in the ways that participants described Kingdom-shaping, and these are explored in the following subsections and are reflected in Table 5.4: Emerging Themes in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping Christian Education.

Themes Emerging in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping Christian Education	Sub-section	Participant/s Featured
The importance of <b>knowing The Word</b>	5.2.2	James Philippa Andrea
Cognitive <b>knowledge</b> and spiritual <b>knowing</b>	5.2.3	Kevin Andrea Philippa
The importance of <b>relationships and community</b>	5.2.4	Andrea James Kevin Philippa Shane Mary
<b>Proclamation</b> requires unified <b>action</b> rather than selfishness	5.2.5.1	Mary Shane
<b>Proclamation</b> is about serving others	5.2.5.2	Andrea James
<b>Proclamation</b> is about the renewal of the world	5.2.5.3	Mary

Table 5.4: Emerging Themes in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping Christian Education

### 5.2.2 The Perceived Importance of Knowing The Word in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping

In their talk about the nature of the Kingdom and about the application of Kingdom-shaping to the purposes of Christian school education, almost all participants placed the heaviest emphasis on Knowing **The Word**. This prominence emerged as I applied the Tripod of Shalom as a lens to analyse the transcripts, exploring the balance among their talk about **knowing**, **being** and **doing** in relation to Kingdom-shaping. Participant responses to Interview Questions 3-7 were coded for their references to elements of knowing **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. A process of calculating the number of words that a participant used in total to talk about Kingdom-shaping and then dividing this number between the proportion of words that a participant used to talk about **knowing**, **being**, **doing** and any other topics allowed me to consider where the emphasis was placed in participant understanding of Kingdom-shaping. Almost without exception—Mary and Kevin were the only anomalies—the participants focused their discussion of Kingdom-shaping primarily on concepts of **knowing**. Please refer to Table 5.5: The Reflection of the Tripod of Shalom in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping.

Participant	Proportion of The Word	Proportion of incarnation	Proportion of Proclamation	Proportion of Other Talk
Andrea	42%	14%	6.5%	37.5%
James	62%	10%	9%	19%
Kevin	35%	54%	2%	9%
Mary	10%	27%	40%	23%
Philippa	74%	8%	1%	17%
Shane	66%	17%	7%	10%
<b>Total with all Participants</b>	50%	21%	10%	19%

*Table 5.5: The Reflection of the Tripod of Shalom in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping*

Overall, 50% of participant talk about Kingdom-shaping was focused on understanding or **knowing The Word**. By far, **Proclamation** had the least emphasis, with only 10% of participant talk focusing on an active outworking of **knowing** and **being**. Andrea’s reflection during the final PLCs meeting demonstrated that, for her, the process of meeting together had allowed her to understand that **Proclamation** was far more important than what she had previously considered. She stated, “...the ‘Proclaim’ aspect of the Tripod is something I, and the school, could emphasise more. I encourage students to know the truth and live according to it, but what about impacting [on] the world?” This was an important epiphany for Andrea where she realised that her emphasis on **Proclamation**—which had been 6.5% in her individual interview—had been too small and needed to change.

It was evident in the individual interview transcripts that for all of the participants there was a concept that Kingdom-shaping included elements of **knowing**, **being** and **doing**. The interrelationship of these three Tripod elements occurred mostly in the early questions about Kingdom-shaping that focused on the broad nature of the Kingdom, what it means to be Kingdom-shaping and how Kingdom-shaping could be applied to the purposes of a Christian school education. Without exception, however, participant responses to Interview Question 6—“Have you ever thought about your practice in terms of Kingdom-shaping?”—were largely focused on **knowing The Word**. This revealed that, although participants were able to talk about other elements of the Tripod in their general discussion about the Kingdom, their understanding of Kingdom-shaping in practice focused largely on the Bible and on its cognitive incorporation into their teaching. The following extracts from the individual interview transcripts of James, Philippa and Andrea, in relation to the interview question—“Have you ever thought about your practice in terms of Kingdom-shaping?”,—

demonstrated the emphasis that was placed on a biblical perspective or on an incorporation of worldview in the participants' practice.

James: *Um, I probably have not used the word 'Kingdom-shaping', um, probably used more the word like 'biblical perspective'...*

Philippa: *...biblical approaches to quadratic equations, that's not coming very naturally, and I don't know how to do it, but I have not written it off.*

Andrea: *...so again, coming back to curriculum...yes, we have this mandated syllabus which we need to comply with, but we take that topic...and then start with what does the Bible have to say about this?*

For the participants, the incorporation of a biblical perspective in their programming of the curriculum and in their everyday teaching practice was a tangible way that they were demonstrating Kingdom-shaping practice. This idea therefore added to my comprehension of participant understanding of Kingdom-shaping Christian education that, for them, instilling a **knowledge** of **The Word** in their students was critical and synonymous with a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. The focus, however, on depositing knowledge in the form of a biblical perspective on a topic, rather than instilling a **knowing** that shapes a way of being, echoed Freire's (2005) critique of a banking approach to schooling and raised the question as to whether this were indicative of a market-driven context that assessed success by quantity and measurable results.

### 5.2.3 Cognitive Knowledge and Spiritual Knowing in Participant Talk about The Word

Alongside the realisation of the weight that the participants placed on **knowing The Word** in their individual talk about Kingdom-shaping, it was critical to me to consider *how* the participants were talking about **The Word**. Chapter 3 of this thesis —The Conceptual Framework—explored two understandings of **The Word** as it applied to the Tripod of Shalom. Cognitive **knowledge** about **The Word** envisaged students being furnished with a cerebral **knowledge** of biblical truth, founded on the Word, and then facilitated towards the application of the Word to their daily lives. A spiritual **knowing** of **The Word** encapsulated a

**knowing** based on a vibrant relationship with God that is realised through engraving the Word on the hearts of the followers of Jesus who then imbue this **knowing** in every aspect of their lives. In essence, cognitive **knowledge** is largely extrinsic—or an immanent act of the mind—, while spiritual **knowing** is essentially intrinsic because it has transcended the mind to become embodied within the identity of the knower.

Applying the principles of Fairclough's (2010) CDA allowed me to explore the ways that participants understood **The Word**—whether their understandings were more inclined towards a cognitive or a spiritual nature—and how they applied these understandings to Kingdom-shaping education. Accordingly, an analysis of participant uses of nominalisation revealed whether they viewed **The Word** as a noun—**knowledge**—or whether they viewed it as a verb—**knowing**. For example, in his description of the meaning of Kingdom-shaping as it applied to education, Kevin stated: "...we are looking to build a **knowledge** and love of God, a **knowledge** of God's plan, a **knowledge** of God, a **knowledge** of salvation into our kids first...". The nominalisation of "**knowing**" as "**knowledge**" and its repetition throughout this list emphasised the cerebral nature of **knowledge** as an entity in Kevin's understanding of Kingdom-shaping. Further to this, the sequencing of a **knowledge** of God first, followed by a **knowledge** of His plan and followed by a **knowledge** of salvation, reflected that perhaps these three entities—God, His plan and salvation—were, for Kevin, the most important aspects of **knowing** for the students.

The focus on cognitive **knowledge** was also evident in Andrea's interview in response to what it means to be Kingdom-shaped. She explained: "Um, that our **goals** are that of Jesus, um, there are **goals** to do with um encouraging and promoting **faith** in Him, **belief** in Him and also **obedience** to Him supremely over any other beliefs or priorities...". Andrea's answer to the interview question utilised a nominalisation word form for faith, belief and obedience that served to present these three elements as entities rather than as actions. In addition, because the word "goal"—associated with an object of a person's ambition or effort ("Oxford Dictionary", 2018)—was placed before the listed elements themselves, she created a sense that faith, belief and obedience were projected outcomes that were future focused and disconnected from the present. Consequently, the actor—the Kingdom-shaping educator—was distanced from the action that would be necessary to achieve the outcome.

This distancing was particularly important in relation to the word “faith” because faith—a strong belief in the doctrines of a religion based on spiritual conviction (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018)—was more indicative of a spiritual **knowing** than of a cognitive **knowledge**. Its placement after the word “goal”, however, projected faith as an academic and futuristic outcome, rather than as an ongoing outworking of action in the mess and chaos of the present. As a result, the three factors that Andrea believed were important were objectified as cognitive and theoretical **knowledge** rather than as active **knowing** that would be implied by a choice of the verb form for the three elements. Furthermore, the use of the word “obedience”—compliance with an order (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018)—suggested an extrinsic action that was based on the **knowledge** of what was right rather than on an outworking of intrinsic faith—or spiritual **knowing**—that was transformational for the students.

Finally, Philippa’s response—also through an analysis of nominalisation—suggested an understanding of **The Word** that was based largely on cognitive **knowledge** rather than on a spiritual **knowing**. In answer to the Interview Question 7—“Have you observed any examples of Kingdom-shaping practice here?”—Philippa’s reply was: “...well, I have seen, I’ve seen the odd English booklet and other things, so in English, for example, that have an explicitly biblical perspective....I’ve seen...programs at times...and I can see there’s a very explicit biblical rationale...” Again, the use of a nominalisation in terms of “biblical perspective” and “biblical rationale” in reference to Kingdom-shaping practice suggested that a **knowledge** of the Bible for students and a teaching approach that utilised a biblical lens were, for Philippa, synonymous with Kingdom-shaping. Furthermore, the simple declarative statement, “I have seen”, that focused the verb on Philippa’s observation rather than on an outworking of **knowing** served to relegate **The Word** as it is related to Kingdom-shaping to an object rather than as something that one does. Additionally, Philippa’s explanation was disconnected from the students, suggesting that, for her, providing a **knowledge** of **The Word** was the responsibility of the teacher, and that this was something that was deposited in students rather than instilled through a deep covenant relationship with both the knower and what is known (Palmer, 2010).

#### 5.2.4 The Importance of Relationships in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping

One theme that emerged from the descriptions of Kingdom-shaping in the interviews of participating teachers was a focus on relationships. Without exception, all participants' discourse about Kingdom-shaping emphasised the importance of community, whether through using the actual term "community" or through using synonyms that expressed the idea of a collective relationship. Their understandings of community as a concept were evident through the noun forms and metaphors that they used—indicating their conceptual schemas (Strauss & Feiz, 2014)—and through verbs—suggesting the physical outworking that was associated with the relationships.

The comprehensive definition of community—"a group of people that interact and support each other, and are bounded by shared experiences or characteristics, a sense of belonging, and often by their physical proximity" (Cobigo, Martin, & Mcheimech, 2016, p. 195)—is useful for interpreting the various elements of participant expressions of relationships throughout their interview discourse. This is because it recognises the social, relational and physical aspects of community. The ensuing discussion focuses on two of the elements of community as they were described in the definition above: support for one another; and a sense of belonging.

Almost every participant used the word "community"—or one of a number of synonyms—at least once in her or his interview as a way of defining Kingdom-shaping. These were expressed in statements such as the following:

Andrea: *...it has to be characterised first and foremost in loving relationships between all members of a kingdom-shaped community...*

James: *So I think it's the here, it's the now, it's living in community.*

Kevin: *So the kingdom I would see as a community of people.*



Philippa: *...so that's another part of being in community...of those in the kingdom...that can help us.*

Shane: *I think that God designed people to be in relationships...*

Mary: *...it's not just about results and we finish the relationship once you walk out the door....We're guiding you into your kingdom purpose...*

The inclusive and interconnected nature of these community relationships as expressed by the participants was evident in the prepositions that they used to connect all of the elements of their definitional clauses. For example, the repetitive use of “in”, such as “being in community” or “be in relationships”, emphasised the idea that relationships such as those being described by the participants were all encompassing. Moreover, the verb to be—“being”—suggested the close relationship between ontology—one’s community identity—and axiology—the value of the relationships—in these definitions.

A recurring subtheme throughout the participant reflections on community was the importance of members in the Kingdom-shaping community supporting one another. The selection of verbs—encapsulating the key actions—that were used by participants amplified this idea, as was exemplified through the following extracts from participant interviews:

James: *...when there have been issues with friendships, there's a lot more time taken to restore and to talk things through...in a way that's more Kingdom focused and restoring relationships...*

Kevin: *Taking time to, when you discipline a child, to pray with them or to pray for them, taking time in a parent-teacher interview, when you're talking with a parent to pray for the child...*

Shane: *...as much as possible reminding each other, encouraging each other that **we need to have a gospel-focused life...to support, encourage and even rebuke each other.***

Mary: *...thinking more along the lines about ...how **we can strengthen each other**...*

Throughout these extracts, the verbs were focused on building up and supporting others within the community. Words such as “restore”, “taking time”, “encouraging”, “support” and “strengthen” highlighted that a community that is Kingdom-shaping is centred on others and is engaged in tangible examples of Kingdom practice. Furthermore, the fact that there was so much emphasis placed on the need to encourage, remind and support suggested that, from the perspective of the participants, a Kingdom-shaping life entails challenges that are difficult to overcome when alone. Indicative of the time pressures that were highlighted in other extracts of participant talk, and that are explored in Chapter 6 of this thesis —Analysis: Hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Education—, two participants also emphasised the need to “take time” to pause and to be intentional about connecting with and supporting those within the community. Additionally, participants’ use of collective pronouns throughout their talk further highlighted the sense that Kingdom-shaping was about “us” together—or “we”—rather than “I”, as was stated by James: *“It’s not about just us; it’s about others.”* These collective pronouns have been placed in bold in the extracts above to demonstrate their occurrence in these sections of participant talk.

The extracts from participant interviews also demonstrated that a Kingdom-shaping community offers a sense of belonging. This was exemplified through the metaphors that the participants used to frame their relationships. The extracts below from two participant interviews illustrated this idea with regard to the use of metaphors:

James: *I think it’s a body of people.*

Andrea: *...we're all brothers and sisters....There is a differential but, within that, also a recognition that in God's eyes we're all the same.*

The metaphors provided me with a framework for comprehending the intrinsic and conceptual understandings (Musolff, 2012) held by participants with regard to the nature of Kingdom-shaping relationships. When the characteristics of the metaphor were applied to the subject, it was then possible to explicate the intricate nuances in participant concepts that were connected with their perception of community. For example, James's use of the "body" metaphor—which he appropriated from the Bible text that states: "The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ....All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27, New Living Translation)—suggested that James's concept of a Kingdom-shaping community entailed unity and each person uniquely working together to play her or his own distinct and important role. Andrea's "family" metaphor also echoed biblical literature, such as the assertion of Jesus that "Anyone who does God's will is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35, New Living Translation). Applying the characteristics of the "family" metaphor to a Kingdom-shaping community allowed the understanding that Andrea perceived deep ties undergirding the relationships among all members of the community, including between teachers and students, and that these reflected two or more people who were connected by their commitment to their relationship with God.

In stark contrast to participant talk about Kingdom-shaping in general—which was heavily focused on **knowing The Word**—participant discourse that focused on the relational aspects of Kingdom-shaping highlighted **incarnation**—or **being**—as the central element. This contrast became evident through applying the Tripod of Shalom as a lens to the CDA analysis of participant talk about community relationships. Using NVIVO, participants' interview transcripts were coded into various themes that had emerged as they talked about Kingdom-shaping. The extracts that were coded as focusing on community and relationships were analysed for the proportion of talk about each of the Tripod elements—**knowing**, **being** and **doing**. Through ascertainment of the total number of words for each participant, and then a consideration of the percentage of talk about each element, the

proportion was derived. Please refer to Table 5.6: The Proportion of Participant Talk about Community in Each of the Tripod Elements.

Participant	Proportion of the Word	Proportion of Incarnation	Proportion of Proclamation	Proportion of Other Talk
Andrea	44%	45%	0%	11%
James	0%	66%	0%	34%
Kevin	26%	40%	1%	33%
Mary	15%	16%	31%	38%
Philippa	36%	52%	0%	12%
Shane	0%	66%	18%	16%
<b>Total with all Participants</b>	17%	48%	8%	27%

Table 5.6: The Proportion of Participant Talk about Community in Each of the Tripod Elements

Because participants' talk about community was centred largely on the development of their **being**, rather than on individual or collective action—**doing**—there was very little focus on **Proclamation** in these participant extracts. The extracts below were a demonstration of this emphasis on **incarnation**.

Andrea: *"It's shaped by love. Um, I think love is meant to **be** the defining characteristic of Jesus' followers..."*

James: *"It's about how you relate to others and how you problem solve and how you um treat other people....because school is about **developing** socially and **developing as a whole person**..."*

Kevin: *"I think the biggest difference you might see is my philosophy that these **children are valuable** and **part of God's Kingdom**....I hope you see a difference in the way I speak about the children, **that I'm not negative** about them."*

Philippa: *"...love...should **be** the defining characteristic of believers."*

In each one of the extracts above, the description of a Kingdom-shaping education—as it is manifest in relationships—focused either on the development of the participant's **being** or

on the **being** of the children whom they were teaching. Words that contributed to this element of **being** have been emphasised through bold type. The fact that the language utilised grammatical elements for describing—such as adverbs or adjectives—contributed to this focus. For example, it could be argued that James’s description of a Kingdom-shaping community was about **doing** because he utilised verbs such as “relate”, “problem solve” and “treat”. However, the placement of the adverb “how” before each one of the verbs positioned the emphasis on the *way* that these actions were done rather than on the actions themselves. The preposition “it’s about how” also emphasised that the connection that James was making was between it—Kingdom-shaping—and the way that it was done, rather than a relationship among an actor, an action and a recipient. Moreover, the fact that he linked this description of Kingdom-shaping with “**developing socially**” and “**as a whole person**” revealed that the focus was on the fact that the way that we relate to others cultivates our **being**, rather than on the **doing** that would reflect **Proclamation**.

Only two participants included elements of **doing** in their descriptions of Kingdom-shaping as it pertained to relationships. These participants were Shane and Mary. The contrast between the focus on **being** and on **doing** can be seen in Shane’s description as follows: “...**being** a Christian isn’t just following Jesus by, you know, trusting in him and by **repenting...but it’s actually everything that we do. It’s how we live...**” While this extract also used the adverb “how”—and in a similar vein to the way that James used it in the excerpt above—, the focus of the description in this account was on explicating the way that “we live”—our **doing**—, rather than on developing a person’s **being**. Additionally, the extract delineated between **being** and **doing** through the contrastive semantic relationship that was projected by the conjunction “but” and emphasised by the adverb “actually” that served to highlight the truth or facts of the situation (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018). Finally, the language used by Mary highlighted the interrelationship that is inherent between **being** and **doing** as she described living in Kingdom-shaping communities. She stated the need to ensure that we are “...**creating disciples who are thoughtful individuals who can interact with the world, who have the abilities to be creatively representing the ideas that they have for the purposes of bringing in God’s Kingdom into our world...**”. Within this excerpt, the use of the active voice and transitive verbs highlighted the action that is meant to take place—“**interact**” and “**bringing**”—and the identity of the actors—**disciples who are thoughtful**

individuals. Moreover, there was a recognition that individuals' actions are largely a response to their **being** or, in this instance, their **incarnation** of Christ.

To conclude and sum up this subsection about relationships, it was clear that, for the participants, relationships were pivotal in their understanding of a Kingdom-shaping education. They expressed that the support that was offered by “**living in community**” was beneficial for personal growth and for a sense of belonging. The perceived importance of relationships for the development of an individual's **being** was emphasised by the fact that almost half of participant talk about relationships was focused on **incarnating**. Of concern to me, however, was that, while the development of personhood and **being** is an intrinsic element of the Tripod of Shalom, the lack of focus on **doing—Proclaiming**—through meaningful action that seeks to release the captives or restore sight to the blind or proclaim that the time of the Lord's favour has come (Luke 4:18-19, New Living Translation) could result in Kingdom-shaped graduates from Christian schools who are unable to undertake Kingdom-shaping action for Shalom. In a context that is market-driven and that seeks to wrest student focus onto their future careers, a Kingdom-shaping education must have as its driving vision “the **transformation** of young men and women so that they might **participate** as kingdom people...to **bring about** [God's] plans to **renew** this broken world...” (Pietsch, 2018, Introduction, para. 14). This is because a Kingdom-shaping Christian education offers students a reason for excelling at school that is beyond facilitating future careers that will finance their lifestyles. A Kingdom-shaping education heralds the opportunity for students to utilise their learning to engage in tangible restorative action that seeks to imbue God's original creational intention for the world. At Yew Tree Christian College, the transformation of students was at the forefront of the participating teachers' minds. The idea that student transformation was not an end in itself but rather a means to proclaim freedom for others in a broader context did not feature prominently in the participants' discourse.

### 5.2.5 Participant Talk About **Proclamation**

As outlined in Table 5.5—The Reflection of the Tripod of Shalom in Participant Talk about Kingdom-shaping—, the proportion of participant talk that featured **Proclamation** was about 10%. Despite the fact that this was such a minor focus for participants in their interviews, it was important for me to explore how participants understood **doing** in

relation to Kingdom-shaping because **Proclamation** is one of the elements of The Tripod of Shalom. Accordingly, I extracted all of the segments of the participants' interview transcripts that contained traces of **Proclamation** and, using CDA, I analysed their talk to gain an understanding of how participants viewed **doing** in relation to Kingdom-shaping. Through this process, three themes emerged with regard to **Proclamation**: unity as opposed to selfishness; service to others; and a desire to bring about renewal.

#### 5.2.5.1 Proclamation Requires Unified Action Rather than Selfishness

Antithetically to what Mary termed in her interview as “a worldly way of living”, a Kingdom-shaping life is one that is unselfish. This view was presented by both Mary and Shane in their interviews, and was demonstrated in the following extracts from their transcripts:

Mary: *...a worldly way of living, or a human response to living is often self-centred and focused on what we can get out of the world...like thinking about what we can draw from other people and what we could draw from our world, even in terms of resources. And so I think Kingdom thinking is thinking more, um, more along the lines about what we can give **and** what we can contribute **and** what we can share **together and** how we can strengthen **each other and** how we can expand that kingdom **and** bring more people into a way of seeing the world **and** see living, um, that is glorifying to God and honouring to God...*

Shane: *God...created people to be in fellowship with Him...Throughout the Bible, God is bringing people back to Himself...and so I think the Kingdom is precisely that God um dwelling with His people um in **good relationship** um where people serve Him and treat Him as God. Um, I think this world um has completely rejected God's Kingship, um, and Kingdom, um, which is why we live in a world where we see suffering and death and why, um, we live **autonomous** lives...*

In their descriptions of **doing** that were indicative of Kingdom-shaping, both Mary and Shane used contrasts to demonstrate that a life that is Kingdom-shaping is one that is generously

lived in unity with others rather than focused on an individualistic and selfish existence. For example, Mary compared a “self-centred way of living” that was “focused on what we can get out of the world” with “what we can give and what we can contribute and what we can share together...strengthen each other and how we can expand that Kingdom...”. Mary’s description contrasted Kingdom-shaping **doing** with self-centred **doing** through her choice of verbs. Where a self-centred way of **acting** was narrow in focus through the repetition of the words “get” and “draw”, Kingdom-shaping **doing** was presented through a cumulative syndetic list of **actions**: “give”, “contribute”, “share”, “strengthen”, “expand” and “bring”. The variety of Kingdom-shaping **actions** compared with the two worldly, self-centred **actions**—“get” and “draw”—, emphasised by the conjunction “and”, gave the sense that a Kingdom-shaping life is more expansive than a narrow, self-focused life. Moreover, Mary’s rhythmic use of anaphora “what we can” and “how we can” perpetuated the sense that the **doing** was ongoing, and that it contributed to the accumulation of **actions** that she believed were congruent with Kingdom-shaping (“Glossary of poetic terms”, 2019). It is possible here, therefore, to conclude that, for Mary, a Kingdom-shaping way of life was completely opposite to a life that she described as “worldly”. Where her repetition of “get[ing]” and “draw[ing]” gave the impression that a “worldly...self-centred” life is narrow and shrinking—perhaps reflective of a reductionist neoliberal market (Barnett, 2010) that sees its machinery pumping day and night in a relentless desire to “get” more—a Kingdom-shaping life by contrast was presented by Mary as a vast, generous vista that inspires **action** that is focused on others, reinforced by her use of the inclusive pronoun “each other” and the adverb “together”. Mary’s understanding of Kingdom-shaping action is highly significant if Christian schools are to avoid churning out typecast students who have been stamped with the iron signature of high-stakes testing. Research literature suggests that the impact of cramming knowledge and skills down the brain chutes of children in the name of test preparation—such as for NAPLAN—erodes the capacity of students to think critically and creatively, and narrows the curriculum into a focus on “getting” marks and “drawing” out the best academic results (Cranley, 2018). By contrast, if students who graduate from Christian schools are to be Kingdom-shaping both in their **character** and in their **actions**—rather than mindlessly inhabiting Eliot’s (n.d.) vision of the modern city, “trampled by insistent feet at four and five and six o’clock...the conscience of a blackened street impatient



to assume the world” (n.p.)—they require an education that broadens their minds beyond themselves and that promotes flourishing through their **knowing**, **being** and **doing**.

Similarly, Shane contrasted a unified Kingdom-shaping existence with a self-focused individualistic life. Shane’s simple statement, “**we live autonomous lives**”—in which he was referring to an existence outside God’s Kingdom—contrasted individualism with the unity that he believed is experienced in a Kingdom-shaping life, described by “**God dwelling with His people in good relationship**”. However, where Mary focused primarily on the **actions** of Kingdom-shaping people, the verbs used by Shane were centred primarily on **actions** that were carried out by God in order to bring about unity between God and people. These verbs were “**created**”, “**bringing**” and “**dwelling**”. Therefore, the emphasis on unity in Shane’s description of Kingdom-shaping **action** was centred on the relationship between God and people, rather than on the relationship that people have with one another. This was further indicated in the verbs that Shane used to refer to human action. These were pointed towards God—“**serve Him and treat Him as God**”—rather than based on meeting the needs of other people. Nevertheless, Shane’s pluralistic language, through words such as “**fellowship**”, “**people**” and “**together**”, contrasted with “**autonomous lives**”—which was linked with suffering and death—suggested that, like Mary, he believed that Kingdom-shaping **action** resulted in stronger bonds with others. This was reinforced in a later comment that he made in his interview when he suggested that “**I think being Kingdom focused is not just being in our own bubble but actually sharing that gospel with all people that we come upon**”.

The contrast between Mary’s and Shane’s focus regarding **action** that was Kingdom-shaping was reflective of Table 5.5. Mary’s emphasis on the importance of **action** that was directed toward others was indicative of the fact that 40% of the proportion of her discourse on Kingdom-shaping was centred on **Proclamation**, compared with 10% on **The Word** and 27% on **incarnation**. Shane’s discourse on Kingdom-shaping, however, highlighted the importance of **knowing**—with 66% of his talk being about **The Word**—and only 7% of his talk on Kingdom-shaping was about **Proclamation**. When he did focus on **action**, this was largely **action** directed towards God, rather than towards others, indicative of the importance to him of **knowing The Word**. As a result, the active responsibilities that

Kingdom-shaping people should be undertaking with others was less clear from Shane’s discourse because there was less focus on the **action** that people are required to carry out.

#### 5.2.5.2 Proclamation is about Serving Others

Participant talk about the nature of Kingdom-shaping also reflected the importance of **Proclamation**—or **doing**—that was centred on serving others. The following extracts from Andrea’s and James’s interview transcripts in response to Interview Question 7 exemplified that, for both of these participants, service was important:

Andrea: *Well, in the case of the prefects...there’s that sense that [the teachers] train them to **be servant leaders**, um, people who are not just going to **be**, you know, the prefects in the school, um, but who **submit** themselves to Jesus and **encourage** others to do the same. Who **follow** Jesus as **servants** and **seek** to find ways to **serve** others and that [they are **being encouraged**] to do that beyond school.*

James: *So I think over the last couple of years, um, in the way that Year 6 is doing leadership within the school, really there has been a real focus on what the **servant** heart and what Jesus shaped leadership is. It’s not just doing the awards at the front and doing the speeches and those types of things, but it actually is about **servicing**.*

It was interesting that, for both Andrea and James, the tangible examples of Kingdom-shaping **Proclamation** at Yew Tree Christian College were occurring in the work that was taking place with the student leaders and the prefects. The repetition of the word “serve”—or other derivatives of the same word—in the two extracts emphasised how important this concept was for Andrea and for James. Furthermore, in using the same contrastive language—Andrea: “...people who are **not just** going to be...the prefects in the school, **but who** submit to Jesus...”; and James: “...there has been a real focus on what the servant heart...leadership is....It’s **not just** doing the awards...**but it actually is** about serving.”—both Andrea and James revealed that they believed that servant-hearted leadership that included tangible **action** was imperative when considering Kingdom-shaping living. Andrea and James

contrasted a minimalist view of leadership by using the adverb “just”—meaning barely (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018)—with the contrastive semantic relation “but”, suggesting that traditional views of student leadership might see this role as a mere function of ceremony. A truly Kingdom-shaping view, however, was by contrast focused on actively submitting to Jesus and serving Him. James’s use of the adverb “actually” further accentuated the contradiction between a ceremonial function of leadership and Kingdom-shaping. Additionally, the contrast described above in Andrea’s extract delineated between **being** and **doing**. This was exemplified through the use of the verb to be—“**people who are not just going to be**”—juxtaposed with the verb to do—“**but who submit**”. The contrast between **being** and **doing** suggested an acknowledgement that, for Andrea, **being** was a part of the role of a prefect but that, to be Kingdom-shaping, **being** needed to be accompanied by **doing**. This “mesh of believing and acting” (James 2:23, Message Version) that “fit together hand in glove” (James 2:18, Message Version) reflected biblical teaching that faith must be accompanied by deeds, and that it is the vibrant relationship among **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that results in wholeness that is reflective of Shalom.

In Andrea’s extract, the verbs have been highlighted in bold. These provided an interesting insight into her understanding of Kingdom-shaping **action** because, while other extracts of participant discourse demonstrated density in the use of nominalisations and nouns—and were thereby highly conceptual—this section of text utilised a plethora of transitive verbs. These were “**train**”, “**submit**”, “**encourage**”, “**follow**”, “**seek**”, “**serve**”, “**do**” and “**prepared**”. Transitivity, involving the agent of the action, the action itself and who or what is affected by the agent, emphasises the capacity for **Proclamation** to be transformative, whereas, by contrast, intransitive verbs involve only an agent and an action but no impact (Strauss, Feiz, & Xiang, 2018). Examining the transitivity of the verbs used by Andrea allowed me to explicate understanding of who was carrying out the action that she described, and also the impact of that action. Please see Table 5.7: Transitive Verbs in Andrea’s Discourse about Kingdom-shaping.

Agent	Transitive Verb—Action	Who is Affected or the Impact	Sentence Remainder
[Teachers]	train	[the prefects]	
[the prefects]	To be	servant leaders,	um
people who	are not just going to be	the prefects	in the school, but
who	submit	themselves to Jesus	and
[who]	encourage	others to do the same,	um,
who	follow	Jesus as servants	and
[who]	seek	to find ways	to
[the prefects]	serve	others	and that
you're	encouraging	them	to
[the prefects]	do	that beyond school.	

Table 5.7: Transitive Verbs in Andrea's Discourse about Kingdom-shaping

Andrea's use of transitive verbs highlighted who the recipients of the action were as a result of **Proclamation** in Kingdom-shaping: others. The other-centeredness of her discourse revealed that—similarly to Mary and Shane—Andrea believed that Kingdom-shaping action is not self-centred but is focused on serving others. In the column second to the right of Table 5.7: Who is Affected or the Impact, “others” appeared three times in varying modes. This servant-hearted action entails significant courage, as was highlighted by the initiative that Andrea believed was required in servant-hearted prefects. They should “**seek to find ways to serve others**”, and this should be encouraged “**beyond school**”.

As was depicted in Table 5.7, there were two main actors: the teachers and the prefects—students. Throughout the undertaking of this research project, my focus had been primarily on **Proclamation** as an element that was about students using their experiences and training from school to enact Kingdom-shaping ways of **doing** in their world. It had not occurred to me that the **actions** that the teachers at a Christian school undertake themselves with regard to their students to train them and disciple them were also an important example of **Proclamation** itself. Accordingly, Andrea's understanding of Kingdom-shaping **Proclamation** illuminated that there are two types of agents and two types of **actions** that are forthcoming from a Christian school: that of the teacher; and that of the student who will go beyond the teacher into the wider world.

With regard to the impact of the **actions** that were carried out by the actors in Table 5.7, there were a variety of recipients/impacts highlighted in Andrea's discourse. These were:

- The Prefects—students—themselves;
- Jesus;

- Others within the school; and
- Others beyond the school.

Andrea’s discourse revealed that, as the prefects engaged as agents of **action**—under the training of their teachers—, they could also be affected by that **action**, thereby shaping their character—their **being**. This was particularly evident in the statement that “the teachers train them **to be servant leaders**”. Table 5.8 below: The Transition between Agents and Actions in Andrea’s Discourse, demonstrates the transition among agent, action and impact in this statement.


Agent	Action	Impact	Focus	
The teachers	<b>train</b>	<u>them</u> <b>to be</b> servant leaders	Teacher as agent	
They	<b>are trained</b>	<b>to be</b> servant leaders	↓ Student as agent	

Table 5.8: The Transition between Agents and Actions in Andrea’s Discourse

The two alternative ways of understanding Andrea’s statement demonstrated that there are two actors in this relationship between teachers and prefects and two recipients—or impacts. There are the **actions** of the teachers as agents who are training the students **to be** the servant leaders. In this first iteration, the students are the recipients of the **action**. Coinciding with the teachers’ **actions** are the **actions** of the students themselves as they become agents who **do** the training and are thereby shaped **to be**—“receive”—the desired servant leadership qualities. This idea, that one should aim to be the person that one is becoming, was explored at length by Pietsch (2018), who asserted that “character is something that develops as we grow intellectually, physically and emotionally, informing the way we engage in activities...but also in turn being shaped by this process” (Chapter 5, *Education as the affirmation of being*, Para. 5). Pietsch’s concept of “being the person we are becoming”—as reflected in Andrea’s discourse—enhanced the understanding of the reciprocation that occurs between **incarnation** and **Proclamation** as our **being** informs our **action** and our **action** shapes our **being**. Furthermore, Andrea’s use of transitive verbs revealed that the experience of teaching at a Christian school is somewhat of a “baton change”—or transition—as teachers model servant leadership, training students to **be** servant leaders who then go on to **be** the actors with servant leadership in the wider world.

Similarly to Andrea, James's extract was also centred on **action** through the use of verbs. While Andrea's extract utilised a variety of active verbs, James's repeated one verb in particular. In contrast to much of the other participant discourse throughout the interview transcripts where the verb to be was often used, James's extract utilised the verb to do. Rather than *being* leaders, he stated "the way that Year 6 is *doing* leadership", indicating that, for him, true examples of Kingdom-shaping practice were practical and entailed action.

### 5.2.5.3 Proclamation is about Renewal

A final theme that emerged in participant talk about Kingdom-shaping practice—primarily in the discourse of Mary—was that it was for the purpose of renewal or restoration, and for furthering God's Kingdom. The following extract exemplified this idea.

Mary: *So, um, the way that I understand it is that we should be as Christians the ones who, um, bring healing into the world where there is brokenness, that we bring light where there's darkness, that we bring opportunity where there's a lack of opportunity. So we're part of actually bringing in what will be ultimately God's redeemed world into this world.*

Using a number of binary opposites, Mary revealed that her concept of Kingdom-shaping was about transformation and restoration. She considered that Kingdom-shaping **action** would bring about:

- Healing to replace brokenness;
- Light instead of darkness; and
- Opportunity instead of no opportunity.

The use of the binary opposites indicated that Mary believed that there is a disparity between the state of the world as it currently *is*—suggested by the brokenness, darkness and lack of opportunity—and what it *should be*—a place of light and opportunity.

Furthermore, her use of the definite article "*...we should be as Christians the ones*" emphasised that the actors who are mandated to bring about change are those who follow

Christ, and that this is a distinctive role that is to be played by Christians. Her use, however, of the modal verb “should”—which indicates obligation, typically when criticising the actions of a person or persons (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018)—implied that, from Mary’s perspective, what *should* occur in reality and what *does* occur in practice were perhaps two different things. This is reflective of the findings demonstrated in Table 5.5 indicating that the participating teachers did not prominently consider **action** as a part of Kingdom-shaping practice. It should be stated that I do not believe that this was because the participating teachers did not see the importance of **action**. Throughout the PLCs meetings, there were many occasions where the participants wrestled with how to express Kingdom-shaping **action** tangibly in their daily work. Rather, the lack of focus on **Proclamation** in the participating teachers’ interviews was likely because this was not a concept that was at the forefront of their minds, and was indicative of the professional development that had taken place at Yew Tree Christian College that had been largely focused on **knowing The Word** through implementing a biblical worldview in teaching, instead of a focus on tangible **action**.

In this extract from Mary’s interview transcript, the idea was also presented that Kingdom-shaping **action** that is restorative for the world is ongoing rather than a one-off event. This was suggested through the use of present tense: “**we bring**” and the present participle “**bringing**”. Because the statement “**we bring**” was repeated throughout the extract, it fostered a sense of unending, burgeoning activity that is all about contributing to others. The fusing of action with description, achieved through the present participle “**bringing**”, also echoed the “mesh of believing and acting” (James 2:23, Message Version) through coupling the adjective that describes Christians—**bringing**—with what they do—**bring**—and highlighting the vibrant relationship between **being** and **doing**. The privilege that this engagement in restorative activity is for the Kingdom-shaping Christian was emphasised by the adverb “actually” (“Oxford Dictionary”, 2018) in “**So we’re part of actually bringing in what will be ultimately God’s redeemed world...**”. The result was that I received from Mary a sense of her excitement about the possibility of being involved in the restoration of the world and, through her use of plural pronouns—such as “we”—, the idea that this is something that Kingdom-shaping followers of Christ do together. Hence, there was synergy between James’s use of the body metaphor in his extract that was analysed in subsection 5.2.4 and Mary’s perception of people working together for renewal.

### 5.3 Summing up Research Question 1: Participating Teachers' Understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian Education

The analysis in Chapter 5 demonstrated that participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education as expressed in their interviews encompassed a variety of themes. It was interesting—and perhaps surprising, given that the Kingdom features prominently in the Bible—that the participating teachers' interviews demonstrated little comprehension of the distinctive nature of the Kingdom as it applied to Kingdom-shaping practice in a Christian school education. Instead, their talk reflected the idea that Kingdom-shaping was synonymous with Christian school education as a whole. Of primary importance to the participants was the impression that Kingdom-shaping practice was centred largely on a cognitive knowledge of **The Word**, with a lesser focus on a spiritual **knowing** of **The Word**. This was reflected in the fact that the largest proportion of participant talk about Kingdom-shaping practice was focused on **knowing**, rather than on **being** or **doing**. Emerging through participant talk about Kingdom-shaping was the importance of relationships, and their perception that these were being eroded owing to hindrances became a feature that is discussed in Chapter 6. The smallest proportion of participants' interview discussion of Kingdom-shaping was **Proclamation**. Nevertheless, three key concepts regarding **Proclamation** as it related to Kingdom-shaping Christian education did appear. These concepts were the need for unified **action** rather than selfishness, the importance of serving others and that **Proclamation** is all about the renewal of God's world. The following chapter, Chapter 6, analyses and discusses participants' talk—from interview and PLCs transcripts—about the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Christian education that they had experienced.



## Chapter 6: Analysis – Hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Education

*The Fairy palaces burst into illumination, before pale morning showed the monstrous serpents of smoke trailing themselves over Coketown. A clattering of clogs upon the pavement; a rapid ringing of bells; and all the melancholy mad elephants, polished and oiled up for the day's monotony, were at their heavy exercise again.*

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*, Ch. 11

### 6.1 Chapter Introduction

In Chapter 5, I explored the data derived from participant interviews that explicated their understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. These interviews occurred right at the beginning of the research project. Emerging from this data analysis was the idea that, for the participants, a Christian school education was synonymous with Kingdom-shaping. As I then explored their deeper understandings of Kingdom-shaping as they surfaced through the data analysis, it became apparent that they held a number of assumptions about the nature of Kingdom-shaping. For example, **knowing**<sup>25</sup>—or indeed **knowledge**—was emphasised in their talk more than **being** or **doing**. Furthermore, the data analysis suggested that relationships were also inherently important for the participants, although to a lesser degree than **knowing**. Finally, it became apparent through the analysis of the data that **Proclamation** appeared to be an element of the Tripod

---

<sup>25</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

of which the participants at the beginning of the research project demonstrated very little awareness.

Chapter 6 is the second of three chapters focused on data analysis. This chapter, exploring participant responses to the second research question—What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?—, was based on transcripts of participant teacher interviews and PLCs meetings. Guiding the analysis for this chapter was Fairclough's (2010) CDA, explored through the transdisciplinary lens of Lacanian Discourse Theory (Zizek, 1998). Please refer to Table 5.1: Lenses Applied to the Research Questions. As was explained in Chapter 4, Subsection 4.4.2.3, Lacanian Discourse Theory enabled me to ascertain how participating teachers were talking about the hindrances that they were experiencing in their teaching at Yew Tree Christian College, and to understand how these hindrances were affecting their capacity to imbue a Kingdom-shaping education.

The focus of this research study has been on a market-driven context and how it has interacted with a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. As a result, despite the fact that a variety of affordances connected with Kingdom-shaping did exist within Yew Tree Christian College—such as Pastoral Care, Biblical Studies and Chapel, the integration of a biblical worldview in programs, teacher professional learning and mentoring of students—it was the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping that were the focus of this research. Moreover, researchers of Christian education, such as Dr Elizabeth Green, Dr Trevor Cooling (Cooling, 2010; Green & Cooling, 2009) and Dr David Smith (D. I. Smith, 2018), have undertaken extensive research into the affordances of Christian education and the long-term impact of these affordances on graduates of Christian schools. Consequently, the focus of analysis here has been to study how a group of participants have expressed the hindrances that they have faced in imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, and how those hindrances have affected them personally, and to gain a picture of how those hindrances might have shaped Yew Tree Christian College as a whole.

The first part of this chapter focuses on an analysis of the data derived from individual participant teacher interview transcripts. The latter part of the chapter then explores the

data that emerged from the transcripts of the audio recorded PLCs meetings. Dividing the analysis in this way enabled me to understand how the hindrances were perceived and experienced by individuals, and to track how the discourse about these hindrances changed over the duration of 2018 when the PLCs met. Furthermore, this approach allowed an understanding of the differences between individual experiences of hindrances and the experiences of the collective group to emerge. Transcripts from both the individual participant teacher interviews and the PLCs meetings were coded for the types of hindrances that participants expressed that they were experiencing. The subsequent list of hindrances—as they appeared in interview and PLCs meeting transcript data—are listed below:

- Increased emphasis on academic achievements and metrics;
  - Overcrowded curriculum requirements;
  - Lack of time;
  - School structures that were reflective of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
  - Interruptions to learning because of discipline and welfare needs of students;
  - Student disengagement from learning;
  - Conflict caused by spiritual beliefs and subsequent expectations; and
  - Lack of teacher professional development.
- } Market-driven hindrances

## 6.2 Answers to Research Question 2—Individual Perspectives

### **What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?**

Participants’ descriptions of hindrances were in response to three questions that were asked in their individual interviews. The corresponding interview questions to Research Question 2 are expressed in Table 6.1. Please refer to Table 6.1: Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 2.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Questions
What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?	1. What are the greatest challenges in providing a Christian education that is Kingdom-shaping?
	2. Have these factors affected you personally in your time teaching here and, if so, how?
	3. What are some of the ways that you have responded to these challenges?

*Table 6.1: Corresponding Interview Questions to Research Question 2*

Desiring to understand the perceived impact that hindrances to a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom were having on the individual teachers who participated in the research, I began by coding their transcribed discourse. In this process, their talk about hindrances was highlighted and subsequently subdivided into the different categories listed below. Table 6.2 outlines an indication of the proportion of participant discourse that focused on each category of hindrance<sup>26</sup>. Please refer to Table 6.2: The Proportion of Participant Discourse on the Different Hindrances.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Participant	Total proportion of discourse on hindrances - Based on coding	Emphasis on academic achievements and metrics	Overcrowded curriculum requirements	Lack of time	School structures that are reflective of 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Interruptions to learning because of discipline and welfare needs of students	Student disengagement from learning	Conflict caused by Spiritual beliefs and subsequent expectations	Lack of teacher professional development
Andrea	9.57%	23%		31%				46%	
James	30.06%	54%	3.7%	15%	1%	13%			9.3%
Mary	29.73%	3%	2.4%	21%	16%	34.8%	25%		7.8%
Kevin	15.10%	9%		1.5%		39%			33.3%
Philippa	29.44%	27.5%	12.5%	2.4%	18%		58.5%	7.4%	17.4%
Shane	21.48%	24%	19.4%		19.8%	14.2%	7.3%	15.3%	
Average Proportion	22.5%	23.4%	6.3%	11.8%	9%	16.8%	15.1%	11.5%	11.3%
Proportion of discourse:		48%				16%	14%	11%	11%

Table 6.2: The Proportion of Participant Discourse about the Different Hindrances

Once participating teachers' interview transcripts were coded through NVivo to reflect the hindrances that were expressed in their talk, it was possible to see the proportion of each interview that focused on hindrances. This proportion is indicated in Column 2 of Table 6.2. It was noteworthy that there was a considerable discrepancy in the emphasis that the different participants placed on hindrances that they were facing in their teaching. For example, only 9.57% of Andrea's discourse focused on hindrances, while 30% of James's talk explored the hindrances that he was experiencing. Three out of the six participants spent more than a quarter of their interview exploring how hindrances were inhibiting their undertaking of Christian education.

<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that, because some categories overlapped in the transcribed discourse and were coded more than once, this table is an *indication* of the proportion that the participants placed on each of the categorised hindrances that emerged in the discourse. Table 6.2 is not intended to be an empirical quantification of data, and any attempt therefore to add the rows to 100% will not succeed. Table 6.2 did, however, illuminate for me how much talk was focused by each participant on each category of hindrance.

After the transcribed interview discourse that had been coded as hindrances was then further coded into the hindrance subcategories, it was possible to gain an indication of the emphases that the participants placed on the different types of hindrances in their teaching experience at Yew Tree Christian College. These data appear in Columns 3 – 10 in Table 6.2. Individually, each of the categories can be ranked in descending order of emphasis, as follows:

1. Emphasis on academic achievements and metrics;
2. Interruptions to learning because of discipline and welfare needs of students;
3. Student disengagement from learning;
4. Lack of time;
5. Conflict caused by spiritual beliefs and their expectations;
6. Lack of teacher professional development;
7. School structures; and
8. Overcrowded curriculum requirements.

Columns 3 – 6 have been placed together and highlighted in purple to indicate that, collectively, these encapsulate key elements of a market-driven education. When considered together, discourse that related to perceived market-driven hindrances formed almost half of the participant talk that was about the hindrances that they had experienced or were experiencing. Discipline and student welfare and Student disengagement from learning were placed consecutively in Columns 7 – 8—next to those related to market-driven hindrances—because it is possible that these two hindrances were a result of a market-driven focus. The sections of Table 6.2 that have been shaded black indicate that there were no coded data for that participant in that corresponding category. The sections that have been coloured orange indicate the category of hindrance that was most prominent for each participant.

Some surprising information was yielded in Table 6.2. The analysis of participant talk with regard to their understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in Chapter 5 revealed that Mary stood out in a number of ways. Firstly, more than any other participant—except perhaps Kevin—her discourse was strongly focused on **Proclamation**.

Secondly, the analysis of her discourse revealed that she had a strongly unified understanding of Kingdom-shaping and of how it could apply to her practice. Table 6.2 revealed, however, that the proportion of Mary's discourse that focused on hindrances was the second highest, only just behind that of James. A couple of reasons could be suggested for the prominence that Mary attached to hindrances in her interview. To begin with, the highest subcategory of hindrance expressed by Mary was student discipline and the welfare needs of students. The fact that this was so most likely reflected her position of leadership at Yew Tree Christian College that required her—more than most of the other participants—to engage in high levels of student discipline and welfare. Furthermore, it could be suggested that the more that a person is invested in a certain activity, the greater that her or his sense of frustration will be when that activity is interrupted. When considering the language that Mary used to express her hindrances, the connection between her passion for Kingdom-shaping Christian education and her frustration at inhibitors that prevented this from taking place in her own practice was palpable. The following extract was an example of language used by Mary to express frustration about the discipline and welfare needs of students:

*...when I'm in a position of leadership,...a lot of my energy, my best, is given to not the classroom any more. It's given to dealing with that student who needs a lot of my time, or that parent who um has particular requirements, or meetings that that take up a lot of my time, and I feel like a big pressure in this sort of context is that that some of the teachers who are passionate about Christian education who could really spend a lot of time thinking through it and getting great outcomes um with with - um um - sort of shaping students end up being drawn out of the classroom fairly quickly and and, so yeah, it's almost likely to continue a recycle of process.*

Mary's identification of discipline and welfare and, to a lesser extent, of time as hindrances in this extract revealed her sense that her ability to be the Kingdom-shaping teacher that she desired to be was being interrupted. This was firstly indicated by her use of the subordinate conjunction, "when", which communicated the conditional semantic relation

that was placed between the “position of leadership” and Mary’s practice in the classroom. The claim was being made by Mary that there was a direct correlation between “my” lack of energy in the classroom and the role that she played in leadership. This was further highlighted through the determiner, “that”, which Mary applied to “that student” and “that parent” throughout her talk. The repetition of this term, “that”, as a demonstrative pronoun had the capacity to place specific stress on the term to which it was applied—“student” and “parent”—and to convey a sense of ambivalence (“Guide to grammar and writing”, n.d.). Further frustration was then communicated through the syndetic list of interruptions—“that student...a lot of time or that parent...particular requirements or meetings that take up a lot of my time”—that, through the repeated conjunction “or”, accentuated how many impositions that there were on Mary’s time, culminating in “a big pressure”. Mary’s subsequent reflection on her position and on its effect on her practice as a teacher was that, owing to the discipline and welfare requirements of students and their families, this was a hindrance to her ability to be a kingdom-shaping practitioner in the classroom.

### 6.2.1 The Effects of Market-driven Hindrances on the Participating Teachers: Frustration

Table 6.2 underscored what hindrances were experienced by the participating teachers at Yew Tree Christian College. In response to Interview Question 2, which focused on the effect of the hindrances on the teachers, a variety of challenges emerged in their discourse. Those emerging challenges that are discussed in this subsection were as follows:

- A frustration caused by an existential crisis of purpose;
- A sense of disempowerment and dehumanisation; and
- The erosion of a Kingdom-shaping Christian focus.

Overwhelmingly in the discourse that was focused on hindrances, participants used language that revealed a sense of frustration that was derived from a chasm that yawned between their own perceptions of what schooling *should be* and the reality of *what was* with regard to the expectations of the schooling system. Sartre’s (1992) existential concept of “The Look” was useful for interpreting the frustration that was expressed by participants towards the hindrances that they were experiencing. In his treatise, *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre explored the idea of a person being ontologically alienated by the expectations of the

Other, whereby “the very stuff of my being is the unpredictable freedom of another” (p. 351). In the context of this research project, it was possible to interpret the identity of “the Other” as the school system that was driving its concept of the purpose and the execution of education practices. This concept was then projected on to the individual school—such as Yew Tree Christian College—that then sought to fulfil these system obligations. As was outlined in Chapter 2, the New South Wales education system had clearly communicated that a minimum standard of education was about success—as measured by employment, higher salaries and good health—, Pisa test results and the expectations of employers (Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards [BOSTES], 2015). However, the sense of alienation that existed between the Other’s—the education system’s—concept of education and the participating Christian teachers’ alternative concept was further complicated by their higher sense of obligation to God. Sartre rejected God on the basis that *either* a person was free and her or his meaning was not dependent on God, *or* a person was dependent on God, thus negating her or his freedom. On the contrary, for the Christian teachers, they derived their ontological meaning from the idea that walking daily with Christ, His Word “dwelling in [their] heart and mind—permeating every aspect of [their being]” (Colossians 3:15 and 16, AMP version)—was a source of peace and inner calm. For them, the frustration of being torn between “The Look” of the education system and their own ontological desire to imbue an education that reflected their deep spiritual beliefs was fragmenting. This was indicated through discourse markers such as the use of contrasting language, repetition and rhetorical questioning. Examples of these are revealed in the extracts below.

James: *Um ---- to --um -- I don't know. I don't know what is, oh, I think what is perceived is that school will teach my children what I need to know, what they need to know so that they can do the next thing. So, if it's a Year One, you your job is to teach the Year One child so that they know what to do when get[ting] them through the HSC, so that they can make a decision about what they're gonna do in the workforce. So it's, yeah, kind of quite linear. What's the next step? What's the next step? What's it preparing them for? Yeah. And I think it it's very much about the workforce as well kind of, but in but it's almost not achieving that either kind of thing...but there is a*



*real fear for what children will be like when they're adults. How they'll succeed in the world.*

Mary: *And so I find it quite straightforward in some contexts, and then others I feel like it, yeah, I'm just banging my head against a brick wall at times, or time constraints mean that I feel like I just need to, you know, tick the boxes effectively, so-so what's that mean?*

Kevin: *I went to their national boys' conference, and they were saying the same things about actual skills like critical thinking and creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, which we all class as hidden curriculum, but that's actually what children need, but yeah the focus is on being able to regurgitate the content in that test type thing, so I think it's definitely something that all teachers are frustrated with.*

Philippa: *I sometimes have these, I don't know what you call them, sudden losses of confidence as to whether the whole school system is right. So, literally, the whole idea of having a school. I love apprenticeships models...and project-based learning, for example, would work super well for me as a person. It's interesting when you suggest something like that—the resistance and scepticism that it can be met with. But, in one sense, I guess I have been project-based learning all my life because I spent a lot of time...with my grandfather when young and...we always had a project that we were working on....That doesn't necessarily work so well in a school, so, yes, I do occasionally have my whole reservations about the idea of a school...*

Each of the above extracts from the participant teacher interview transcripts revealed a sense of what education *should be* as opposed to what *it is*, and the subsequent frustration that the participants felt at having to adhere to the perceived expectations of “The Other” in the form of the schooling system. James’s use of repetition, “**what I need to know, what they need to know**”, followed by the causal semantic relation “so”, indicated that he was coupling knowledge that students gained at school with achieving “the next thing”. The

emphasis in his concept of education was therefore placed on continuous progress through achievement, rather than on fostering a sense of being in his students. This was further accentuated through the repetition of “What’s the next step? What’s the next step?”, which conveyed a sense of urgency and movement, and the conviction that the role of a teacher is to be perpetually propelling students into the next phase of their lives and learning. The effect of this view of education on James was suggested by his use of the second person pronoun, “You”, throughout the explanation. Fludernik (1994b) proposed that the presence of the second person pronoun in a narrator’s talk was an indicator of an elevation in emotion. Because James’s discourse went on—beyond the extract—to include the accusatory voice of the parent: “What type of job are they going to have if they can’t read?”, and his answer to this question that focused on the character of the child: “[This is] not a reflection on who they are as a person....He is kind and he’s generous...and he accepts responsibility...and he has [the] qualities of a wonderful person...”, it was reasonable to conclude that there was an element of emotion and intrinsic concern for him in the parental focus on success rather than on character. This importance of character for James was emphasised by the syndetic listing that he used—“and”—that placed a focus on just how many other things were important other than the success of a child in the world of work. Mary’s sense of frustration with what she perceived as the impact of the expectations of curriculum requirements on her practice as a teacher was evocatively expressed by her use of the idiom, “I’m just banging my head against a brick wall at times”, conveying the idea of attempting to fulfil a Sisyphean task that is very difficult or impossible to achieve (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019). This was further accentuated by her inclusion of the adjective “just”. Other indicators of Mary’s conflict between an education that was focused on curriculum delivery and her own desire to educate for character were her nominalisation of “time constraints” that, as a result, became a powerful entity on their own—depersonalised and thereby unable to be resisted—and her use of the term, “I just need to, you know, tick the boxes”. These indicated that Mary—uncomfortable with her teaching practice and the consequent feelings of alienation caused by knowledge of what she wanted to achieve in contrast with how she was surviving in the classroom—was justifying her acquiescence with the expectations of the curriculum with me, the interviewer.

A contrast between what was perceived by the participants as desirable practice for a teacher and what was the reality was also evident in Kevin's interview transcript. His use of the contrastive semantic relation "but" to separate the skills that were highlighted at the national boys' conference—such as critical and creative thinking and interpersonal relationships—from the reality—which was regurgitation of content—emphasised the dichotomous relationship between the practised and the desirable approaches to education. The attitude that Kevin held towards the practice of teaching for regurgitation and testing was revealed in his application of the adjective "actual" to describe the skills that *should* be taught at school. In addition to its ability to place emphasis on a comment that modifies a contrasting statement, the meaning of "actual" is to suggest that something is in fact real ("Cambridge Dictionary", 2019). When applied therefore to Kevin's list of what was taught at the boys' conference, "actual skills like critical thinking and creative thinking...", it implied that Kevin considered that these elements of schooling were more valid, or real, than the regurgitation of content in a test. Finally, for Kevin, his use of the absolute, "...so I think it's definitely something that all teachers are frustrated with", coupled with the term "frustrated", which means thwarted or blocked ("Cambridge Dictionary", 2019), implied that this focus on regurgitation and testing also hindered the possibility for teachers to imbue an education that is "actually what children need".

Philippa's sense of what education ought to be, in contrast to what she was experiencing, was also clearly apparent in her interview transcript. Her sensory mental processing—feeling—when applied to her discussion about schooling revealed two different emotional responses. Her frustrated attitude towards traditional school systems when compared with a desired concept of schooling is depicted in Table 6.3: Philippa's Feelings about Traditional School Systems Compared with Her Desired Alternative.

Feelings towards Traditional School Systems	Feelings towards Desired School Systems
...sudden <u>losses of confidence</u> as to whether the whole school system is right.	I <u>love</u> apprenticeship models
...when you suggest something like [apprenticeship models]—the <u>resistance</u> and <u>scepticism</u> that it can be met with	...project-based learning...would work <u>super well</u> for me as a person
...[apprenticeship] models <u>don't necessarily work so well</u> in a school	...I have been project-based learning <u>all my life</u> because I <u>spent a lot of time...with my grandfather</u>
...I do occasionally have my <u>whole reservations</u> about the idea of a school	...we <u>always</u> had a project that <u>we were working on</u>

Table 6.3: Philippa's Feelings about Traditional School Systems Compared with Her Desired Alternative

The emotive language that Philippa used to explore her desired vision for education featured emphatic, feeling-based language, such as “love”, and superlatives, such as “super well”. This discourse conveyed the enthusiasm, life and vitality that were authentically central to Philippa’s view of learning and her style of teaching. Furthermore, her anecdotal description of time spent with her grandfather indicated that Philippa’s understanding of what education should be was based on a concept of lifelong “elbow” (Frost, 2014, p. 88) learning that occurs in relationship with others. She was a passionate educator who desired the best for her students. This was demonstrated by the articulation in her interview of how she felt about the quantification of student growth in learning. She stated: “I think it’s very discouraging for students that are not at the required level....When I especially hate it is when I can see the progress, and it’s absolutely not present. You know, when you can see a student pick up a little bit and try and then get beaten back down by the next assessment.”

The emphatic, feeling-based language that Philippa used here, “very discouraging”, “especially hate” and “absolutely not present”, coupled with the personification of assessment—which Philippa described as beating students down—yielded for me an understanding of the protective response that Philippa had for her students and her desire to nurture their learning—as she had experienced herself at the side of her grandfather. For Philippa, cultivating learning dispositions in her students and enabling them to develop an awareness of the beauty in her subject were her purpose as an educator. Antithetical to this vision of learning was what Philippa described as the “school system”, about which she had a loss of confidence and reservations. Philippa’s highly emotional descriptions of how the current school system—as she was experiencing it at Yew Tree Christian College—was adversely affecting her were an indicator of the existential crisis that the participating

teachers were experiencing between the “Other’s” concept of education and their own desire for an education that was about flourishing and Kingdom-shaping.

Applying what Fairclough (2010) termed as the third dimension of CDA: sociocultural practice— through the lens of Gee’s (2005) Big “D” discourse and Lacan’s (1969) discourse analysis—to the interpretation of the text in the second dimension, it was possible to unravel the Master discourse that was at war with the perceptions of education that were held—whether they were aware of it or not—by the participating teachers. The “truth” about education that had been communicated by the master signifier<sup>27</sup>—either explicitly or implicitly—to the teachers was that their role was to equip students with the knowledge, skills and ability to demonstrate these through positive test results. The endorsement of—or acquiescence to—this role by the participating teachers served to effect this as a reality at Yew Tree Christian College, and to add further to the teachers’ sense of alienation as they played the role directed by the master puppeteer. Language from the extracts above that indicated either endorsement of or acquiescence to the master signifier’s truth is depicted in Table 6.4: Participant Language in the Extract that Reflected Acquiescence to the Master Signifier.

Third Dimension	Participant	Participant Language in the Extract that Reflected Acquiescence to the Master Signifier												
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Master Signifier)</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Knowledge)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Agent</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;">→</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>other</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Truth</td> <td style="text-align: center;">//</td> <td style="text-align: center;">product</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Teacher)</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Reality)</td> </tr> </table> </div>	(Master Signifier)		(Knowledge)	<b>Agent</b>	→	<b>other</b>	Truth	//	product	(Teacher)		(Reality)	James	Your job is to teach the Year One child...so that they can make a decision about what they’re gonna do in the workforce.
	(Master Signifier)		(Knowledge)											
	<b>Agent</b>	→	<b>other</b>											
	Truth	//	product											
	(Teacher)		(Reality)											
James	What’s it preparing them for? And I think it’s very much about the workforce.													
Mary	...time constraints mean that I feel like I just need to, you know, tick the boxes...													
Kevin	...the focus is on being able to regurgitate the content in that test type of thing													
Philippa	...project-based learning, for example, would work super well for me as a person.													

Table 6.4: Participant Language in the Extract that Reflected Acquiescence to the Master Signifier

Out of the four participant extracts, James’s extract indicated the least awareness of the role that the master signifier had assigned to him as the teacher. His matter of fact description of his job that, as the teacher, he was to prepare his students for the workforce,

<sup>27</sup> The master signifier is the dominant voice of a discourse that is received by a community (Neill, 2013). In the context of this research, it is the voice of market-driven elements of education that are focused on curriculum content, quantification of results and preparation of a workforce.

together with the high modality in the statement, “And I think it’s very much about the workforce”, suggested that, for him, this was a deeply held, unquestioned belief about his purpose as an educator. James’s endorsement of the role assigned to him by the master signifier was contrasted with the reluctant acquiescence that Mary, Kevin and Philippa gave to that same role. The difference in their perspectives from that of James was suggested by the fact that, although they fulfilled the role assigned to them, it was fulfilled grudgingly and with a sense that they were antithetically opposed to it. This was indicated through Mary’s justification of her actions, “I feel like I just need to...tick the boxes”, and Kevin’s obvious derision for the “test type of thing”. While Philippa overtly stated her opposition to the role assigned to her as educator in a market-driven context, her low modality in stating that “project-based learning...would work super well for me...” suggested that the style of learning that she described in her interview was something that she would like to utilise in her teaching, but was not currently doing. Consequently, all of the teachers demonstrated that their adherence to a paradigm of education that was antithetical to their understanding of the purposes of a Christian education caused a sense of alienation and frustration that hindered their ability to be the Christian educators that they desired to be.

### 6.2.2 The Effects of Market-driven Hindrances on the Participating Teachers:

#### Disempowerment

A result of the existential crisis of purpose for the participating teachers—as was discussed in Subsection 6.2.1—was a sense of disempowerment and dehumanisation—both for the teachers and for their students. This disempowerment seemed to be derived from the perception of the participating teachers that they were struggling with a lack of time, a crowded curriculum, constant assessment and consequent discipline issues. These same pressures were also indicative of those broadly experienced by teachers across Australia at the time, as was recognised by Stroud (2018), who stated that “Time is the commodity that’s slipping away—crowded out by continual assessment, further impacting on the quality of time spent with individuals” (n.p.). The participating teachers’ endorsement of—or acquiescence to—the role of educator that the master signifier communicated to them was ontologically antithetical to their belief that education was about imbuing within students an understanding of who they are as God’s creation and their God-given purpose in life. Their adherence to the voice of the master signifier—the “Other”—therefore seemed

to be alienating for them, causing a fragmentation between what they desired to do as Christian teachers and what they had to do as employees of Yew Tree Christian College. Additionally, the forces of a paradigm of education that was “locked in an ineffective industrial-era model...based on a one-size-fits-all...that focuses primarily on academic achievement” (Stroud, 2018, n.p.) were overwhelmingly strong and seemed to be an insurmountable barrier for the participating teachers. The fact that they perceived education’s incredible potential to be about the flourishing of students and society, yet their experience instead was of abject impotence, was incredibly discouraging for them. The following extracts taken from the individual interview transcripts reflected this adverse impact of the “Other” on the participants.

Philippa *But I don't know, I feel from my point of view as a teacher and, I'm not the only one that's said it, they, you know, it always feels like we're marking one test and then writing the next test and there yeah though that's important, but yeah there is a lot of that stuff, so. But, look, I don't know what do we, what do we do?*

James *We, we have a lot of knowledge about what education should be like, but we can't. There are too many tensions.*

Mary *...you are dealing with the bare bones a lot of the time when it comes to education. So we're teaching things to students that previously seemed to be fairly locked away a bit earlier than they are now. So, you know, like just very simple processes about, you know, respect for listening or sitting or not getting up from the seat when you you should be staying there or, you know, those kinds of things, which I feel like in previous years they were the accepted norms.*

Shane *“...so let's just have one big table and we'll sit around that”, um, and the students are quite shocked. And, in some sense, they're almost too lazy because they're not expecting it. They're like, “We couldn't be*

*bothered.”...Yeah. I had one example, a Year 11 class. Um, I’ve really struggled with them. They have just been disengaged.*

Philippa’s sense of disempowerment in her teaching was related to education’s failure to be about beauty, and was suggested by her use of absolutes, listing and rhetorical questioning. The idea that “it always feels like we’re marking one test...”, compounded with the additive semantic relation—syndetic listing—“...and then writing the next test and there...”, communicated for Philippa the incessant, cumulative character of the quantification of knowledge. For her, the other important elements that should have been intrinsic to education seemed to be crowded out by the continual focus on testing content. Earlier in her interview, she had described what she comprehended as being central to learning Mathematics: “...it should be more about beauty. However,...our course itself provides little scope for exploring that.” It is likely that the stark contrast for Philippa between what she perceived should be—beauty—and what existed in reality—testing—therefore led to her view that she was powerless to effect change, conveyed through the repeated rhetorical question: “I don’t know, what do we, what do we do?”

James’s frustration, similar to Philippa’s, was based on a perception that, collectively, “we” have the answers with regard to what education ought to be, but that these answers “can’t” be effected in reality. This existing and unrealised potential—communicated through the use of the present tense “have”—seemed to be the crux of James’s disillusionment. The burgeoning possibilities of education were conveyed by the nominalisation of “knowledge”, the amount of which was emphasised through the use of the modifying adjective “a lot of”. It is reasonable to conclude that James was implying through the use of the word “knowledge”—meaning information about a subject, derived from experience or study and with which people are familiar (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019)—that educators and the education system itself are abundantly equipped with an understanding of what is required to educate effectively. This was further indicated through his use of the modal verb, “should”, to convey a sense of duty or what is the correct thing to do (“Cambridge Dictionary,” 2019). Linking the two—“knowledge” with “should”—James was therefore signifying that there is a duty, or even a moral obligation, that undergirds education that was not being realised. The obstruction that hindered knowledge from being applied to



“what education should be like” was identified by James as “too many tensions”. These tensions were explored elsewhere in James’s interview as a lack of time, too much subject content, an emphasis on testing and student achievement, and parental expectations. As a result, when there is knowledge about what *should* be done that is thwarted by hindrances outside one’s control, it is likely that an individual will feel disempowered. James’s interview certainly suggested that this was a reality for him.

Both Mary’s and Shane’s extracts focused their sense of disempowerment on an inability to effect the desired intrinsic behaviour and engagement for learning in their students. Similarly to James, Mary utilised a contrast to emphasise just how student behaviour had altered over her teaching experience. Describing the past, Mary applied an idiom—“locked away”—to refer to student attitudes and behaviours that should have been fixed in place earlier—and that had been “in previous years”—but that now still required correction. She identified these attitudes and behaviours through a syndetic list, emphasising the number of attributes that she had expected that students would be demonstrating. These were “respect for listening or sitting or not getting up from the seat...or those kinds of things...”. Mary’s locating of the dehumanisation that she experienced in her teaching at the beginning of her statement, “I think it means that you are dealing with the bare bones a lot of the time...”, accentuated her disappointment at education as it had become. The reduction of learning to simple, basic processes, rather than being able to “engag[e] on a different level and get a bit further into conversations”, as Mary described for her ideal learning environment later in her interview, revealed the importance for her of relationships between teacher and student in the classroom. The lack of these relationships was disempowering for Mary as a teacher because relationships with self, others, God and the world (Wolterstorff, 2004) are central to a flourishing Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom.

Shane’s experience with his students was similar to that described by Mary. His expression that “I’ve really struggled”, through his straightforward, simple sentence structure and his use of the adverb clarifier “really” that may be used to emphasise a high degree of feeling (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019), painted a picture that was antithetical to that of the flourishing classroom. Struggle may imply the requirement of a great effort or difficulty to

overcome, and even an impending failure in the attempt ("Cambridge Dictionary," 2019). The reason for Shane's struggle with his Year 11 class—because "they have just been disengaged"—echoed the feelings that Mary expressed in her interview. Similarly to Mary, who desired conversations and deeper engagement with her students, Shane articulated the importance of relationships with his students through the physical arrangement of his classroom as a hospitable space where the teacher and students sat around one big table as a collective "we". Shalom occurs, however, in a community where the sojourners delight in one another and in their desire to relieve the world from injustice (J. Stronks, 2008). The students' negative response, "We couldn't be bothered", which was a rejection of Shane's overture of hospitality and of his aims to effect an education that was just both for the students in the class and *for* justice in its aim to promote learning that was about training his students to *be* just, was disempowering for him as the teacher.

As the researcher, it was a humbling experience for me to consider the poignantly expressed desires of the participant teachers. Their raw descriptions of their hopes and dreams with regard to their students, and their honest admissions of disappointment when these hopes were not realised, highlighted for me that their perception of their roles as teachers entailed much more than a transaction of information with their students in order to pass an examination. The reductionist view of the relationship between teacher and student in a market-driven context is disempowering for students who become disengaged from their learning, and dehumanising for teachers who become one more cog in a giant economic wheel that is designed to turn the economy.

### 6.2.3 The Effects of Market-driven Hindrances on the Participating Teachers: Erosion of Kingdom-shaping

Dehumanisation and disempowerment were adverse consequences of a market-driven context for the participating teachers that were explored in the previous subsection. A consequent by-product of the dehumanisation that emerged from an analysis of the data was the erosion of a Kingdom-shaping Christian focus. As executive staff members at Yew Tree Christian College became more focused on producing an education that was centred on elevating results in high-stakes testing, and as they narrowed the focus of the school to improving image and status in the school community, the vision for who the graduates of

the school would be in terms of their character and what they would do in terms of their Kingdom-shaping action was eroded. Instead, the emphasis became about how many students would achieve results in the top band that would, in turn, contribute to the school's status in league tables. The by-product of this prominence of results was anecdotally seen in 2019 through the number of students who chose to attend the school's leadership camp. Once a highlight of the year for Yew Tree Christian College student leaders, where up to 60 students would jostle for a position to attend, in 2019 the number of students who attended the camp had dwindled to 33. While 60 students were invited, 27 declined the invitation, most stating the need to focus on their assessments and their study as the reason for not attending. The tug-of-war between the desire to elevate results—thus fulfilling the expectations of the executive leaders at Yew Tree Christian College—and the desire to engender a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom was evident in the following extracts from the participant teachers' interviews.

- Kevin *I think the greatest challenge is the tension between wanting to get good academic results and have an academically rigorous reputation as a school, but also maintaining the Christian distinctive.*
- James *So you're working so hard just to [make sure] that kids are keeping up with content that there's not enough room to not even sometimes not even within [a] biblical perspective just to think critically and to think creatively. There's not enough space in the program and what is being expected that **we have to churn out for children, or even finishing the HSC [Higher School Certificate], it's still so content-based that um viewing things from a different perspective is not, um, valued as a leaver of school, even though it should be kind of thing. So I think you're constantly in a tension between ticking the boxes and having those meaningful lessons and the time to think critically, yeah.***
- Mary *Some things lend themselves to really good conversations that are Kingdom-shaping questions. But you know that the person around the corner at the local school is not going to be into that space and not going to take up three lessons,*

*where the kids will inevitably love it and a lot of kids will want to get involved in that conversation, but it's moving away from what you have to achieve. Um, and so I find that pressure a fairly constant one. That I don't feel like I have enough time to be able to complete what is a core requirement of the course, let alone going into some conversations that that I would want to do.*

**Andrea** *Um, if you've got this requirement that this thing must be done, maybe I better get that done um, and as for working out a really biblically grounded lesson for next period, look, I can wing it because I know the Bible passage. So, yeah, that's the temptation.*

**Shane** *But um - the art, the art scene, if they want it, if students want to get into the art world, it is very competitive um, and **you have to** push the boundaries um, and **you have to** do the unexpected, and **you have to** shock people, I guess um, in some way or another, and that is quite, often quite secular in the way that artists do that, so, yeah, it is a bit of a tension between, um, getting them to engage in the content, um, and to do their best, but also not to take on um that lifestyle, I guess.*

Of the above five extracts, four used either the word “tension” or the word “pressure” to describe the experience of balancing the Kingdom-shaping ideal with the requirement to cover the content and to achieve results. Table 6.5—Competing Points of Tension between a Kingdom-shaping Focus and Other Educational Requirements—depicts the elements of tension as articulated in the above extracts.

Participant	Kingdom-shaping Focus	Other Education Requirements
Kevin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining the Christian distinctive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanting to get good academic results</li> <li>• An academically rigorous reputation</li> </ul>
James	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking critically and creatively</li> <li>• Viewing things from a biblical perspective</li> <li>• Meaningful lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep up with content</li> <li>• Fulfilling expectations</li> <li>• Children finishing the HSC</li> <li>• Ticking boxes</li> </ul>
Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Really good conversations that are Kingdom-shaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing with other schools</li> <li>• What you have to achieve</li> <li>• Completing core requirements of a course</li> </ul>
Andrea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblically grounded lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This requirement that this thing must be done</li> </ul>
Shane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Christian lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Push boundaries and do the unexpected, shock people</li> <li>• Engage in the content and do their best</li> </ul>

*Table 6.5: Competing Points of Tension between a Kingdom-shaping Focus and Other Educational Requirements*

A number of similar threads emerged with regard to how the participants expressed the nature of the tensions between Kingdom-shaping desires and other educational requirements. Firstly, the number of other educational requirements that were mentioned by each participant far outweighed the Kingdom-shaping desires that they had in their teaching. The Kingdom-shaping focus was simply stated by all participants—with the exception of James—as being one element, such as a biblical perspective. By contrast, the pressures that were articulated as a result of other educational requirements were largely expressed in multiples. This was then further supported by the resounding theme throughout that “there’s not enough space” or “enough time” to accommodate the Kingdom-shaping perspective. The fact that there were more other educational requirements listed than the Kingdom-shaping focus suggested that, for the participants, the pressure of meeting those other requirements was stronger and more forceful than the need to be Kingdom-shaping. It appeared that, for most participants, the Kingdom-shaping focus was indeed eroded as a result. This was evident in Andrea’s description, where she stated that “maybe I better get that [requirement] done and, as for working out a really biblically grounded lesson,...I can wing it...”, and in Mary’s extract that described how “I don’t feel like I have enough time to be able to complete what is a core requirement of the course, let alone going in to some conversations that that I would want to do”. In Andrea’s extract, the hypotactic relationship between the main clause—“maybe I better get that [requirement] done”—and the subordinate clause—“as for working out a really biblically grounded lesson”—revealed the main idea in her statement. Placing the biblically grounded lesson in a subordinate position to the requirement revealed the power relation between

the two factors, and the fact that the requirement was placed in a more prominent position than the biblically grounded lesson. For Mary, the subordination of the desired conversations to the core requirements of the course was evident through the ordering of the ideas in the sentence. Time was not available to be able to complete the core requirements, “let alone” the Kingdom-shaping conversations. The use of the adverbial phrase, “let alone”, which usually appears after a negative statement to emphasise the unlikelihood of a situation (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019), further accentuated that the curriculum content was given a higher priority than the Kingdom-shaping conversations.

The tension between the expectations of educational requirements and a Kingdom-shaping Christian education was expressed by James and Shane through the auxiliary verb “have to”. James stated that “we have to churn out [the expectations] for children”, and Shane articulated “and you have to push the boundaries and you have to do the unexpected and you have to shock people...and that is quite often quite secular”. The auxiliary verb “have to” is used with another verb to express an action that needs to or must be carried out (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019). In these two extracts, the action that was imperative was churning out expectations, pushing boundaries and shocking people. For both James and Shane, these were expressed in such a way as to convey that they were deemed antithetical to a Kingdom-shaping education. Shane’s use of syndetic listing, “and”, that was used in conjunction with the repetition of “have to” also added emphasis to the number of pressures that were on students, with the overall effect being one of crowding out the Christian lifestyle. Additionally, James’s use of the phrase “churn out” further amplified the effect of market-driven pressures on education because it implied that an education such as he was describing—one that was about meeting curriculum expectations—was mass produced.

Most participants expressed the pressures that they were facing through a nominalisation of expectations or requirements. James phrased the tension in “what is being expected”. Mary used the term “a core requirement of the course”. Andrea expressed the tension in terms of “this requirement that this thing must be done”. Only Kevin and Shane used verbs and located the expectations within the school community, Kevin stating, “wanting to get good academic results”, and Shane giving students ownership over their desire “to get into

the art world". The nominalisation of the requirements served to remove the identity of the initiator (Fairclough, 2003), thereby rendering the participants powerless to fight against the expectations that were being placed upon them. Kevin and Shane's locating of the pressures within the school community suggested that pressures on teachers were derived from both outside and inside Yew Tree Christian College.

The title of this thesis is "Not for sale: The challenge to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian school education for Shalom in an Australian market-driven context". As I talked with various other leading Christian educators in the time during which I was undertaking this research project, a number expressed the countervailing view that there is no conflict between a Kingdom-shaping Christian education and the market. On the contrary, these extracts clearly demonstrate that there is indeed a significant pressure that is faced by Christian teachers who desire to engender a Kingdom-shaping education and that, disturbingly, despite the passion of the participating teachers, the requirements of the curriculum were given supremacy over the Kingdom-shaping. This indicates that there is a very real danger of the erosion of Kingdom-shaping practices owing to a market-driven context that is all about results, success and the academic reputation of a school.

### 6.3 Answers to Research Question 2 – Collective Perspective/s

Similarly to the individual expressions of hindrances that were discussed above, the description of hindrances that occurred in the PLCs meetings demonstrated that an existential crisis of purpose, disempowerment and an erosion of Kingdom-shaping at Yew Tree Christian College also existed for the participants collectively. In order to capture the interplay among the participants in their dialogue, longer extracts from just four of the meeting transcripts have been utilised in this analysis. As the meetings progressed, participants began to show growing awareness of the effects of the hindrances on them personally and collectively and on Yew Tree Christian College. This was indicative that the aims of the research project, as were explicated in Chapter 4, that participants would be empowered to explore how their practice had been shaped and constrained by the narrative of Babylon, and to consider how they may release themselves from these

constraints, creating space for an alternative narrative—such as Shalom—to be imbued at Yew Tree Christian College, were being realised.

The following extract is a section of the transcribed audio from PLCs meeting 2. It included interaction among five of the six participating teachers.

James *But I think it comes from a fear of getting it wrong. And I think, in Biblical Studies, I already have kids that go, "Oh, I know this story. I know this story." And I have to say to them, "I've read this story a thousand times and I'll still learn something new from it. God will challenge me with it." But there's that kind of "I've learned it once; I'm done."*

Bronwyn *It's about knowledge.*

James *Yeah. And I guess that that being. It's, yeah, more just about the surface knowledge, rather than how it actually applies to me and what I can do with it later on.*

Philippa *Related to that, I personally think that the way that we assess in our subjects – well, my subjects – to be disastrous. I have no interest in in categorising kids into an order - I know the school does.*

Shane *- Well, I think the school system in general does....I don't think schools are set up for 80%, like 20% of [students] learn this way but for the other 80%, [they] actually don't want to sit taking in information all day.*

Mary *One of the things I've been doing this year with my Year 7 History class, but more so with my Year 11 class, is doing what they call "alt history" which is basically reimagining History events. You can't do it too long cause it isn't really syllabussy and stuff.... "What if" sort of history, cause you can't get that sort of information, they have to actually think*



*through...and then you get them to justify why they came up with that particular response and then you go and look at the actual events that unfolded at that point and it gives a new light...*

James

*But it takes time to train kids to do that, cause I've been doing it with Year [number] with See, Think, Wonders. What do you see in the History source? - a birthday party - and what questions does it make you think of? And I've just felt so disheartened - the questions, I mean, It's a [age] year old's level but the questions were so so surface and so, I wanted to do it again but I had to go onto the next thing and until I kind of start embedding that as a priority in my teaching, it takes time to get that thinking kind of happening...*

Shane

*...But again, all these things aren't obviously something that you can do every lesson, even though they seem to be the lessons that the students remember.*

Kevin

*...I sometimes find that the best lessons are when I shut up and just let them do it.*

Mary

*I wonder if sometimes it's [taking ownership over learning] a greater problem in like a Christian school and out of um like some of the kids have very fixed very fixed views at our school at a very young age that there's not a lot of validity in their thinking so one of the great tools that we can use is to be like, not the devil's advocate necessarily, but be someone who is challenging their fixed view. Even if we've come to the conclusion that they've got it right, it's actually good to prove it to me. Some subjects lend themselves better to that than others...*

Philippa

*And yet I also think that, in terms of at least me practically, and I'm sure it's the same for all of us, we are so bound by our programs and I don't*

*actually know what because we are going to have to do things within, we can't I guess we can't really branch out...*

An examination of the use of deixis throughout the extract demonstrated the woven interaction of ideas among the participants and that, through their dialogue, they were building a shared understanding of their practice. Words such as “Related to that”, “but it takes time to train kids to do that” and “all these things” were markers that indicated the connectedness between the thoughts of the various speakers and the previous participant’s ideas, demonstrating the cohesion of the dialogue.

A number of hindrances were identified by the participating teachers in this extract. These were:

- A lack of time;
- Assessment and the categorisation of students;
- Being bound by the curriculum;
- Students’ fixed mindset; and
- Students’ unwillingness to go beyond surface knowledge.

An indication that the participating teachers were hindered by the expectations of “the Other” (Sartre, 1992) in their endeavours to imbue a Christian education appeared in their mental processing with regard to feeling and thinking. The participants used the following phrases in response to the hindrances that they were facing:

- “...I personally think that the way that we assess in our subjects...to be **disastrous**.”
- “...I don’t think schools are **set up for 80%** [of students]”
- “And I’ve just felt so **disheartened**...”.

The pithiness of the language—particularly the terms “disastrous” and “disheartened”—led to a consciousness that the teachers were unwilling participants in a style of schooling that they found to be detrimental for “80%” of their students. The sense that they felt trapped in this education paradigm was furthered by the fact that their practice continued to be adversely affected by it. This was evident in the words of James, who stated: “I wanted to do it again but I had to go onto the next thing...”, and of Mary, who claimed: “You can’t do it

too long [be]cause it isn't really syllabussy", and of Philippa, who finished with: "...we are so bound by our programs....I guess we can't really branch out...". The semantic relations in these statements demonstrated the connections between the desires of the participants and their actions. For example, James's contrastive use of "but" to separate "I wanted" from "I had to" revealed that going onto the next thing was an action that was inspired by outside influences, even though he felt "so disheartened". Similarly, Mary's use of "[be]cause"—a reason semantic relation that explains the cause of action—justified why she could not engage in classroom practice, such as "alt history", too often, even though she found it effective for bringing "a new light" to her students' understanding. Instead, the fact that it wasn't "syllabussy" enough shaped her practice. Finally, Philippa, although she was highly critical of the outside expectations placed on her, complied with these expectations, justifying her doing so through the hypotactic relation "because we are going to have to do things, we can't" where she subordinated her desires to what she had to do. As a result, all these participants expressed that they had desires to imbue in their practice an alternative way, but that, because of the louder voice of "the Other" expectations placed upon them of time and the curriculum, they were unable to do so.

Consequently, the participants also expressed a sense of disempowerment in the face of what seemed to be overwhelmingly powerful factors shaping their practice. This was indicated in the above extract, and also in an extract from PLCs meeting 4:

Mary *I actually talk a lot about my life to my students....It's that distancing in education that's going on. We have to be so safe. It's not a relationship. It's a, or it's a relationship of a moment. So, when we're in the classroom, we have a transaction where I pass on information to you um; I give you nothing back of my own circumstances and yeah. So I thought that was really anti sort of anti-relationship.*

Philippa *I feel that too. The way we've changed. And so we get less information. And I feel, like I know why, so I'm I'm not ignorant of why we don't get given the*

*information because we have to protect, but it doesn't allow us to make the best decisions....Management plans don't always work.*

Andrea *Perhaps the model [of school] itself isn't geared very well to forming communities. They get formed in spite of the model.*

Mary *We sort of don't expect it in our classrooms a lot of the time either that anything's going to be revolutionary....In some circumstances it happens, but not very often.*

The main theme that emerged from this PLCs meeting, and that was echoed in other meetings as well, was the importance of relationships between teachers and their students. The significance of relationships is reflected in a plethora of literature about Christian education (Burggraaf, 2014; Dow, 2013; A. E. Greene, 1998; Knight, 2006; Pietsch, 2018; J. K. Smith, 2009). The disempowerment that the participating teachers felt with regard to their perceived difficulties in imbuing a relational Kingdom-shaping education was reflected again in their use of the mental processes of thinking and feeling. The following were evident in this extract from Meeting 4:

- *“So I thought that was really anti-relationship.”*
- *“I feel that too....And I feel...it doesn't allow us to make the best decisions.”*

The importance of relationships was particularly evident in Mary's contributions in the extract from Meeting 4. Her use of the adverb “actually” to state that “I actually talk a lot about my life to my students” indicated that talking “a lot about my life” is the opposite of what the current culture allows from a teacher. This was then explained in her following sentences where she listed the contrasting elements of education that were antithetical to relationships:

- *“It's that distancing in education that's going on.”*
- *“We have to be so safe.”*

- “...we have a transaction where I pass on information to you; I give you nothing back of my own circumstances.”

Mary’s attitude towards these elements of education was indicated by her use of language. For example, her use of the determiner, “that”, separated the idea from herself, presenting the concept that the distancing in education was not something to which she subscribed. Furthermore, her application of market language such as the metaphor “transaction” that she explicated as passing information and giving nothing back of herself was then described as “anti-relationship”. The use of “anti” as a prefix rather than a word such as “devoid” presented the idea that this paradigm of education not only left out relationships but also worked against them. The disempowerment of the participants was then expressed in terms of the following:

- “We have to...”
- “We get less...”
- “It doesn’t allow us...”
- “We don’t expect it...either.”

The use of auxiliary verbs such as “have to”, which demonstrated forced behaviour, indicated the lack of autonomy that participants felt in this model of education. They had no permission to seek a reciprocating relationship with their students. Finally, they indicated that they had become complicit in the model because they no longer looked for or expected relationships that were meaningful or revolutionary in their classrooms.

This view of the marginalisation of relationships was also echoed in later meetings, along with its associated disempowerment. In Meeting 5, the following was expressed in a conversation between Shane and Mary:

Shane                    *And the relational aspect which is what this [reading] spoke about*

Mary                    *centres on. It's not there if that's removed.*

Shane                    *And we're becoming much more robotic.*

Mary *It's impossible to operate if you're not relational in the classroom. If you're not connecting with your students. If you're not sharing stories with your students about your own life at times. It's not, that is not relational.*

Shane *Yeah, I really agree with that because that's something that is really special about the school. Um, the relational side, and now we just all, or at least I'm finding, what can I say? What can I do? And I think the students are picking up on it as well...*

Mary *And the other side is this sort of sense of really important, deep teaching. But then such a such a lot of pressure that's suddenly come from nowhere to at the upper end and towards the end, [Year] 11 and 12, to just be getting results....And the message is just abundantly clear that quality education, but what's the purpose of the quality education? Is it actually just looking good on a piece of paper that parents look at? I understand the paradox and the challenges that exist with that, but I think it's I don't think it's revolutionary to go and, to say, to say things without actually, you know. I think we know that stuff we're doing would work, but it's a risky kind of approach to things, and I'm not sure that, as much as, yeah, I don't know, I'm not sure if there's the willingness to take the risk or if we're just grammar schooling ourselves in some ways, or trying to when that's not the reality of our circumstances either. And I'm not, I'm not.*

Philippa *You're not the only one that's wondering about those things.*

Mary *I'm sure. And there's lots of people in the staff that are feeling like that, that push. And maybe it's more Secondary, but I'm not sure.*

The synergy between the feelings of Shane and Mary was demonstrated in this extract through the fact that there were instances where they finished each other's sentences in the first three lines. To delineate between the two participants, Shane's contribution has been underlined: "And the relational aspect which is what this [reading] spoke about centres on. It's not there if that's removed and we're becoming much more robotic." Additionally, the use of a conjunction "and" to build on previous ideas, such as in "And the other side is...", also emphasised the connection between their opinions. Furthermore, the strength of their attitudes towards the lack of relationships was expressed in the use of language that highlighted the ensuing objectification. Shane revealed this through the statement: "...we're becoming much more robotic", where he used a metaphor to indicate the lack of autonomy that he felt in his practice, and that likened his and others in the group—through the use of the collective pronoun "we're"—to machines. Moreover, Mary's repetition of the negation "you're not" also emphasised a deficit view of education that resulted from a lack of relationships. The contrast of "not" revealed Mary's view of what she deemed to be relational:

- "...connecting with your students."
- "...sharing stories with your students about your own life..."

The sense of disempowerment derived from an outside force was expressed through rhetorical questioning: "What can I say? What can I do?" and "Is it actually just looking good on a piece of paper...?" Also contributing to the sense of disempowerment and lack of hope was the expression of risk and "I'm not sure if there's the willingness to take the risk..." The general consensus throughout the meetings was that Yew Tree Christian College had lost its identity, and was instead "grammar schooling" itself.

Finally, the third extract, which demonstrated a concern amongst the participants that Yew Tree Christian College was losing its Christian distinctiveness, was taken from the first PLCs meeting:

Kevin            *One of the things I feel...when I was here 15 years ago, every single meeting opened and closed in prayer. Every single meeting. Every parent meeting would open and close in prayer. I like praying with parents....But I*

*noticed when my girls started here, and when [staff name] started here, that that's not a common practice any more. Ah and I've certainly noticed that coming back on staff here that that's not the way we do things.*

Bronwyn *Even with [staff] devotions?*

James *Yep. Click, click, click [clicking fingers]...*

Mary *I'm not sure what shifted first, though. Like it's one of those funny moments that. Yeah. I remember coming when [staff name] was first here. And like seeing, and it took me a while, took me about two years to stop getting emotional about being in the hall and seeing 15-year-old boys singing like proudly about God and and that was overwhelming, and I was like what is this, what the heck is this place? What are they doing here? And that is - not the reality of our school anymore. It's not.*

Collective *Hmmmm.*

Mary *And, like I said, it may be because we shifted first or the the pressures that we were feeling as from abroad shifted, um culture shifted certainly, um but we have definitely shifted and that's a really interesting point. I mean I've been involved in a bunch of interesting things over the last few weeks [laughing] and it was one of the things that I was going to raise as a notable difference that that prayer is not at the centre of what I do in practice. I don't expect to pray with a parent anymore. Because, basically, I don't know their context. I'm not, um they may know my context to some degree, but I know that often the parents that I'm speaking to, that wouldn't be part of their regular um - aspect of their life, I guess, to come and start a conversation about their children. So, I assume that is the case, and most of my meetings then are conducted in that manner.*



James *I think on that, it's it's that legalism that has come into schooling, even more so, in that we're too scared to do anything in case we get in trouble or we get or you get too personal and you make it someone makes a complaint because you offended someone so like. Even in terms of writing a general comment on a on a report, we've got to be so careful now.*

Mary and *[Snicker]*

Shane

Philippa *We don't write comments anymore.*

Shane *Let's not talk about that [laughing].*

James *About – yeah about speaking kind of on more personal issues that um that - um so we don't even go there spiritually because of*

Mary *No.*

James *fear of yeah getting in trouble.*

A common thread throughout this extract from PLCs Meeting 1 was what was no longer happening at Yew Tree Christian College that had been happening in the past. These are identified in Table 6.6: Changed Practices at Yew Tree Christian College and Associated Language Used by Participants.

Element of Yew Tree Christian School that had Changed	Associated Language Used by the Participating Teachers about the Change
A reduced experience of prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...when I was here 15 years ago, <u>every</u> single meeting opened and closed in prayer. <u>Every</u> single meeting. <u>Every</u> parent meeting...that's not a common practice <b>anymore</b>...that's <u>not</u> the way we do things.”</li> <li>“...prayer <u>is not</u> at the centre of what I do in practice. <u>I don't expect</u> to pray with a parent <b>anymore</b>.”</li> </ul>
Student engagement in worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“And that is – <u>not</u> the reality of our school <b>anymore</b>. It's <u>not</u>.”</li> </ul>
Writing report comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“...<u>we're too scared</u> to do anything in case we get into trouble...Even in terms of writing a general comment on a, on a report, we've got to be <u>so</u> careful <b>now</b>.”</li> <li>“We <u>don't</u> write comments <b>anymore</b>.”</li> </ul>

Table 6.6: Changed Practices at Yew Tree Christian College and Associated Language Used by Participants

Throughout the extracts in Table 6.6, “anymore” was used by three of the five contributors to this section of dialogue. “Anymore”, used as an adverb, has the meaning of no longer, or in the past but not now (“Cambridge Dictionary”, 2019). Similarly, James used the word “now” in his talk also to imply that previously things had been different. As such, it was then possible to identify that, in the past, meetings began with prayer, students engaged enthusiastically in worship, teachers wrote individual report comments<sup>28</sup> about students that applied to them as a whole person and there had been less fear amongst teachers. Kevin emphasised the distinctiveness of prayer in all meetings through his repetition of the word, “every”, which he utilised three times in the space of 12 words. Emphasising the fact that prayer occurred in all meetings was Kevin’s pairing of “every” with the word “single”: “every single meeting”. Furthermore, to express their ideas, the participants used negation such as: “that’s not the way we do things”, “prayer is not at the centre”, “that is not the reality”, and “we don’t write comments”. The subsequent effect was that the positive characteristics of the school, such as prayer, engagement in worship and reporting were turned into negative outcomes. Additionally, in the extract from Meeting 1, Mary’s repetition of the word “shifted”, which she used four times, also stressed that the culture at Yew Tree Christian College had changed. The semantic structure within which Mary employed this repetition suggested that she was thinking out aloud, and attempting to understand the cause and time for the change that had taken place. This is because of the low level of certainty with the word “maybe”, the variety of syndetic words used: “or”, “but”, and “and”, and the lack of flow, communicated by the repetition of words and fillers such as “um”. She stated: “...it may be because we shifted first, or the the pressures that we were feeling as from abroad shifted, um, culture shifted certainly, um, but we have definitely shifted, and that’s a really interesting point.” This, paired with her use of rhetorical questions, such as “what the heck is this place?”, to elevate her past sense of

---

<sup>28</sup> Report comments were still being written at Yew Tree Christian College. The change to which participants were referring was an initiative to use a prewritten comment bank where comments only focused on levels of achievement, rather than on a student’s approach to learning or effort. It was mandated by executive staff members at the school that all comments would be derived from the comment bank. The research participants found this dehumanising. While one could argue that report writing is purely educational and does not fit under a Kingdom-shaping section of analysis, considering that a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom is about knowing, being and doing in relationship, report writing should be an important element of the Kingdom-shaping that occurs in the school. Moreover, all elements of education—not just the Christian content—are formational (D. I. Smith, 2018).

surprise and wonder at 15-year-old boys who were “singing proudly about God” conveyed to me that she looked back on the past with fondness and desired to know what had led to the shift.

The analysis that emerged from Table 6.6 and the rest of the extract from PLCs Meeting 1 began to paint for me a vivid picture of a sense of loss that participants were feeling. Of greatest concern, however, was that, right in the first PLCs meeting, participants were focusing on elements of Yew Tree Christian College that indicated that they believed that the spiritual fervour that had been present in the past was no longer there, and that there had been an erosion of Kingdom-shaping at the school. This erosion was attributed by participants to a number of possibilities, such as pressures from abroad, culture, legalism and fear. James finally summed up this impact in his words that “we don’t even go there spiritually because of fear of getting into trouble”. When comparing the PLCs meetings over time—from the first meeting to the final meeting—I expected that the focus on hindrances would have decreased. To some extent this was true in the final three meetings. However, because the discussion of Kingdom-shaping education was conducted through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom—The Word, incarnation and Proclamation—and of the writings of a plethora of experienced Christian theologians and educators (Brueggemann, 2001; Goldsworthy, 2001; Knight, 2006; Palmer, 2010; J. K. Smith, 2009; Stephens, 2016; Wright, 2011a), participant understanding of the ideals of a Kingdom-shaping education grew over the year that the meetings took place. Rather than decreasing their discussion of hindrances, this elevated their awareness of the hindrances at Yew Tree Christian College as they compared what was occurring with what could be. As a result, some of the later meetings had a greater focus on hindrances than the earlier meetings.

#### 6.4 Summing Up Research Question 2: Hindrances Revealed by Participating Teachers that Conflicted with their Kingdom-shaping Practice

Chapter 6 has explored the data and the associated analysis of those data that pertained to Research Question 2: What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice? A variety of hindrances was identified by the participants in their individual interviews and in the PLCs

meetings. These ranged from an overloaded curriculum and time pressures to student disengagement and discipline. Participants revealed that the impacts of these hindrances on them were to cause an existential crisis between their desire to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education and the resultant pressures that they were facing that prevented them from enacting their desires, a consequent feeling of disempowerment and an erosion of Kingdom-shaping practice in the school. Individual participant data derived from the transcripts of the interviews aligned with the collective views of participants that emerged in the transcriptions of audio recorded PLCs meetings. Repeatedly throughout the year that I spent with the participants, I was reminded through their words and actions that they had intrinsic desires to be Kingdom-shaping in their practice. At times, particularly after PLCs Meeting 5—where there was a realisation, expressed by Mary, “I felt very confronted by that article and thinking in lots of ways....It isn’t the direction that we are seemingly taking...the high ideals that were placed on a Christian education” — there was an overwhelming sense of loss for what had been a flourishing Christian school. On the way home from that meeting, I wept as I recalled the participant descriptions of what had been, together with their collective expressions of despair at what currently was. As Chapter 7 reveals, however, it became evident that the relationship of a group of teachers with a deep desire to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom, together with the utilisation of AR, could effect a positive and life-giving transformation in ourselves—individually and as a group—and, consequently, in Yew Tree Christian College.

## Chapter 7: Analysis – Transformed Practice: Together, the Instruments of Change

*They were nothing more than people, by themselves....But all together, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great.*

*Together, all together, they are the instruments of change.*

Keri Hulme, *The Bone People*, p. 4

### 7.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 6 focused on the hindrances that were revealed by the participating teachers, both individually and collectively, in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education at Yew Tree Christian College. Emerging from the participant interviews and transcripts of PLCs—Process Learning Circles—were constraints such as an emphasis on academic achievements and metrics, overcrowded curriculum requirements, lack of time, school structures, interruptions to learning owing to student discipline concerns and disengagement from learning, conflict with regard to spiritual beliefs and a lack of teacher professional development. In their discussion, the teachers revealed that these hindrances had caused internal frustrations to arise as they struggled between an intrinsic desire to imbue Kingdom-shaping in their teaching and the external demands to meet systemic and school requirements. Consequently, they faced a sense of disempowerment and helplessness that was derived from a perception that they were powerless to overcome the hindrances that they were experiencing. It emerged through participant discussion that the subsequent acquiescence of the participating teachers to the demands that they were facing was a possible contributor to an erosion of the Kingdom-shaping Christian focus and culture at Yew Tree Christian College.

Chapter 7 is the final of three chapters that have focused on data analysis. It centres on answering the third research question—How were the participating teachers' deepening

insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice? Accordingly, this chapter centres on the Action Research (AR), the use of the Tripod of Shalom as a lens and data derived from the discussion and reflections of participating teachers in the PLCs meetings. Firstly, this chapter considers the participating teachers' deepening insights into Kingdom-shaping education that could be attributed to the PLCs and the implementation of the AR. The latter half of this chapter then explores how these insights were transformational for the participating teachers' practice.

### 7.1.1 A Word on Transformation

In Chapter 4, the capacity of AR as a means by which participants could work collaboratively to “reconstruct and transform...practices” (Somekh, 2006, p. 27) was explored. Through an analysis of the social environment at Yew Tree Christian College, and a collective self-study of practice, the participants were facilitated to consider their understandings of the nature of Kingdom-shaping, and to envisage how “transformational action” (McTaggart et al., 2017, p. 22) may imbue a Kingdom-shaping culture within a market-driven context at Yew Tree Christian College. Consequently, the desire was to effect “morally committed action...that comes together and coheres in a way of life” (Kemmis, 2007, p. 3).

Reflecting Kemmis's (2007) view that AR aims to change three things—practice, understandings of practice and the conditions under which practice takes place—, and taking into account Carr's and Kemmis's (2004) definition as they applied it to educational research, transformation in the context of this research project encapsulated the following components:

- Allowing the participants to explore and develop their **understandings** of the nature of Kingdom-shaping Christian education;
- Enabling the participants to develop awareness of **themselves** and of their **situation** at Yew Tree Christian College that had frustrated the pursuit of Kingdom-shaping Christian education;
- Facilitating an awareness of **action** that could allow these frustrations to be eliminated or overcome; and

- Taking emancipatory action that was reflective of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

Consequently, transformation referred to an illumined vision—**knowing**<sup>29</sup>—for the participants through a growing, reflective awareness of themselves and of their context. This new way of **knowing** then facilitated a marked change in their **being** and **acting** that became intently focused on emancipation from the frustrations and on imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. Research Question 3 particularly focused on the transformation of practice that emerged from the developing awareness of Kingdom-shaping Christian education. In keeping with the discussion of action that was explored in Chapter 4, particularly in relation to phronesis and praxis, practice is understood in the context of this thesis to mean the application of belief—as distinct from the theory that relates to it—and the emerging way of doing something that then becomes a way of life. Wenger’s (1998) definition of practice—“a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful” (p. 51)—is helpful for elucidating the transformation of practice as it pertained to the third research question. The desire, therefore, was to understand how a group of teachers whose illumined way of knowing and transformed being and acting brought about a more meaningful engagement that was indicative of a Kingdom-shaping way of life.

## 7.2 Answers to Research Question 3 – Transformation of **Knowing** and **Being**

**How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?**

---

<sup>29</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

As was outlined in Chapter 5—with regard to participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of Kingdom-shaping Christian education—there was a sense that a Christian education was synonymous with Kingdom-shaping. Furthermore, the way that participants expressed their understandings of Kingdom-shaping education in their interviews suggested that they lacked confidence in articulating the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education. Finally, the participants’ talk about Kingdom-shaping demonstrated a high prevalence of language that was centred on cognitive **knowledge**, rather than a balance among spiritual **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, suggesting that they equated Kingdom-shaping—or Christian education—with head knowledge rather than with a shaping of self and action. An analysis of the transcribed audio recordings from the PLCs meetings suggested that, over the year of their meeting together and the implementation of the AR intervention, the participants developed a deeper insight into the nature of Kingdom-shaping. I now unpack some of the deepening insights that participants gained into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education, and how these contributed to transformed practice.

### 7.2.1 Kingdom-shaping is More than Just Head Knowledge

The deepening insights of the participating teachers with regard to the nature of Kingdom-shaping education were evident through their reflections that took place in PLCs Meeting 8 as they reread their interview transcripts. Moreover, comparing how they talked about Kingdom-shaping in early PLCs meetings—and the AR implementation that arose from this—with the ensuing implementation that occurred in the later AR cycles also provided an indication of their deepening insights. This first subsection of Section 2 of Chapter 7 begins with an analysis of the deepening insights that were derived from participant reflections that occurred in PLCs Meeting 8.

Utilising Caine and Caine’s (2010) structure of PLCs meetings that included a reading phase (a list of readings is located in Appendix F), PLCs Meeting 8 began with participants being provided with transcripts of their interviews and the time to read and reflect on what they had said in response to the interview questions. As they read, participants muttered, chuckled and snorted with amusement as they recalled their earlier thoughts about the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education. Their ensuing discussion highlighted that all participants had shifted in their understanding of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-



shaping education. The following extracts from PLCs Meeting 8 demonstrated the reflections of the participants on their understanding of Kingdom-shaping education:

Philippa *For me, what's changed is it's a broader concept, I think....Reading through the interview, I was shocked at how scattered, random and vague and inconsequential a lot of the things I was saying [were]. So I think just the time we've had to sit and reflect on it—so the outward focus, the proclamation and all of that...*

Kevin *I think I used to see Christian education as about the children, and I think I've been challenged to think about this is not just about the children; it's about my colleagues as well.*

Shane *My thinking was very works-based, me-focused, what am I doing, whereas that idea of prayer, the Kingdom-shaping education as well, surrender, letting God lead, which is very opposite to the education system, which is very measured. It's the relational side, I think, that has come out more, as opposed to ticking the boxes.*

Mary *I think [the Tripod] provides a framework. And, when I look at my interview, I had a sense, but I didn't have any legs on how to think through it, so it's actually given it a framework....So you can operate out of that space and know what you're doing, rather than sort of be, in a sense, touching on something and wondering why it might have been effective...*

Andrea *...one of the challenges to how I thought, I think, [is] there is more potential for students to really step up and...proclaim the Kingdom. And be really Kingdom-shaping in their person and in their actions. More so than I thought. And, perhaps, also more antipathy to that idea among some of our students than I thought.*

James *I think we haven't understood what a Kingdom-shaping education is....Like it's only taken until the end to go, "Ah ha! This is what a Kingdom-shaping education is." And "Oh, we are doing it, and this is happening. We can see that." So I don't think Kingdom-shaping has been a language that we use at our school. "Biblical perspective" we use, "Christian schooling" we use, but having an understanding of the fact that it is more than just programs and teaching has taken a while to get...*

It was evident in these extracts that, beyond the intrinsic development of the participants' understandings of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education, they were also explicitly aware of how far their insights had deepened. This awareness of their own deepening insights was indicated through the comparative language that they used in their reflections. For example, Kevin stated: "I used to see....It's not just about the children; it's about my colleagues as well." His comparison with the past, through the words "used to" and "just" compared with "as well", revealed a growing and explicit comprehension of the nature of Kingdom-shaping. Similarly, Andrea compared her previous thinking with her new comprehension through the expression: "More so than I thought", indicating that her comprehension of the potential of students was now of a greater degree than her previous thinking. Other participants demonstrated their growth in insight through the use of a contrastive semantic relation. For example, both Mary and James compared their previous understanding with their new insights through the use of "but". Mary stated: "I had a sense, but I didn't have..." , and James explained: "...Christian schooling we use, but having an understanding...that it is more". This use of a contrastive semantic relation revealed that the participants—such as Mary and James—were explicitly aware that there was a difference—or contrast—between what they had previously thought and what they had come to understand.

The participants' growth in their awareness of the differences between their previous understanding of Christian education and how that had evolved as they had considered the nature of Kingdom-shaping was also evident in the emotion and attitude that crept into their statements about Kingdom-shaping. Philippa's statement that "I was shocked at how scattered, random and vague and inconsequential a lot of the things I was saying [were]"

illuminated the realisation of her progression from her earlier thoughts to her final comprehension. The fact that she was “shocked” at the difference between her prior statements and her later understandings suggested that, for her, the contrast was so great that she could not comprehend that she had ever held her previous opinions. This reaction was compounded by the listing of four adjectives that she used to describe “a lot of the things” that she had previously said. The application of the conjunction “and” in a list usually signifies that the list has come to an end (“Lists: General rules”, 2013). Philippa’s use of a second conjunction “and” in the list to add another adjective—“scattered, random and vague and inconsequential”—suggested the intense derision that she felt towards her previous ideas, because it indicated that she was flooded with negative descriptors that continued to flow even after her list had initially been completed. This further implied a radical change to her original understanding. Similarly, Kevin’s application of the word “challenged”—implying that he had been cognitively confronted—and James’s interjection: “Ah ha!”, which was full of emphasis, also implied a sense of intrinsic, emotional engagement with his new understanding of Kingdom-shaping education. This was more than cognitive head **knowledge**; rather, it indicated that the participants were developing a spiritual **knowing**, and, consequently, an imbuing of this **knowing** in their **being**. They were coming to understand that cognitive **knowledge** may be held within the mind of a person without informing that whole person’s **being** or **doing**. The epiphany of the nature of a spiritual **knowing** seemed to enable the participants to realise that, beyond conveying cognitive **knowledge** about the Bible to their students, it was also important to inspire their students, as Andrea expressed, to “be really Kingdom-shaping in their **person** and in their **actions**”.

Freire (1970a) posed the idea that true **knowing** involves a person engaging in critical recognition of the culture that has shaped her or him, and moving towards reflection and then transformational **action** upon the world as a result. This deepening awareness of the reality that shapes life and of the capacity to transform that reality was termed “conscientization” (Freire, 1970b, p. 452). The emphasis that Freire placed on first gaining a critical consciousness of reality before developing the subsequent capacity to be transformational suggested that the explicit recognition of their spiritual **knowing** that the participants developed with regard to the nature of Kingdom-shaping was essential if they

were to **be** Kingdom-shaping themselves and to **Proclaim** a transformational Kingdom-shaping way of life. Therefore, Mary’s statement that “it’s actually given it a framework...**so** you can operate out of that space...” was a critically important moment because the causal semantic relation “so” suggested that she was—and that potentially the other participants were—developing an understanding of the connection between **knowing** a framework and that framework giving them a basis for **action**. Therefore, while **knowing** is important, it was crucial that participants, in order to be Kingdom-shaping in their practice, understood the differences between cognitive **knowledge** and spiritual **knowing**, and that their **knowing** was influential on theirs and their students’ **being** and **doing**.

### 7.2.2 Kingdom-shaping is Profoundly **Ontological**

During 2018, when the PLCs met, it became increasingly obvious to the participants and to me that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education was an incredibly slippery concept. As part of the reflection process in the meetings, I used a Harvard Project Zero (Ritchhart et al., 2011) thinking routine—3, 2, 1 Bridge<sup>30</sup>—in an attempt to capture some of the deeply buried conceptual understandings of Kingdom-shaping. Consequently, many meetings required participants to articulate a word or a metaphor—an analogy—that encapsulated their concept of Kingdom-shaping. Tracking these words and metaphors over time allowed an impression of the changing perceptions of the nature of Kingdom-shaping held by the participants to develop. Please refer to Table 7.1: The Words and Metaphors of Participants with Regard to Kingdom-shaping.

---

<sup>30</sup> “3, 2, 1 Bridge” stands for 3 words, 2 questions and 1 analogy.

Meeting Number	Andrea	James	Kevin	Mary	Philippa	Shane
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daunted</li> <li>• Spark – the edges of an idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexpected – I went in thinking it would be very separate...</li> <li>• Tangled – It's a lot more subtle than I expected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determined</li> <li>• Unsure</li> </ul>	Absent for this part of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sovereignty</li> <li>• Evidence</li> </ul>	Absent from the meeting
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jar in which you put important things</li> <li>• Transformation</li> <li>• How?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cusp</li> <li>• A clearing fog – It's not fully clear yet but just seeing little bits that are encouraging.</li> </ul>	Absent from the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• False peak – Thinking that you've reached something and then realising that... you don't even know where the top is</li> <li>• Adventure</li> <li>• Inquisitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two ships – an aircraft carrier and a canoe....I am wondering whether we've turned into an aircraft carrier which can't really change direction and we need to...pioneer again and hop into a canoe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child relying on their father</li> <li>• Privileged</li> <li>• Humbled</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertain</li> <li>• Nostalgic</li> <li>• Task-oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spider web – the more we start talking about what Kingdom-shaping looks like...you just start seeing links a bit better.</li> <li>• Encouraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging</li> <li>• Growing</li> <li>• Reforming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A novice craftsman working on a fragile piece</li> <li>• Journey</li> <li>• Challenged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action</li> <li>• Challenged</li> <li>• Humility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child being led by an adult</li> <li>• Excited</li> <li>• Challenging/difficult</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intentional</li> <li>• Difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflicted – Kingdom vs task focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More focused on and intentional about prayer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More focused</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyes opened</li> <li>• Changed focus</li> <li>• Encouraged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive encounters</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformative</li> <li>• Relational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outwards focus on others</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth</li> <li>• Relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A greater purpose</li> <li>• Emerging challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outward focus</li> <li>• Connectedness and relationship</li> <li>• Hopeful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outward focused</li> <li>• Relationships</li> </ul>

Table 7.1: The Words and Metaphors of Participants with Regard to Kingdom-shaping

The transformed understandings of the participants with regard to Kingdom-shaping Christian education were illuminated through considering how the words and metaphors that they had used to encapsulate their concept of Kingdom-shaping changed over the period of 2018. Early in the process—as was reflected in Meeting 3—, the common theme that emerged from the words used by the participants was a lack of clarity. This was expressed through the words: “tangled” and “unsure”. Participants were confronted by the unexpected nature of Kingdom-shaping because they had come into the research with preconceived ideas about Christian education, and they had found that these ideas did not reflect the nature of Kingdom-shaping as it was emerging through their reading, discussion and ensuing action in the PLCs meetings. It was possible to see that, as early as Meeting 3, James was articulating that his understanding was already shifting, through the statement: “I went in thinking it would be very separate, like this is biblical perspective and today you will try this in your lesson...whereas we’re a bit more working it through....I’m realising that ...there’s not one way to do it and it’s...a lot more subtle than I expected.” His use of the semantic contrastive relation “whereas” to join the past tense “I went in thinking” with the present tense “we’re [we are] a bit more working it through” indicated that his past thinking was transformed by his involvement in the AR project. This was further emphasised through his use of the singular pronoun “I went in” compared with the collective pronoun “we’re [we are] a bit more...” that reflected how his individual concept had shifted as a result of the collaborative sharing and intervention that were central to his participation in the AR.

Moreover, the use of the second person “today you will try this...” suggested that James’s earlier concept of what the project would involve was centred on being informed of how to implement cognitive **knowledge**—“biblical perspective”—rather than the “subtle” experience of **being** and **doing** in relationship through “working it through”. The development of James’s understanding was evident by Meeting 8 when the word that he used to encapsulate Kingdom-shaping was “community”. Where his earlier understanding and awareness of his role as a teacher at a Christian school had been confined to the four walls of the classroom and how he would incorporate the cognitive **knowledge** of a biblical perspective in a lesson with his students, his developing awareness of Kingdom-shaping burst through the confines of the classroom to envisage a much more nuanced understanding of an “**outwards focus on others**” that centred on **being** and **doing** in community rather than on the individual.

Similarly, Andrea also demonstrated transformed understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping over the duration of her involvement in the AR project. While she articulated in Meeting 3 that she had a “**spark**” and “**the edges of an idea**” forming, one of the words that she chose to encapsulate her understanding of and involvement in Kingdom-shaping practice was “daunted”. She further clarified this through stating: “**I feel like I’m still getting my head around how this works and the practicalities of programming [it] in the classroom**”. Like James, Andrea’s earlier understanding of Kingdom-shaping was centred on cognitive **knowledge**, demonstrated through her focus on how she would make Kingdom-shaping work and “the practicalities of programming”. The nominalisation of “practicalities” suggested that Andrea, similarly to James, was hopeful of a list of methods by which she could effect the outcome of Kingdom-shaping through “programming”. Additionally, her focus was within the boundary of her own classroom and on a biblical perspective. Nevertheless, her yearning for Kingdom-shaping to be **a way of life** rather than mere cognitive **knowledge** was evident in the question that followed her description of being “daunted”. She asked: “**...how exactly do I make students see the significance of Christ in all of their lives beyond the ‘He saved me, and He is Lord’?**” Andrea’s developing understanding of Kingdom-shaping was indicated through her use of the preposition “beyond” to contrast the simplistic view of students that centred on **knowing** that Christ had saved them with the significance of Christ in “**all of their lives**”. Furthermore, Andrea’s

description of Christ influencing a student's **being** as "significant" also implied that she had a sense that Kingdom-shaping was of great consequence, and that it was therefore much more than head **knowledge**. This was then confirmed in Meeting 8, when she articulated that Kingdom-shaping is: "**not just better biblical understanding**", and that it is "**necessarily transformative [and] relational and affects the whole person**".

The words that Kevin used throughout the meetings to encapsulate his growing understanding of Kingdom-shaping demonstrated a trajectory of development. In Meeting 3, while he was "determined", he also expressed that he felt "unsure". The transcript of the meeting revealed that this feeling related to "**whether I communicate [Jesus and my students' place in His Kingdom] effectively in a lesson**". As with James and Andrea, Kevin's focus was on the boundary of his classroom and a single lesson, on the communication of **knowledge** and on the burden that he carried individually for his students through the use of the first person pronouns "I" and "my". Over the duration of 2018, however, Kevin's word choice changed to incorporate "emerging", "growing" and "reforming" in Meeting 6, and, by Meeting 8, to be centred on "growth" and "relationships". While Kevin was still focused on his students and a deep desire that they would **know** their place in God's Kingdom, it had also broadened to include encouragement of his colleagues and the purpose of "**growing our students for a 'higher' purpose**", together with an emphasis on "relationships".

Consequently, tracking the words that the participants were using to summarise their understanding of Kingdom-shaping revealed that their understandings of the nature of Kingdom-shaping had developed from a focus on themselves as individuals, the boundary of their individual classrooms and a cognitive emphasis on head **knowledge** to imbuing an ontological way of **being** in their students and in the community as a whole. Looking at the words that were used by participants collectively in Meeting 8 to encapsulate their understanding of Kingdom-shaping, there was an emerging theme of "outward focus"—used by three of the six participants—and "relationships"—used in varying forms by five of the six participants. This was in contrast to the words used in Meeting 3, which were generally centred on the participants' individual **conceptual knowledge** of Kingdom-shaping.

### 7.2.3 Kingdom-shaping Integrates **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**

The difference between being a Christian school and being Kingdom-shaping was perhaps one of the greatest epiphanies that the participating teachers had during the course of the PLCs meetings of 2018 whereby, by the end of the year, they all realised that it is possible to undertake a Christian school education without that education being Kingdom-shaping. Recognising that there is indeed a difference between Christian schools that are truly Christian in practice and those that are merely Christian in name, Christian and Beamish (2018) delineated between the two through coining the term “a special Christian character” (p. 23). Their term, while placing a heavier emphasis on Christian worldview than I have placed in the Tripod of Shalom—where it is one of three equal elements—, recognised that a “really Christian” (p. 23) school is one where the school’s operation “reflect[s] beliefs rising out of a Christian worldview and hence give[s] it a special character that reflects Christian characteristics” (p. 23).

In the context of this research project, the participants’ emerging understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom that would imbue “a special character that reflects Christian characteristics” were founded on the illumined vision that Kingdom-shaping was more than belief and worldview. Rather, it incorporated a seamless unity of **knowing**, **being** and **doing** that had the capacity to transform individuals and the school community as a whole. Over the period of 2018, as the participants reflected on their growing awareness of themselves and of their context in the PLCs meetings, they began to articulate their understandings of Kingdom-shaping through language that integrated **knowing**, **being** and **doing**. Coding of earlier meetings indicated that the understandings of these threads were discrete and separate. Moreover, much of the dialogue in these earlier meetings was centred on student **knowledge** of biblical perspectives, and little attention was given to **incarnation** or **Proclamation**. This changed as the year progressed and as the participating teachers began to see the importance of **knowing**, **being** and **doing** working together. Please refer to Figure 7.1: Coding of **Knowing**, **Being** and **Doing** in Meeting 1, Figure 7.2: Coding of **Knowing**, **Being** and **Doing** in Meeting 5, and Figure 7.3: Coding of **Knowing**, **Being** and **Doing** in Meeting 7.



James

So in that sense is it going back to the model, like their understanding of the Word and who God is um means that they're unable to engage in those um realities so um maybe in terms of what we're doing in the class are we actually talking about who God is and what His character is like so that when a little bit of suffering comes, they know that God is their hope. They know that when when you know, the world is caving in, um, I actually have a security in who God is. So that, are we actually and that's where it comes back to tacking on the biblical perspective at the end or that type of thing or tacking on the verse is not actually showing them the truth of who God is and what He's like in our world. So yeah. Maybe that's something.

Shane

You know, that's interesting. Something that Year 9 Biblical Studies recently said to me, we were having a chat about what do you want in Biblical Studies, what makes your class tick, etc, and they said we want it to be relatable to us. Because when they don't see that what they're learning, and it's not just Biblical Studies, it's in Maths and Art and everything, well if I don't think that it's important to me, I don't care, I'll just shut off.

Philippa

But then the question is what makes it important to you?

Shane

Yeah. I mean we're studying God's world. That's important to me because for me, it's important to me because it's God's world not because I'm going to do something with it.

Shane

And at the end of the day, it's like well it's actually not about you. [laughter from group]. You want it to be all about you but the answer is it's actually about God. And bringing glory to Him. And I think that's where, again, what we can teach them goes one way but then the Spirit also needs to work in showing them that it's not about them.

James

Yeah. And even like last year for devotions I taught my Year [class] the different models of prayer like the ACTS model of prayer in Year 1. And adoration, and part of it was telling God what He is like. And so we actually started talking about the names of God, just really briefly, but I'm actually now going to do it properly in devotions so that they know when we say God is a shield, He's a protector and He and so you know, He is our shield. And in the Bible it shows us that He did protect other people and He did protect people. And obviously there's always questions when people aren't protected and all that type of thing but we can look at, you know, History, and and look at moments when God did prove that He was a protector. Um and and and that sort of thing. So yeah. Helping them have more of a truth of who actually God is.

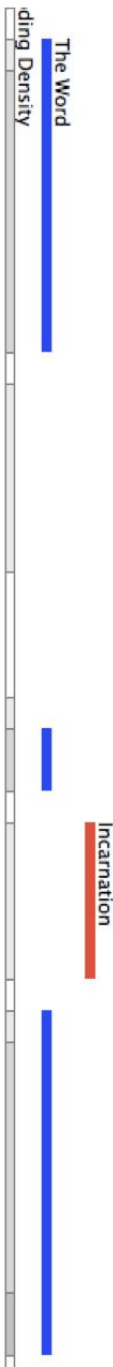


Figure 7.1: Coding of *Knowing*, *Being* and *Doing* in Meeting 1

01:10:25.8	01:11:18.9	Do we know? Do we know what our top priorities are? Do we begin lessons with our top priorities? My top priority is that they will know numbers one to ten or is my top priority that these children will know they are known and loved by their creator and by me? Can you do both?	Kevin
01:11:18.9	01:11:46.2	If you start with seeing the kids as the <sup>John</sup> image of God um and so they have infinite potential because of that, um how does that shape the rest of your teaching? I guess that like filters into how you pastor and teach your kids and maybe allows you to be more pastoral than just teaching focused	James

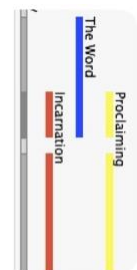


Figure 7.2: Coding of *Knowing*, *Being* and *Doing* in Meeting 5

00:35:11.0	00:35:11.1	Just as a sort of aside to that. The one counter current to that that worries me a little bit is, I think we do need to learn to be apologists and my other concern is I feel in the background there is always this in our society as well is this idea that we leave it to the experts. But being an apologist and being pastoral is something that we all need to be experts in.	Phillip	
00:35:40.5	00:35:40.6	Sorry, I want to add one more thing. We're saying that students you know, they're asking the questions and they're willing to be involved, I actually think I've seen a need just recently that we need to be actually training them in telling them about Jesus or doing devotions in Family Group or assembly or whatever it is. Because I think I've realised they are actually still kids and it's so fantastic that they're getting up and having a go but I think we need to make sure that they're actually. That's our bell. We are going to have to get into our reading.	Susan	
00:39:47.3	00:40:02.8	Alright, what themes can we see emerging? Feel free to move things around like we've done in the past.	Susan	
00:40:02.8	00:40:02.9	I think something that really stood out this big question of what is it to be human and then thinking about I guess from that, thinking, Jesus is fully human and so what did that look like and then are we addressing what it means to be human in our school as well?	Susan	

Figure 7.3: Coding of *Knowing*, *Being* and *Doing* in Meeting 7

Figure 7.1, incorporating dialogue from the transcribed audio of Meeting 1, represents a snapshot of the way that participants were talking about *knowing*, *being* and *doing* at this stage in the project. Clearly evident was the centrality of *knowing* through the prevalence of the blue stripe. *Incarnation*, while it appeared in the extract, was separate and less prominent in focus. The snapshot from Meeting 5—Figure 7.2—, however, encapsulates a snippet of the data that revealed the merging of *knowing*, *being* and *doing* for the participants. They were beginning to talk about the students in more holistic terms that captured a desire that students would *know*, and that this *knowing* would lead to *being* and *doing* that were “*more pastoral than just teaching focused*”. By Meeting 7—Figure 7.3—, participants were regularly expressing their ideas in a sustained interweaving of *knowing*, *being* and *doing*.

This shift in participant awareness—whereas previously the participants had emphasised cognitive *knowledge*, they grew to understand that *knowing*, *being* and *doing* must be unified—was also increasingly evident in the transcript of Meeting 8 from which the following extracts were derived:

- Shane *I think I to begin with was very programs-focused. I was focused on biblical perspective teaching, and I...downplayed the importance of the school **culture** and the foundations, and I think more and more, I think that is where it starts. And that I shouldn't have downplayed that. I kind of was like **we're a loving community** and that's great, but I'm not teaching Maths from a biblical perspective. Whereas I think all that stuff flows out of our foundational understandings of what the Kingdom of God is.*
- Andrea *I think particularly the third aspect of the Tripod—**Proclamation**—that it's not simply a matter of **knowing** the truth, or even just obeying the truth, but also **proclaiming it and the impact that that has on the world**. And that should be more central to Christian education....I think...it doesn't stop with understanding. It's not merely understanding or having a biblical worldview. That it must **affect the whole person**, and then that **expands outward**.*
- James *I think [Kingdom-shaping education] comes down to a lot of the foundation and the development of **culture** as well. Like a lot of the things were not planned lessons as such, but more [the] **heart behind what we want to do**. And the word "**genuine**" keeps coming up. It's not forced or contrived, but there's this **genuine desire for people to respond in some way**.*
- Philippa *For me, before we had this group, I didn't whinge about the **culture**, but I don't know if I was actively thinking. Yeah. Just to be more active. This is the **culture** we need....We need the unified focus on the **culture we want to create**.*

In all four of the above extracts, the participants used the word "more" to describe the difference between a traditional Christian education that was about teaching Mathematics from a biblical perspective, knowing/obeying the truth and planned lessons on the one hand and a Kingdom-shaping education that was focused on the whole person on the other hand. By tying the word "more" to Kingdom-shaping, participants were implying that there was something that was lacking in a Christian education that was devoid of Kingdom-shaping.

The elements that they perceived were “downplayed” in a Christian education that was not about Kingdom-shaping were “culture”, “impact[ing]...[on] the world”, the “[e]ffect [on the] whole person”, “expand[ing] outward[ly]”, the “heart behind what we want to do”, and a “genuine desire for people to respond in some way” and “to be more active”. These were not ideas that appeared in the participants’ expressions of their understandings of Christian education in their interviews, suggesting that they were new concepts that had emerged during their involvement with this project.

Additionally, another word that appeared multiple times across these extracts—in three out of four of them—was “culture”. This was less centred on **knowledge**, and instead focused on building a foundation that was based on **being** “a loving community”, **being** “genuine” and **acting** based on an identification with the Kingdom. Participants recognised that in the past they had trivialised these things, and that this should not have been the case. For example, Shane stated: “...I shouldn’t have downplayed that”, and James recognised that, in contrast to his desire for “planned lessons” that would enable him to be Kingdom-shaping in his practice, it was “**more [the] heart behind what we want to do**”. The participants’ understanding of the centrality of culture was also indicated through words such as “importance”, “comes down to” and “we need”. Philippa’s repetition of the word “need” and the imperative “must” used by Andrea further communicated how intrinsic this new concept was to the participants’ understanding of an authentic Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

Most importantly, in contrast to the prior emphasis that participants had placed on **knowledge** and on instilling in students a **biblical perspective** on their subject content, this extract indicated that their understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education had grown to incorporate a belief that students’ consequent **being** and **doing** were equally important as their **knowing**. To exemplify, Andrea’s statement that: “**I think...it doesn’t stop with understanding. It’s not merely understanding or having a biblical worldview. That it must affect the whole person, and then that expands outward**” utilised all three elements of the Tripod of Shalom. She did not trivialise the importance of **knowing**; rather, she stated that it was not merely **understanding**. The use of a double negation “doesn’t stop” and “not merely” implied that in the past she had personally considered **biblical knowledge** to be the



pivotal element—perhaps the only element—in a Christian education. Indeed, Andrea’s interview transcript demonstrated a high concentration of language that was about **knowledge** and **knowing**, a minor indication of language related to **incarnation** and very little awareness of **Proclamation**. Her illuminated understanding of Kingdom-shaping education revealed that **understanding** “**must**” result in **incarnation** that then leads to **Proclamation**—“**expand[ing] outward**”. While Pietsch’s (2018) very insightful principle that we must *be* the people who we are becoming—engaging in action *in order* to become—placed action before being, where Andrea placed being prior to action, Andrea’s concept as expressed in this extract demonstrated the unity of all three elements of the Tripod of Shalom, and her growing awareness that a Christian education is about the formation of a whole person rather than just the mind.

It was encouraging to note that one positive outcome of this research project was that the Tripod of Shalom had provided participants with a framework that had enabled them to understand and apply the elements of Kingdom-shaping, and to ascertain whether these elements were in balance. Three out of the six participants—Andrea, Mary and Philippa—expressed how useful it had been in guiding their understanding of Kingdom-shaping. Philippa conveyed in Meeting 8 that “**it’s great because it does provide that balance. Because I think each one of us might naturally have an affinity with one of the Tripod [elements] and so...each time we focus on one, the two others remind you they’re still there**”.

With reference to the definition of transformation presented in Subsection 7.1.1, I concluded that the participants’ understandings of the nature of Kingdom-shaping Christian education were developed and transformed during their year’s engagement in the PLCs. With their rising awareness of the centrality of Kingdom-shaping in an authentic Christian education, participants began to comprehend that there was an increasing chasm between their understandings of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that was for Shalom and what was being practised at Yew Tree Christian College. During 2018, a market-driven perspective had begun to inflict its cold, steel grip on the participants through an elevated emphasis on classy image and academic success that was being conveyed by members of the executive. The reality of this conflict was recognised by Mary in Meeting 8 where she

reflected: “It has been a really challenging year....I need to be a voice for holding firm to this authentic approach even as the ship potentially takes a different route”. As a result of the perceived conflict between what was happening at Yew Tree Christian College and the ideals of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, there was an emerging passion towards emancipatory action that was desirous of effecting transformed practice that would ensure that Kingdom-shaping—as opposed to the market—was foundational to a Christian education at Yew Tree Christian College. The teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education that led to emancipatory, transformed practice is the focus of Section 7.3.

### 7.3 Answers to Research Question 3 – Transformation of **Being** and **Doing**

#### **How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?**

In Section 7.2, the emphasis was on how the participants in this research project deepened their insights into the progression from a cognitive head **knowledge**—that was central to their prior understandings of Christian education—to a spiritual **knowing** that, together with **being—incarnation**—, would foster a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. **Knowing** and **being** together were significant factors that emerged in the analysis of Section 7.2. Section 7.3 focuses on how the transformed **knowing** and consequent **being** that emerged from that **knowing** were connected with the transformation of practice—**doing**. This **practice** related to the **Proclamation** element of the Tripod of Shalom. Section 7.3 therefore considers the emerging awareness of **action** within the participants and of the emancipatory **action** that they devised and enacted that was reflective of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. This action was pivotal to the AR cycle (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005) that incorporated diagnosing, planning action, taking action and evaluating action. Section 7.3 has been further divided into two subsections, each of which focuses on one AR cycle—the first and second cycles have been considered together. Table 7.2 depicts the focus of the three AR cycles and how they align with the next subsections. Please refer to Table 7.2: The Three AR Cycles and Their Focus.

The AR Cycle	The Focus of the AR Cycle	Subsection for Analysis
The First AR cycle	Creating an initial spark to address student apathy	Subsubsection Chapter 7.3.1: Action is about <b>Doing</b> Kingdom-shaping
The Second AR cycle	Building on the spark and engendering student ownership over learning—flourishing	Kingdom-shaping
The Third AR cycle	Being Kingdom-shaping and prayer	Subsubsection Chapter 7.3.2: Action is about <b>Being</b> Kingdom-shaping

Table 7.2: The Three AR Cycles and Their Focus

### 7.3.1 The First and Second Cycles – Action is about **Doing** Kingdom-shaping

At the beginning of the project, participants were focused on diagnosing the issues that were perceived to be antithetical to Kingdom-shaping and on devising concrete interventions that would circumvent those issues. Consequently, it was determined in Meeting 1 that the perceived apathy that students were manifesting towards their learning was not Kingdom-shaping because it was devoid of the flourishing that should be a central by-product of God’s Kingdom. The following extract from Meeting 1 demonstrated how the participants were approaching the action at the beginning of the project. Because it was my desire to capture fully the early thinking processes utilised by participants with regard to how they were developing an understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping and how that was shaping their intervention, a deliberate decision was made to include here a lengthy section of the transcript. Later in this chapter, this early thinking is contrasted with the extracts from subsequent meetings, demonstrating how participants’ deepening realisation of the nature of Kingdom-shaping had led to a transformed conceptualisation of intervention.

Bronwyn *We need to narrow it down to something manageable.*

Mary *...I’m wondering if there’s something in an experimental kind of space of going: What can, how can we get a spark in our kids? Like, I don’t know. That’s again quite general, but, you know, if we’re asking the question, what, what is the, if we’re talking about apathy, we’re talking about a lack*

*of hope, or a lack of, I don't know. Anyone else want to grab [onto] that? I don't know.*

Shane *So you're talking about like the moment, for example, when your class was in tears? How do we get to that point?*

Mary *Yeah, yeah, yeah. Or even exploring with the kids in some practical way...like, okay, let's say you have this lesson in your hand. We might have a general topic in our subjects and what does—what does—I don't know. I'm a bit stuck. There's an undeveloped thought that's sitting there, but maybe someone can capture....We create a moment of BANG! Where the kids go: "No, that can't be right!" and [we] prove it...and they go: "Oh, wow! That's crazy!"....Now it's not necessarily about, Yeah. I don't know how to get that back to—*

Philippa *What's fascinating is that moment of spark is almost never something that's related, that they are going to need in their, you know, [they ask:] "Why am I going to need this in my life?"*

Shane *Or always planned...*

Mary *Which pushes away from "This is something I need, so I'll listen, but this is actually interesting because it sparks something in me".*

Kevin *I remember with one student, I'd been banging heads with her all year...and we discovered that we both [share] our birthdays. And that was my magic moment. And that child is now putty in my hands.*

Mary *The question is why is that important?*

Kevin *Why is that important to her?*



- Mary *Why is that important to her that suddenly the apathy, or the [in a bored voice] “Err, this is the worst thing I’ve ever done in my life”, is suddenly [in a bright and cheery voice] “Ohhh, that’s a little bit better!”?*
- Bronwyn *Because it’s humanity.*
- Mary *Yeah.*
- James *It’s relationship.*
- Mary *It’s actually even those moments that might not be obviously related to anything obvious in God’s Word that actually can be, there’s something in there, there’s some value in there and something, you, that, you know, I think God innately puts in us that links back to something that’s bigger and more important...*
- Shane *But it seems like often those sparks and those moments are one to one.*
- Philippa *Occasionally they can be larger than that. Yeah.*
- Shane *But even less are they always to do with the Kingdom focus as well. Or is it just relating with the student, having that shared birthday, or—*
- Philippa *In one sense, when a truth is illuminated about the world that God has made, it’s a Kingdom moment. It’s not necessarily specific to us...*
- Shane *But how, um, ah, is me finding out that I have the same favourite movie as a student, how is that pointing to the Kingdom?*
- Collective *Mmmmmmm.*

- Shane *It's a special. It's fun. Like it's connection. But it's—*
- Collective *Yep.*
- Shane *Not pointing to Christ, I don't think, particularly.*
- Mary *But I think that it's a moment of break in apathy. It's a moment of breaking into something which then then might open up doors for something else. And that's probably the key to it.*

The dialogue captured in the transcribed audio of Meeting 1 encapsulated the early wrestling of the participants with the nature of Kingdom-shaping and how that could be tangibly implemented in their practice. There were a number of pivotal questions that were central to this conversation. The first question was indicative of the early emphasis that participants placed on cognitive **knowledge**. They asked: how could the intervention be distinctively Christian? This was indicated in the words of Shane, who persistently questioned the Kingdom focus in the proposed action that was being discussed. He used three statements to express his scepticism:

- *But even less are [the sparks] always to do with the Kingdom focus...*
- *But how...is that [spark] pointing [students] to the Kingdom?*
- *[That spark is] not pointing [students] to Christ, I don't think, particularly.*

Shane's repetition of the verb "pointing" suggested some assumptions that, at this early stage of the project, were underpinning his understanding of Kingdom-shaping Christian education. Please see Table 7.3: Transitive Verbs in Shane's Talk about Action.

Agent	Action	Impact
But even less are [the sparks]	always <b>to do with</b>	the Kingdom <b>focus</b>
But how...is that [spark]	pointing	students <b>to</b> the Kingdom
[That spark] is not	pointing	students <b>to</b> Christ

Table 7.3: Transitive Verbs in Shane's Talk about Action

Reflecting the plan to instigate a spark in apathetic students, the agent in all three of Shane’s sentences was the spark itself. The placement of the verb “pointing” in the position of action indicated Shane’s assumption that, to be Kingdom-shaping, an intervention must overtly direct students either **towards** Christ or **to** the Kingdom itself. Suggesting that the outcome of the spark was the direction of students **to** the Kingdom rather than a personal engagement **with** the Kingdom or **with** Christ was the appearance of the preposition “to” in all three of his sentences and in two of the impacts. While grammatically the use of “to” instead of “with” is a small difference, in the light of the Tripod of Shalom and the desire for students to engender a spiritual **knowing** of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**, an engagement **with** the Kingdom is more indicative of Kingdom-shaping than a direction **to** the Kingdom because it implies the inclusion of the whole person in a transformational and relational experience rather than a mere change in direction.

This wrestling with the distinctively Christian nature of Kingdom-shaping by the participants was further indicated in the interplay of their dialogue. Their co-labouring (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993) in order to pin down the slippery concept of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education was reflected in a desire to understand how to apply it correctly to their own practice. This was indicated in the conversation between Philippa and Shane, who were attempting to understand the Kingdom-shaping element of creating a spark. The pronoun “they” demonstrated that both participants were talking about the same topic:

Shane        *But it seems like often **those sparks** and **those moments** are one to one.*

Philippa    *Occasionally **they** can be larger than that. Yeah.*

Shane        *But even less are **they** always to do with the Kingdom focus as well. Or is it just relating with the student, having that shared birthday, or—*

Philippa    *In one sense, when a truth is illuminated about the world that God has made, it’s a Kingdom moment.*

Shane's use of the definite article "those" sparks and "those" moments revealed the topic of the interaction between him and Philippa. Philippa's building on his ideas through the pronoun "they" and the link with the "Kingdom" revealed that the two were co-labouring on the same topic with the desire to understand it and apply it. However, the semantic relations that they were using to engage with each other's ideas—"But even less..." and "in one sense, when a truth..."—demonstrated that their views held some dissonance. This was because Shane was using the contrastive word "but" to indicate a differing opinion from the one that was being discussed, and Philippa was using a hypotactic relation to argue that "**when** a truth is illuminated...it is a Kingdom moment". Their co-labouring on the distinctively Christian nature of the intervention, through Shane's use of questions, further indicated their absolute commitment to Christian education that had been expressed in their interviews and at the beginning of Meeting 1. In the first and second cycles of the AR, participants were very focused on how they would be able to achieve and measure the Kingdom-shaping impact of their intervention. Consequently, the type of intervention that was devised centred on applying Kingdom-shaping principles to practice, and on measuring the results of these interventions. This was reflected by Philippa, who in Meeting 3 expressed: "I do want to be able to gather specific evidence as to what my research is actioning and what I am doing, and whether it's working or not."

As a result, when participants in Meeting 3 reflected on how their intervention was progressing, they were centred on the tangible progress that they had made through attempting to achieve a spark in their practice. Following are some extracts from Meeting 3 where the participants shared the outcomes of their intervention:

Kevin      *...the teachers and I have made a decision that, from now on, we are going to ask the children how many stamps they should get at the end of the lesson and then we reflect with them on what their behaviour has been....So we've gone from "stamps are my right; I will get them for just showing up" to "I actually have to work for these and it's a privilege". And it's impacting [on] ownership of behaviour in our classrooms.*

- James *I [asked] them to think about something...to do with, you know, [their] attitude towards learning or organisation, or even something as simple as tidying [their] desk or managing calling out. So they all had to write it on a post it note....**And a couple of them have really just taken it on their own...and it has made me realise how important ownership over your learning is...***
- Philippa *One thing I've been doing...is not giving them the aim [of an experiment]...**so they do take ownership over that....That's made them better at doing what they're doing because they're not following instructions anymore.***
- Andrea *We had an activity last week that got them to brainstorm different connections....They had to think about all the different connections they make in the course of a single day...the impact that they potentially have. **So that's been a positive...challenging students to take ownership over an aspect of their lives and to realise...[they] make decisions and choices that [have] impact...***

The participants' use of causative verbs to articulate a tangible intervention revealed that, early in the project, their understanding of Kingdom-shaping was something that they needed to *do* in order to cause an effect. This was evident in Kevin's description that "the teachers and I **have** made a decision", James's request that the students "all **had** to write it down", Philippa's "One thing I [**have**] been doing" and Andrea's statement that "We **had** an activity last week that **got** them to....They **had** to...". Moreover, using the causal semantic relation "so", which indicates the consequence of an action, each participant was able to articulate a cause and effect that, for them, was indicative of the intervention having some positive impact on their students. For example, Kevin perceived "so we've gone from...to", Philippa described "so they do take ownership over that..." and Andrea articulated "So, that's been a positive".

The intervention in the first cycle of the AR was designed only to create a spark in the students to “[break] into something which then then might open up doors for something else”. All of the participants who shared their experiences identified that the students had elevated their sense of “ownership” as a result of the intervention. This should have made the participants feel a great sense of achievement, given that their sentiments in Meeting 1 were focused on the apathy of the students and on the fact that they had not seemed to be taking ownership over their learning. From an AR perspective, and following Coghlan’s and Brannick’s (2005) AR cycle, the participants had diagnosed that the students were apathetic, planned action, taken action and evaluated that action—finding that seemingly it had mitigated some of the apathy in the students. AR is, of course, based on taking action (Bradbury-Huang, 2010). It should not be surprising that participants were therefore using causative verbs to describe that action, nor that their reflections included consequential semantic relations. Nevertheless, despite the seeming success of the AR itself, the participants and I could not escape the feeling that we were missing something important in our pursuit of Kingdom-shaping. Using the language of the Tripod, Philippa mused that “I think The Word might have to be more explicit [in the next cycle], because up to now it’s been too general...in that [it’s] not just some sort of tenuous connection [to] good teaching practice”. James, also using the language of the Tripod, posed the question: “I wonder whether...there’s a little process between Word and incarnation kind of thing”. He then went on to wonder whether coming to different types of understandings might enable students to imbue these “knowings” in their own lives. Reason’s (2006) view was that AR is not merely the description or interpretation of our world, but creating a tangible connection between intellectual knowledge and personal and social action “so that inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the ecosystems of which they are a part” (p. 188). For the participants and me, we were perceiving a flourishing in our students that was indicative of a positive result from our intervention because they had begun to take some ownership over their learning. We were not, however, able to determine that this particular break in the apathy of our students was contributing to flourishing that was suggestive of Kingdom-shaping in the ecosystem of Yew Tree Christian College and, for us, this was a problem. As the project progressed, the participants continued to wrestle with a number of questions. These centred around the following:

- Was good teaching practice synonymous with Kingdom-shaping?
- What were the distinctive elements of Kingdom-shaping practice?
- How could we know if our practice were Kingdom-shaping?

The lingering doubt that the participants had voiced a number of times in early meetings—that there was more to Kingdom-shaping than what they had so far perceived—continued to gain traction, and this was exacerbated by the readings with which they had been engaging in the PLCs meetings. Mary in Meeting 4, for example, queried: “Are we on board with the challenges [of being a community of truth] that Parker Palmer puts out there? Do you think our action plans are addressing the concerns?” The following extract from Meeting 4—the final meeting in the second cycle of the AR—demonstrated that participants were already beginning to look towards the next phase in the research project.

Shane *I wonder – the whole focus is Kingdom-shaping education, and so I think it’s great that our students are...tak[ing] more ownership, but how is that different to even if we were secular teachers? So how can we **actually** now be bringing it into **being** more Christ-centred? That’s probably where I would encourage us to head.*

James *I’ve been really challenged, and I kind of spoke to Kevin a little bit about this, is the need for prayer kind of on our own part as teachers. **But** I think sometimes we try to think of these Action Research ideas, and we’re trying to almost do it in our own strength. And I have been quite challenged about the role of prayer kind of **within my own life** in school, but also in our classroom....I have been challenged about whether I **actually** care that much kind of thing, and the fact that I **actually** need to submit these thoughts and action plans to God. And even just thinking, what if I did start each session with my class in prayer? What difference would that make? I know it could be a bit routine to begin with and a bit forced, **but** I think, yeah, kind of allowing God to move in those situations. I think we are kind of looking at it objectively rather than subjectively sometimes, so*

*I don't know what that means for our Action Research, **but** it's something I've been very challenged about...*

Philippa *I think I would go along the lines of what Shane said.*

Mary *What do we need to shift, and also what has also maybe been missing?...This is not a meeting of minds so much as it is **a meeting of spirits**. Like what's the reason we're wanting to do this and focusing on the idea of Shalom in that kind of concept?*

Philippa *...Just that it's, yeah, challenging me to think to what extent and what it would look like to **be** Kingdom-shaped as opposed to assessment-shaped or curriculum-shaped, which I feel a lot of my lessons evolve to, and neither assessments nor curriculum are bad things, **but**, so yeah. I, I, I don't know how I – yeah. I don't know how to do it.*

The participants' growing understanding of the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice was indicated by their use of contrastive semantic relations, because the use of these relations suggested that the participants knew that there was a contrast between what they had been able to achieve and what was authentic Kingdom-shaping practice. For example, Shane's question revealed the fact that he was aware that students *were* taking more ownership, *but* that there must be more than this to Kingdom-shaping: "**but** how is that different to even if we were secular teachers?" James also built on this idea, using the contrastive relation "but", saying: "**But** I think sometimes we try to think of these Action Research ideas and we're trying to almost do it in our own strength". And finally, Philippa reflected on her lack of answers, stating: "...neither assessments nor curriculum are bad things, **but**, so yeah.....I don't know how to do it".

Furthermore, the use of the adverb "actually" by both Shane and James suggested that there was a stage to *actual* authentic Kingdom-shaping for Shalom that was beyond the simple flourishing of students that might be experienced in both secular and Christian contexts. A close analysis of the verbs that were used in the extract where participants



devised the intervention for the first and second cycles, compared with the verbs used in this extract, suggested that participants were beginning to realise that Kingdom-shaping was much more about **being** than they had previously realised. For example, at the beginning of the first cycle, the focus was on “**creat[ing] a moment of BANG!**” and “**get[ting] a spark in our kids**”. The words “creating” and “getting” were focused on tangible actions that would create a reaction in the students. By the end of the second cycle, however, participants were using language that was indicative of the realisation that Kingdom-shaping was much more about imbuing a lifestyle than getting a reaction, demonstrated through “**being** more Christ-centred”, spiritual **shaping** “**within** my own life”, “a meeting of **spirits**” and what it meant to “**be** Kingdom-shaped”. Of particular note here was the change in James’s language from “pointing students **to** Christ” to “**being** more Christ-centred” where it appeared that, over the duration of four meetings and the time in between, his thinking had begun to shift towards a more intrinsic relationship *with* Christ, rather than the overt cognitive focus *towards* Christ that was suggested in Meeting 1. Furthermore, the extent to which James himself had perhaps moved from what he termed “looking at it objectively rather than subjectively” was indicated by his use of the word “challenged”, which appeared in his extract four times: “I’ve been really challenged”; “I have been quite challenged”; “I have been challenged”; and “it’s something I’ve been very challenged about”. Quite apart from the fact that there were three iterations of this word after the initial statement, indicating the strength of his feelings, the adverbs that appeared: “really”, “quite” and “very” also conveyed the intensity of his response. The subjectivity, for James, also appeared through his use of the verb to be: “I have been”, closely linking his feelings about the research with his own sense of **being** and the consequent action that he felt should flow out of that.

### 7.3.2 The Third Cycle – Action is about **Being** Kingdom-shaping

Meeting 5 was the beginning of the third cycle in the AR. The changing emphasis towards prayer in the PLCs discussion, as was indicated in the extract in subsection 7.3.1, had confirmed to the participants that their understanding of Kingdom-shaping Christian education had shifted, and that their intervention should then shift accordingly. The third cycle intervention, emerging from the discussion in Meeting 5, was articulated to the participants in the post-meeting summary as follows (highlight present in the original):

***Action Research – A new cycle while maintaining the ownership cycle in our own teaching:***

*The group wrestled with what feels like “impossible challenges” arising out of a perceived shift in the school. The vision in the reading by George Knight (2006) did not seem to match our current experience. Two areas of action for the next cycle:*

- ❖ *The importance of prayer. **A commitment to regularly, intentionally and deliberately set time aside to pray for:***
  - *The executive and school board*
  - *Teachers and all staff*
  - *Students*
  - *Families*
  - *Enrolments*
- ❖ *To make and utilise opportunities to speak with our colleagues about **Christian education** in terms of:*
  - *Encouraging*
  - *Questioning where appropriate*
  - *Setting an example and sharing our experiences.*

The following extract from Meeting 5 highlights the process of deliberation undertaken by the participants as they formulated their plan for the third cycle in the AR. It follows on from the indication in Meeting 4 that prayer would become an important element in the intervention of later cycles.

Bronwyn *Are you suggesting, Mary, that action needs to not necessarily be contained in our classrooms?*

Mary *...I think that what we’re doing is making a difference. It’s whether, yeah. I think anyone can make a difference in a school; it’s just whether the school as a whole is on board and making a difference as a whole. So there’s two sort[s] of separate ideas. There’s what we do in the classroom doesn’t*

*necessarily rely on changes effected by changes in policy. Like we can do stuff of real significance and it's great, and we can encourage others to do similar kinds of things as well without being pointedly against a big movement.*

Philippa *Yeah. The last thing we want to be is a sort of underground rebel. But—*

Kevin *I still think prayer is the most powerful thing we've got in this battle. And I think prayer for our leaders, prayer for our board.*

Mary *Prayer for the appointments [of staff members].*

Kevin *Prayer for the appointments that have to take place, and prayer for our students.*

James *We touched on that last time as well.*

Kevin *Maybe it's the undertaking of committing to pray for our school...and it's timely because the recruitment process is happening.*

Bronwyn *And maybe it is what we need to be doing over the next four weeks, making that commitment as a group and asking for God's guidance where we know and where we be and where we act, and that we focus on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in terms of any action that comes out of that, whether it's a word that we speak in our classroom or—*

Shane *I'm okay to pray some more. I think that I should be encouraged [to do this].*

Philippa *We also, I think, need to open the dialogue about what it means to be a Christian school with all our colleagues all of the time. Because it is happening actually. Because people are concerned. So people are talking*

*about what it means, but in a positive way. Like what can we do? What can we do? Or what are the specific things we can do?*

The basis for the deliberation in Meeting 5, unlike that that took place in Meeting 1, was what would create the most impact for Kingdom-shaping in Yew Tree Christian College's "ecosystem" (Reason, 2006, p. 188) as a *whole*. In Meeting 1, the focus was on the *individual* participants' students: "...how can we get a spark in our kids?" and "exploring with the kids...". In this earlier context, participants were using a variety of pronouns: singular and plural. Most of the time, however, the use of these pronouns also reflected an individual approach to the intervention: "...let's say you have this lesson...", "...that child is now putty in my hands", "how is me finding out that I have the same favourite movie...?". Meeting 5, however, entailed language that suggested a crossing of borders into the broader school context: "encourage others", "prayer for our leaders, prayer for our board", "pray for our school", "for the appointments that have to take place and prayer for our students" and "open the dialogue...with all our colleagues all of the time". Using plural pronouns, such as "our", and collective groups, such as "others", "leaders" and "students", suggested that the participants' focus had moved beyond themselves and their individual classroom practice to a desire for Kingdom-shaping to be imbued in the school as a whole. These changes in the language of the participants also indicated that they were beginning to understand that Kingdom-shaping practice could not be confined within a classroom; rather, it was a cultural practice that should influence the being of a whole school context. Similar to the prophets of old that were referred to in Chapter 1, the participants were captivated by a transformed vision that was igniting their imaginations and passions for dynamic change. This was further suggested by Kevin's use of a battle metaphor in his statement: "I still think prayer is the most powerful thing we've got in this battle". His choice of the definite article "this" to refer to the battle suggested that, for Kevin, the hindrances that were being experienced at Yew Tree Christian College that were thwarting Kingdom-shaping practice were specific to that place and time, rather than a long-term state of affairs. Moreover, a battle promotes imagery that is indicative of violence, danger and a need to fight back. Kevin's identification of prayer as "the most powerful thing we've got", together with his use of the collective pronoun "we", communicated that overcoming the current

hindrances was going to be difficult and would require a communal effort that was focused on strength that was imbued from God.

The connection between the participants as they devised the intervention in Meeting 5 and the lack of coherence evident in Meeting 1 was indicated through the links between their contributions to the discussion. In Meeting 1, the lack of clarity about Kingdom-shaping practice was conveyed through the fragmentation of the dialogue: unfinished sentences: “we’re talking about a lack of hope, or a lack of, I don’t know”; questions: “...is it just relating with the student?”; and the use of clarifiers that suggested a hesitancy towards the ideas: “it’s not necessarily”, “almost never something”, “seems like often” and “probably the key”. By contrast, in Meeting 5, participants used more decisive language such as: “I think that what we’re doing is making a difference”, “...prayer is the most powerful thing we’ve got” and “I think that I should be encouraged...”. Furthermore, their contributions built on one another’s because the repetition of the word “prayer” throughout the section of dialogue became an integral thread. This indicated that, over the space of seven months, participants had moved from an individual approach towards the intervention that was confined to their classrooms to a collective approach that was directed at achieving a broader school impact.

A desire for a broader school impact seemed to be underpinned by a growing sense of the importance of **being** and **doing**. This was reflected in the words of Mary: “...what we’re **doing** is making a difference”, “...we can **do** stuff of real significance...and we can encourage others to **do** similar kinds of things as well”. Beyond the repeated use of the word “do/ing”, Mary’s desire that the action would be transformational (indicative of **Proclamation**) was suggested by her adjective “real significance”, and the idea that part of the **Proclamation** was “encourage[ing] others to **do** similar kinds of things...”. Philippa’s dialogue that centred on building the understanding of colleagues emphasised **being**. This was evident in the statement: “We...need to open the dialogue about what it means to **be** a Christian school **with all our colleagues all of the time**”. Rather than a focus on disseminating cognitive **knowledge** to colleagues about what a Christian school entailed, which would indicate the idea that authentic Christian schooling is about applying the correct **knowledge** to practice, Philippa’s statement suggested that she had come to consider that **being** a Christian school

is something that the members of the school do together, and that a Christian school that is about Kingdom-shaping is a dynamic organism rather than an organisation.

### 7.3.3 Transformed Practice

As a result of the third AR cycle that shifted the focus of action onto **being** Kingdom-shaping and prayer, the participating teachers began to approach their Kingdom-shaping practice with a greater sense of hope. The following extracts encapsulate snippets from a variety of meetings between Meeting 6 and Meeting 8 that reveal the transformation that could be linked with the intervention that had been enacted by the participants in Cycle 3. The number next to the participant's name indicates from which meeting the extract was derived.

- (6) Kevin *I think for me, my question was, how do I juggle all of these priorities? Because I know I have to get that report comment bank written, but I also know I said I would set aside 30 minutes for prayer [each day].....And the theory is, if I do the prayer, the work should come easier. But it hasn't worked that way for me this month. It's been missing out on sleep or on other things because I've said I will do this.*
- (6) Mary *You can talk about Christian education....I've done it a couple of times with staff. So talking about those circumstances...to go and remind everyone what we're doing here and why we're here and what we can achieve. That article we read by Knight (2006) a while back. I shared that fairly broadly with staff. I've shared it in other places, just to be able to say, "Let's remember what we're actually doing here"....It's not what we're always talking about it anymore, so it is standing there and saying, "Hey, guys! I'm just over here. Don't forget this." That's really useful. Like we have more voice than we sometimes think.*
- (7) James *I feel that I've been a bit more focused and intentional about what I pray for in group settings at our school now. Like I feel like I don't pray for the*

*excursion that's happening tomorrow, but I'm thinking more about future and spiritual [ideas]. Kind of what we'd like to see, and praying for restoration more than [the] daily running of things.*

- (7) Shane *I've also been trying to push my classes, as we've been praying, more to think beyond themselves. That's not something new I've been trying, but I guess an encouragement to keep working on that because, at the end of the day, there's always going to be assessments and exams, and of course we'll pray for those things, but actually praying beyond ourselves. As well as in our prayer group on Friday mornings with our colleagues. That's been really encouraging as well.*
- (8) Andrea *I think we can have conversations with our colleagues about these ideas. That's one of the things I put for changes. Yeah. I need to have more of these kind[s] of Kingdom-shaping conversations with my colleagues. Not just the collegial curricular or those kinds of conversations.*
- (8) Philippa *...this time of just being able to share and discuss, and then we go away and think. Well, it's just even if we didn't talk about something we're going to do, it's very encouraging. Because we go away from this – well, I know I do, and I'm sure we all do, we go away from this meeting thinking, "What is it that I can do?" or "What is it that we can do?"*

The responses of the participants in these extracts were reflections on the transformed practice that had emerged from the AR intervention. Not all of the participants could see tangible results from their action, partially because, unlike the intervention that had emerged from the first and second cycles—mitigating apathy—, the third cycle's intervention was spiritual in its nature. Nevertheless, even if the participants could not see the fruit borne out of their efforts, it was possible for me to see their growth because I had journeyed with them from the beginning. Therefore, when Kevin reflected on the idea that *"the theory is, if I do the prayer, the work should come easier. But it hasn't worked that way..."*, rather than focusing on his hypothesis that prayer equalled easier work—conveyed

through the hypotactic use of “if”, tied to the clause “work should”—and the failure that was indicated by the contrastive semantic relation “but it hasn’t”, my focus was on the final words of the dialogue: “because I’ve said I will do this.” These final words in Kevin’s reflection indicated that, while transformation had not been effected in positive outcomes for his work, a deeper shaping of **being** had taken place in him as a person. This was conveyed through the causal semantic relation “because”, which highlighted the reason for his actions, and the determination expressed in the high modal verb “will”. Despite the difficulties of “juggl[ing] all these priorities”, Kevin demonstrated that Kingdom-shaping action had become “subjective”—to use James’s terminology—and a matter of personal integrity that was intrinsic to his **being**.

A theme that was evident in the extracts from the participants’ reflections on their Kingdom-shaping practice was an emerging outwards focus. While the emphasis in the first two cycles was on individual students and classes, terms that indicated a broader perspective appeared in these extracts. For example, there were “go and remind everyone”, “beyond ourselves” and “with our colleagues”. Because of this broader focus, the reflections and examples used by the participants in the later PLCs meetings indicated that there had been an imbuing of the concept of Kingdom-shaping in the broader school community that had every potential to cause a larger transformation than the work that had been done in individual classrooms earlier in the research. Furthermore, the commitment that the participants had to this broader perspective was suggested in verbs such as “push”—that conveyed a sense of desire and effort—, in the adverb “actually” that was used by Shane and Mary to give a sense of importance and authenticity to the action, and in the syndetic listing used by Mary: “go and remind everyone what we’re doing here and why we’re here and what we can achieve”—that communicated a sense of urgency because it highlighted a myriad of elements that were important for colleagues to understand: the what for our doing, the why for our doing it and the possibilities that may emerge from our doing.

Indeed, there were hints in Meeting 8 that the intervention had been perceived by others at Yew Tree Christian College, beyond the participants, and that this had been challenging because it questioned the emerging culture of the school at that time. Mary shared with the group: “...there have been other impacts of this group potentially, or at least, there’s been



cross over into spaces where it's got very tricky and complicated. I think that there has been an impact in some spaces, and there's been conflict potentially that has resulted". The reality of Mary's statement had been founded in her awareness of conflict that had occurred between members of the executive at Yew Tree Christian College and me as a result of my growing alienation from the core values of the school and my inability to imbue those authentically in my practice.

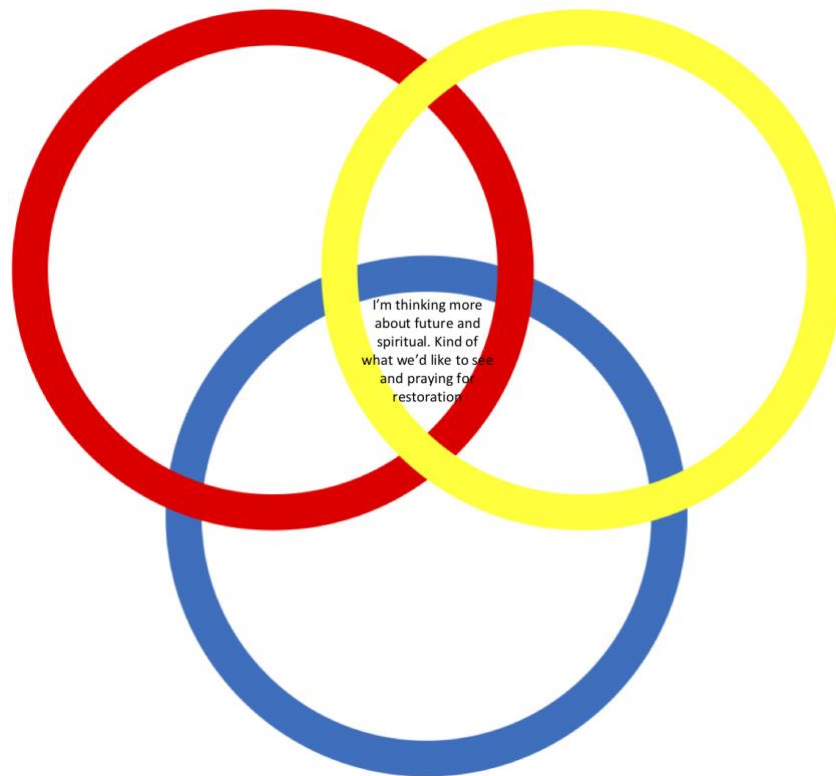
Finally, Kingdom-shaping intervention had transformed the participants' views of Christian education and their subsequent practice because it effected a visionary perspective. Repeated by most of the participants in the extracts under discussion was the term "more"—for example: "we have more voice than we sometimes think"; "I've been more focused" and "thinking more about future and spiritual"; "more to think beyond"; and "more of these kind[s] of Kingdom-shaping conversations". Participants demonstrated a hunger for growth, even beyond the end of the research—as indicated by Andrea who, using future-focused language, stated in the final meeting that she desired more Kingdom-shaping conversations with colleagues, "not just" the everyday kinds of curricular conversations, suggesting that she would go on beyond the end of the project to be shaped by the things that she had learned. The visionary perspective emphasised the integrated nature of the three rings in the Tripod of Shalom. Evident in each of the participant's language were indicators of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation** that were closely intertwined. Please refer to Table 7.4: The Tripod Elements in Participant Reflections on the Research Action.

I'm thinking <b>more about future and spiritual</b> . Kind of what we'd like to see and praying for restoration more than the daily running of things.
I think we can have conversations <b>with our colleagues about these ideas</b> .
<b>Being able to share and discuss</b> and then we go away and think...Because we go away from this...meeting thinking, "What is it that I can do?"
...it is <b>standing there and saying</b> , "Hey guys! I'm just over here. Don't forget this."

Table 7.4: The Tripod Elements in Participant Reflections on the Research Action

The fact that these elements of the Tripod were so intertwined is demonstrated by the possibility of placing each of the above coded sections of dialogue in an alternative element depending on whether thinking was interpreted as **knowing** or as an element of **being incarnational**. For example, the first extract could also be coded as "**I'm thinking more about**

future and spiritual. Kind of what we'd like to see and praying for restoration...". A critic could argue that this is evidence that the Tripod of Shalom is too vague, and that it fails to encapsulate Kingdom-shaping practice meaningfully. On the contrary, I assert that it is indicative of the truly interlinking nature of the rings, and that authentic Kingdom-shaping occurs in the synergy of all three elements working together. Consequently, the above statement could be depicted as demonstrated in Figure 7.4: The Interlinking Nature of the Tripod of Shalom.



*Figure 7.4: The Interlinking Nature of the Tripod of Shalom*

The Tripod of Shalom has been a central way of depicting Kingdom-shaping because it encapsulates the understanding that Shalom is about right relationships between people and God, people and one another, people intrapersonally, and people and nature (Wolterstorff, 2004). The above statement reflects this view of Shalom as demonstrated in Table 7.5: A Reflection of Shalom in Participant Dialogue.

Relationship with God	Relationship with Others	Intrapersonal Relationship	Relationship with Nature
and spiritual.	Kind of what we'd like to see	I'm thinking	more about future
and praying for restoration			

*Table 7.5: A Reflection of Shalom in Participant Dialogue*

Furthermore, the final part of the statement “and praying for restoration” was indicative of the flourishing that is central to Shalom. Rather than the disconnected view of Kingdom-shaping Christian education that participants held prior to the research, and that was indicated in their individual interviews where the emphasis was heavily placed on a cognitive **knowledge** of the Bible, the final transcripts of PLCs audio recorded dialogue revealed that participants had come to understand that Kingdom-shaping Christian education was about **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, and that they had begun to imbue this in their practice in a transformational way.

#### 7.4 Summing Up Research Question 3: Deepening Insights into Kingdom-shaping Christian Education that Led to Transformational Practice

Chapter 7 is the final data analysis chapter in this thesis. It has explored the answer to the third research question: How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education transformational for their practice? Throughout the analysis undertaken in this chapter, it has been revealed that participants came to understand that action is about **doing** Kingdom-shaping, and that action is about **being** Kingdom-shaping. The process of undertaking Kingdom-shaping **action** in the AR was profoundly transformational for the research participants. Most importantly, the participants began to realise that Kingdom-shaping is not a program through which Christian education is delivered to the students at a Christian school. Rather, it became abundantly clear that for us as teachers to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education we would need to **be** Kingdom-shaping ourselves and that, in turn, our Kingdom-shaping **Proclamation** would emerge from this **incarnational** life. Furthermore, we learned that the more that we were shaped by Kingdom-shaping **principles** and **values**, the more that we became uncomfortable with the emerging culture at Yew Tree Christian College that was indicative of the market-driven context where success in terms of results, ranking and branding was emphasised over the Kingdom-shaping elements of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. While the focus on Kingdom-shaping over the duration of 2018 at times filled

the participants and me with despair as we became aware of the discrepancy between the culture of the school and the culture of the Kingdom, a seedling of hope—reminiscent of the potential of a Yew Tree to be resurrected—began to emerge and to grow within us. We had started to realise that we had the capacity to make a difference collectively through **incarnating** and **Proclaiming** an alternative and compelling Kingdom-shaping culture, and that “together, all together, [**we were**] the instruments of change” (Hulme, 2001, p. 4).

## Chapter 8: Conclusion of the Thesis

*...And every question, it'll say our dreams are not drawn to scale  
So draw it.  
Because the word "paint" has the word "pain" in it  
And if paint means more than one colour, so be it  
Don't use camouflage but stand out showing hope.  
Don't forget you need someone to push you a far  
For others can be the green when you're blue.  
So we'll need a telescope to see a bright yellow star.  
Some things are not what they seem.  
If seeing is believing, how could you believe in the future?  
You can't see.  
So believe, have faith, ours is God...  
Open doors,  
Invite. A battle of righteousness is never fought by few.  
There will always be something to do...  
We were once seeds in a garden, but now it's time to be fruitful  
So shine through the dark, because it's our turn to be useful. (Supan, 2019, n.p.)*

### 8.1 Chapter Introduction

The previous chapter was the final of the three data analysis chapters. In that chapter, I focused on answering the third research question, about how the participating teachers' deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education were transformational for their practice. Chapter 7, therefore, considered the way that the Tripod of Shalom, in the context of meeting in a Process Learning Circle (PLCs), had been used as a lens by the participating teachers to shape their teaching. In the process of meeting to plan and reflect on their practice, the participating teachers gained new insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping education. The chapter concluded with the notion that, most significantly for the teachers individually and collectively, these insights shaped the ways

that they viewed their sense of **knowing**<sup>31</sup>, **being** and **doing** with regard to themselves, and thus their transformed practice emerged out of a transformed self.

Chapter 8 concludes this thesis. This chapter summarises the research—the intention, literature, methodology and methods, and analysis. Following this, the chapter explores the findings that have emerged from the data analysis with regard to each of the three research questions, and considers how each of these findings contributes originally and significantly to knowledge. Once the contributions have been discussed, suggestions for further research are made, including how the research may shape policy development and, finally, the thesis concludes with a reflection on the impact of the study and the thesis on myself and my positionality.

## 8.2 Summary of the Research

In this research project, I set out to wrestle with the challenges that a market-driven context poses for Christian schools that desire to imbue an authentic, Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. The aim was to understand the hindrances that teachers were facing in this context, to consider how these might be mitigated and to deepen insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education and its capacity to be transformational. The result for me was a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the nature of a Christian education that is centred on **knowing**, **being** and **doing**.

When I began this research project, I had been teaching for almost 20 years. During that time, an emphasis on the quantification of results, school success, branding and parental expectations became increasingly and painfully apparent. Whereas previously testing—such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)—had passed by on

---

<sup>31</sup> To distinguish the different elements and voices in the thesis, the following colours have been used:

- The Tripod of Shalom
  - **The Word – Knowing** (blue);
  - **incarnation – Being** (red); and
  - **Proclamation – Doing** (yellow).
- The voices in the work:
  - **The quoted words of the participant teachers** (green);
  - **The quoted words of students from Yew Tree Christian College** (pink); and
  - **The quoted words of staff members from Yew Tree Christian College** (purple).

the calendar with barely a comment in the media or in a school, suddenly teachers were focusing on test preparation, and it became clear that, in the eyes of the parents, schools were selling a product called “Education”. The connection between education outcomes and economics—particularly for the nation of Australia as a whole—has been progressively documented over the last 20 years. In particular, Deloitte Research (2016) explicitly tied an increase in GDP with improved educational outcomes, stating that the importance of schooling is found in the empirical link between school outcomes and economic outcomes.

In fact, the Deloitte report, *The Economic Impact of Improving School Quality*, stated:

“...rather than focusing on raising the overall educational attainment of students, educational policy should focus on raising assessment scores....It is noted that raising the skills and abilities of students...has positive wage and employment outcomes...” (p. 84).

Echoing this view was the response of the Victorian Education Minister to the 2019 NAPLAN results achieved by Year 9 students. In an attempt to elevate the importance of the tests in the minds of Year 9 students, he proposed linking the NAPLAN test to future job applications (Carey, 2019). The increased media diatribe that has linked student academic success with employability has shaped the way that parents have chosen a school—seeking out schools that have the highest success rates with regard to student achievement (Black, 2016; Bonnor & Shepherd, 2016; Savage, 2017)—and the consequent expectations that they have for the ability of the schools that they have chosen to elevate their child’s educational success. This shift in the way that schools have been placed as the central cog in a great economic wheel has transformed how schools operate. In his research into public schools in Australia, Savage (2017) listed a variety of ways that public schools have marketed themselves in order to improve their image and competitiveness. Amongst these were:

- The production of glossy brochures and elaborate websites;
- Highly orchestrated school tours and open nights; and
- Various attempts to refine the school’s brand image through school logos, facilities and uniforms (p. 155).

Christian schools are supposed to provide an affordable education (Etherington, 2008). The use of these same marketing methods—identified by Savage as in the style of “elite private schools” (p. 155)—at Yew Tree Christian College (see the list in Section 2.4) suggested that it was being influenced by the same image-driven market trend as everyone else. Roy (2013) described the impact of this subversive threat on Christian schools by stating that “Some

[Christian schools] are just relatively more up-market, selective, academically competitive clones of the public school down the road, but with a veneer of spirituality thrown in” (p. 19). When Christian schools focus primarily on academic excellence and on competing with the images of other institutions—rather than on Christ’s Kingdom agenda—they take the risk of compromising their biblical integrity, and great care should be taken to avoid such an outcome (Schultz, 2002).

The literature—as reviewed in Chapter 2—suggests that an authentic Christian education should be distinctively different from an education that is insidiously sculpted by the demands of a market-driven context. A market-driven education is characterised by pressure: pressure on politicians to enact memorable policy during their term of office; pressure on school principals to elevate their school performance; and pressure on children who are adversely impacted by the demands of the system and the demands of their parents who desire for them to achieve well (Clark, 2016). By contrast, an authentic Christian education should be about the spiritual formation and flourishing of students who, rather than seeing their life’s purpose as being about acquiring material health and wealth (Pietsch, 2018), envision a life in which they are active participants in holistic renewal (Roy, 2013) and in Christ-centred restoration (R. T. Habermas, 2008). This thesis has centred on exploring the nature of a Christian education that is focused on Kingdom-shaping for Shalom.

The nature of the Kingdom of God and its application to Christian education were considered at length throughout Chapter 2—The Literature Review. Babylon—as a metaphor for an earthly kingdom that is antithetical to the Kingdom of God—was used as a basis for comparing a secular, market-driven model—that is purposed towards material success—with a model of education that is Kingdom focused on imbuing the reign of God. This concept of education is based on the biblical premise that the Kingdom of God is “both applicable to every dimension of earthly life and open to the entire human family” (Middleton, 2014, p. 282), and is purposed towards human flourishing (Spears & Loomis, 2009). According to Smith (2009), central to a Kingdom-shaping life are an understanding of who we are as image bearers of God and the comprehension of our purpose that, as image bearers, we are to invoke God’s grace and mercy for humanity. For a Christian education to



be Kingdom-shaping means that its purpose is oriented towards assisting students to develop a Christian way of viewing reality (Knight, 2006), to develop Kingdom virtues and, as transformed men and women, to participate as Kingdom people of grace in the wider world for the restoration of humanity (Pietsch, 2018). An education such as this exemplifies Shalom because it is focused on the development of right relationships between individual students and God, students interpersonally, students intrapersonally and students with the world around them (Wolterstorff, 2004).

As I began this research project in 2016, there was a plethora of literature that focused broadly on Christian education (nearly 54 million results in a Google search). These results spanned topics such as the nature of Christian education, the reasons for a Christian education, the integration of faith and learning, and the particular characteristics of a myriad of Christian schools. Internet searches yielded very little focus, however, on how the market-driven context was affecting Christian education. Spears and Loomis (2009) cautioned that standardisation and accountability were placing enormous pressure on the educational enterprise. They noted that “Few Christian educationists are aware of the phenomenon, and fewer still have written about it. To bring about change will require a new...way of looking at education, which will take some serious theoretical work...” (p. 169). A decade later, it has appeared from my research that this is still an area that requires greater focus for study. This research project has therefore centred on being aware of the phenomenon—the challenges of the market—and on considering a new way of looking at education: a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

The Tripod of Shalom that has emerged as a result of this research has therefore provided a lens for understanding the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. It has also been applied in the research process as the conceptual framework. I now review the research paradigm, the methodological approach to the research and the methods used in the research, and then I consider the Tripod of Shalom and how it has been applied to the research methods as a whole.

This research project has focused on the capacity of a Christian education—in a market-driven context—to emancipate students through a reframing of the purposes and processes

of education and, more broadly, on graduates of Christian schools being enabled to contribute actively to the “humanization” (Freire, 2005, p. 44) of others as they imbue lives that are indicative of Shalom. An approach to life that advocates a “revolutionary praxis” (McLaren, 2007, p. xvii), reflects critical pedagogy because critical pedagogy is underpinned by a social and educational vision of justice and equality (Kincheloe, 2008). Accordingly, a qualitative research methodology was chosen as it is focused on facets of reality that are unable to be quantified (Queiros, Faria, & Almeida, 2017), like the answers to important questions such as why things are the way they are, who benefits from them and how they could be different (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Additionally, and also indicative of a qualitative research approach, a central part of this project was directed towards understanding how the participating teachers at Yew Tree Christian College were interpreting their experiences and the meanings that they were bringing to those experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Using purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015), six teachers were invited from Yew Tree Christian College to participate in this case study approach (Starman, 2013) to qualitative research to understand how they conceptualised a Kingdom-shaping Christian education, and the hindrances that they were facing in imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice. Each of the participants was interviewed individually and then, over the duration of a year, they met collectively in a PLCs (Caine & Caine, 2010). Action Research (AR) was utilised as a research method because its cycles would facilitate the diagnosis of hindrances, planning action, taking action and evaluating the effectiveness of that action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Consequently, in addition to co-labouring (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993) as we toiled together to identify hindrances and to mitigate them in our teaching, we deepened our understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom.

Framing our growing concept of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom was the conceptual framework: the Tripod of Shalom. The Tripod, an arrangement of three interlocking rings incorporating the elements of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**, assisted us throughout the research to consider what it meant to be Kingdom-shaping and, in turn, to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. In the process of the research, the Tripod was used to:

- identify the three elements of Shalom and their relation to Kingdom-shaping practice;
- structure the study's research methods: AR (Kemmis, 2007), communicative action theory (J. Habermas, 1987), and critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010);
- provide a lens for the analysis of data; and
- guide ethical ways of relating and acting throughout the research.

Three research questions were posed to guide the study into teacher practice and the understanding of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom. These three questions were:

1. What were the participating teachers' understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?
2. What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?
3. How were the participating teachers' deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?

Data were gathered through the transcribed audio recordings of the individual teacher interviews and the eight PLCs meetings. Fairclough's (2010) CDA was then used in order to probe the data for the understandings that were being offered to address the questions. Fairclough's CDA utilised three dimensions: text analysis; discourse practice; and sociocultural practice. This enabled me to examine what the participants had said in their interviews and in the PLCs, to interpret it for its meaning and to understand that meaning in the light of social practice. In concert with Fairclough's (2010) view that a transdisciplinary approach could assist with analysing texts as elements of social processes, two lenses were employed in the third dimension: Lacanian Discourse Theory and the Tripod of Shalom. Lacan's (1969) Discourse Theory as a lens allowed the elucidation of the hindrances that the teachers were facing, and an explanation of the Master signifier that was shaping their practice. The Tripod of Shalom, employed as a lens in the first and third dimensions, provided an understanding of how the participants were conceptualising a Kingdom-shaping education, and also allowed me to see how their insights were deepening over time.

Co-labouring (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1993) over the duration of a year with the six participant teachers from Yew Tree Christian College was an incredibly rewarding experience. Incorporating an equal blend of males and females, a variety of subject areas and year groups from both Primary and Secondary, the teachers had diverse perspectives towards the hindrances that they were facing, and towards their understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian education. All participants were shaped by their involvement in the study and, reflecting in the final meeting, they expressed views such as: “I didn’t have a framework to operate out [of] before this group” (Mary); “I think I downplayed the culture of a Christian school, but it is actually quite foundational in Kingdom-shaping schooling” (James); and “I’ve come to see the value of working alongside students” (Shane). Their growing perspectives were transformational both for themselves personally and for pockets of Yew Tree Christian College as they began to imbue a Kingdom-shaping way of life in their daily practice. At the end of the year, collectively, we were brightened by a spark that had been fanned into a flame: a hope that, in the midst of the demands of a market-driven context, we could resist and refocus ourselves and our students onto a vision for education and life that was about flourishing.

### 8.3 Understandings that have Emerged from the Research

This section of the thesis considers in turn the three research questions and the themes that have emerged from addressing these research questions during the course of the AR project. The findings that are explored here in each of the following subsections have been illuminated through CDA, which was applied to the data derived from the transcribed audio recordings of individual interviews with the participants and of the collective PLCs meetings.

#### 8.3.1 Research Question 1 – Understandings of Kingdom-shaping Christian Education

##### **Research Question 1:**

##### **What were the participating teachers’ understandings of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education?**

The findings from Research Question 1 originated from the transcribed audio recordings of individual participant interviews. It was my desire, prior to the commencement of the PLCs meetings, to gain an impression of the ways that each participant understood Christian

education. A number of themes emerged from the participant talk that indicated an understanding of the nature and purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education.

The first theme that was consistent across the participants' interviews was the notion that a Christian school education is synonymous with Kingdom-shaping. This conclusion was derived through comparing the ways that the participating teachers talked about a Christian school education with their descriptions of Kingdom-shaping. The repetition of key terms—such as “the Bible”, “God’s eyes” and “the Gospel”—to define both entities was indicative that there was a lack of understanding of the distinctive nature of Kingdom-shaping. Through the data analysis—particularly the exploration of the filled pause—the conclusion was made that the participating teachers did not actually think that Kingdom-shaping was synonymous with a Christian education. Rather, they simply did not understand the concept of Kingdom-shaping. This lack of understanding was deemed important because it was unlikely that the teachers or the executive at a Christian school would perceive the need to pursue Kingdom-shaping principles intentionally if they were not understood, or if it were thought that being a Christian school in name was all that was required. Andrea’s reflection in Meeting 8 where she stated that she had learned that “‘Christian education’ is not quite the same as ‘Kingdom-shaping education’...” was a significant gain in understanding, and one that the other participants also voiced.

Another theme that surfaced through an analysis of the participants' interview data was the emphasis that was placed on knowing **The Word** in their talk about Kingdom-shaping. In the calculation of the proportion of talk that was focused on **knowledge**, compared with the talk that was about **being** and **doing**, the proportion of talk about **The Word** was more than double the proportion of talk about **incarnation**, and five times the proportion of talk about **Proclamation**. As the data were explored, it became evident that the emphasis was placed on cognitive **knowledge** of the Bible, rather than on a spiritual **knowing** of **The Word**. This was important because the focus on cerebral **knowledge** of biblical truth meant that teachers were more engrossed in student acquisition of content than in a spiritual development of their **being** or **doing**. Andrea’s reflection in Meeting 8 went on to articulate that “[Kingdom-shaping] is necessarily transformative [and] relational and affects the whole person; its purpose is...not just better biblical understanding...”. A lack of emphasis on

**incarnation** and **Proclamation** in the participant talk about Kingdom-shaping, therefore, was problematic because it would potentially negate the possibility for the fruit of a Kingdom-shaping education to be transformational **being** and **doing** that were about relationships.

Finally, emerging from the proportion of participant talk about Kingdom-shaping that included **Proclamation** was the perspective that **Proclamation** occurred when there was unified action to serve others rather than selfishness, and that the purpose of **Proclamation** is renewal. The concept that true Kingdom-shaping practice entailed **doing** was important for considering the necessary outworking of a Kingdom-shaping education, and that it is about fulfilling the creational mandate given to God's image bearers to tend and cultivate the earth.

### 8.3.2 Research Question 2 – Hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Education

#### **Research Question 2:**

**What hindrances were revealed by participating teachers in achieving the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily practice?**

Answers to Research Question 2 were derived from the individual participants' interviews as well as from the transcribed audio of PLCs meetings. The themes that emerged from the participant talk, particularly in the context of the PLCs meetings, indicated that the teachers had, indeed, been influenced by the demands of a market-driven context, and that these influences had frustrated them from imbuing Kingdom-shaping principles for Shalom in their daily teaching. These themes are articulated below.

Highlighted in the individual and collective data of the participating teachers was a sense of their disempowerment and dehumanisation. This seemed to be derived from a disconnect that they perceived between their growing understandings of how a Kingdom-shaping Christian education should be imbued in practice and the reality that was occurring at Yew Tree Christian College. Each one of the participating teachers—over the course of 12 months—demonstrated that she or he was fundamentally committed to the purposes of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education. This was expressed through their interviews, where teachers such as James explained their attitude towards and commitment to the project as being **“excited....It's something that I have been thinking about, how to be more intentional**

as a Christian teacher....I want to learn how to do that better...”, and by Kevin, who, despite significant challenges—such as a lack of sleep—, devoted himself, as part of the intervention in AR Cycle 2, to 30 minutes of prayer a day “because I’ve said that I will do this”. It was, therefore, no real surprise that the frustrations that they expressed owing to the hindrances that were thwarting their attempts to imbue a Kingdom-shaping education were described in such vivid language. Nor that these frustrations indicated an existential crisis of purpose because the participants were forced to be hypocritical to their true purpose: authentic Christian education. This was consequently alienating for the teachers, and they described their feelings towards this in words such as: “very discouraging”, “especially hate”, “frustrated”, “pressure”, “tick the boxes”, and “constraints”. Their sense that there were “too many tensions”, that they knew what they “should” be doing but “we can’t” and the resultant “struggle” that they faced in an education that was “dealing with the bare bones a lot of the time” conveyed powerfully their consequent disempowerment.

Beyond the personally detrimental impact on the teachers, however, was a more concerning outcome for Yew Tree Christian College as a whole. The demands of the market that were voiced by the school executive were given precedence by the teachers over Kingdom-shaping practices because they were afraid of not meeting the mandated educational outcomes and of low student academic achievement. There was, as a result, a clear indication of an erosion of Kingdom-shaping practice at the school. In their talk, the teachers repeatedly discussed the challenges associated with the pressures ensuing from a desire for achieving “good academic results” while “maintaining the Christian distinctive”. They described this relationship as a “tension” and a fairly constant “pressure”. This thesis was entitled “Not for sale: The challenge to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian school education for Shalom in an Australian market-driven context”. The words of the participating teachers as they discussed their practice at Yew Tree Christian College suggested that there were indeed challenges faced by teachers in a market-driven context, and that these challenges, if unchecked, had the potential to derail the purposes of Kingdom-shaping Christian education, and to render them extinct.

### 8.3.3 Research Question 3 – Deepening Insights into Kingdom-shaping Christian Education that were Transformational for Practice

#### Research Question 3:

**How were the participating teachers’ deepening insights into the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education transformational for their practice?**

After the despondency that emerged from Research Question 2, the insights that surfaced from Research Question 3 yielded hope for the future, and indicated that, despite the palpable challenges that were experienced by the teachers in a market-driven context, it was actually possible to “push back” and to disempower these challenges. Consequently, in the process of intentionally shaping our practice through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom, the teachers came to understand more about the nature of Kingdom-shaping than they had expressed in their interviews, and they found that they personally and collectively began to be Kingdom-shaping themselves. As a result, and in contrast to the emphasis on cognitive **knowledge** with which participants began the project, they left with a transformational comprehension of Kingdom-shaping that integrated spiritual **knowing, being** and **doing**.

The participating teachers’ comprehension that there was a difference between cognitive **knowledge** and spiritual **knowing** was critical for providing them with a transformational basis for their **being** and **doing**. This was reflected in Mary’s statement that the value of the Tripod of Shalom was the provision of a framework “so you can operate out of that space”. Using the Tripod, Shane reflected that his thinking had been “works-based, me-focused, [and] what am I doing?”, whereas he came to see the importance of “the relational side”. The excitement of the participants as they expressed their new revelations of the nature of Kingdom-shaping through language such as “more potential...than I thought” and “Ah ha! This is what Kingdom-shaping education is!” provided a sense of hope to emerge from the thick blanket of discouragement that had tended to infuse the participants with helplessness. Accordingly, the participants began to express a transformed way of **being** and **doing** through statements such as: “I shouldn’t have downplayed [culture]”; “...it’s not simply a matter of knowing the truth...but also proclaiming...the impact that it has on the world”; “...there’s this genuine desire for people to respond in some way”; and “...we need the unified focus on the culture we want to create”. Their use of interjections, imperatives



and contrastive conjunctions demonstrated an intrinsic awareness of their growing understanding of kingdom-shaping and of the consequent impact that this had on their compulsion to be kingdom-shaping people who practised kingdom-shaping action.

Consequently, it became clear through the participant reflections that nurturing a Kingdom-shaping culture within a Christian school is vitally important. Furthermore, this culture is based on relationships within a loving community where individuals are recognised as people rather than as “automatons”. Because of the emphasis on the humanity of a person in the Tripod of Shalom, Kingdom-shaping materialised as a possible antidote to the dehumanising elements of a market-driven education that reduces students to a number and a statistic in the comparative league tables. This is due to the fact that it is about “the whole person”, and that it is “others focused”.

#### 8.4 The Knowledge Contributions that have Emerged from the Research

I embarked on this doctoral journey not because I desired to gain more qualifications or to propel forward my career as an educator. Rather, the passion that has impelled me and that has been a fire in my bones is the yearning to understand how Christian schools in this market-driven context can imbue a focus on Kingdom-shaping and avoid the insidious creep of mission drift (Greer & Horst, 2014). Greer and Horst asserted that drifting is the natural course of a mission, and that it often occurs slowly and unnoticed as the current provided by a dominant culture carries an organisation away from its original core purpose and identity. My personal commitment to the purposes of Christian education is such that I cannot stand by and knowingly allow mission drift to occur in this context. Consequently, through increasing my own epistemological, ontological and axiological understandings of the nature and practice of Christian education, my aspiration has been to draw attention to the dangers that are faced by Christian schools in a market-driven context, and to consider how I might make a contribution towards imbuing Kingdom-shaping for Shalom in Christian education.

#### 8.4.1 Contributions to Theoretical Knowledge

As was described in Subsection 8.3.1, the participating teachers began their involvement in this research project with the impression that a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom was synonymous with a Christian education. Their transformed thinking, encapsulated by Philippa, who exclaimed: “I was shocked at how scattered, random and vague and inconsequential a lot of the things I was saying [were]...”, demonstrated that a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom is actually distinctive, and that a Christian school can deliver a Christian education without its being Kingdom-shaping. A number of theoretical knowledge elements of a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom emerged from the research. These are outlined below.

Firstly, clarity with regard to the different emphases of a Christian education from a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom emerged as a result of the research. Traditionally, imparting a biblical worldview to students has been understood to be a central focus for a Christian education—exemplified by a Google search on biblical worldview in Christian education that yielded over eight million results. Furthermore, my own Master of Education thesis emphasised this element of Christian education, where I stated: “Attendance at a Christian school is intended to shape the worldview of adolescents who study there....The aim is to equip students with the tools to apply and integrate a biblical Christian worldview...” (Wong, 2008, p. 12). However, this research has enabled me, along with the participants, to see that—while biblical instruction is very important and should not be abandoned—a Christian education that fixes its aim on the acquisition of cognitive knowledge about the Bible is not enough. Rather, a Kingdom-shaping education places a much greater emphasis on developing integration amongst students’ spiritual **knowing**, the outworking of this **knowing** in their lives as they live **incarnationally** and Kingdom-shaping action through **Proclamation**. As I have had opportunities to share the Tripod of Shalom at symposiums—such as the 18<sup>th</sup> University of Southern Queensland Postgraduate and Early Career Researcher Group research symposium and the Christian Education National (CEN) 2019 International Transforming Education Conference (ITEC)—delegates suggested that the Tripod provides a dynamic framework that may be widely utilised—even beyond education—to effect a balanced and humane approach to life. Its ability to hold **knowing**, **being** and **doing** in a balanced tension, ensuring that neither one becomes unbalanced, has

been noted. Moreover, the resonance between the Tripod of Shalom that focused on imbuing a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom and the framework of knowing, being and doing used by Bartlett, Bennett, Power and Sunderland (2014) in their research into embedding elements of Aboriginal spirituality in a higher education art curriculum emphasised that **knowing**, **being** and **doing** are indeed central to an approach to life that is about being authentic to one's beliefs.

Therefore, a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom is distinctively about imbuing God's Kingdom reign through the spiritual transformation of students and the restoration of their identity as image bearers so that they may live as Kingdom citizens and be equipped to tend and cultivate creation. Indicative of this shift in understanding, the participants—who had at the beginning of the research emphasised the importance of biblical content—at the end highlighted that a Kingdom-shaping education is more about:

- Valuing the identity of the students as image bearers of God;
- Students being kingdom-shaping in their whole person and being prepared to step up and be vulnerable;
- Living a life that is indicative of Kingdom values;
- Flourishing relationships;
- The development of Kingdom culture; and
- Hope derived from a greater purpose that is outwardly focused and that holds an eternal perspective.

The use of the Tripod of Shalom as a lens provided the participants in this research project with a tangible framework through which to ensure that there was balance among **knowing**, **being** and **doing**, and to consider that a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom has a broader focus and outcomes than student attainment of cognitive biblical knowledge.

Another theoretical contribution to knowledge that has emerged from this research is the need for Christian educators to be Kingdom-shaping themselves before they can imbue a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom in their students. This realisation was a turning point for the participants and me in the research. The epiphany came when the focus on our own sense of **being** through elevating the importance of prayer in our AR intervention enabled us

to see that Kingdom-shaping is a way of life rather than something that one does in isolation. Kevin summed this up in Meeting 6: “...that’s who Jesus calls us to be. The salt and the light on the hill. In making a commitment to do that, it’s going to shape us beyond our time in this school. That’s what we want to be when we’re in nursing homes”. For a Christian school to imbue a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom, it is therefore essential that its teachers are growing citizens of the Kingdom who are permeated by a dynamic interweaving of **spiritual knowing**, **incarnational being** and **Proclamational doing** that is indicative of a vibrant individual and collective flourishing.

#### 8.4.2 Contributions to Methodological Knowledge

As I began this research, it was my desire that Kingdom-shaping principles would be applied to the research methodology and methods. Using the Tripod of Shalom as the conceptual framework allowed **knowing**, **being** and **doing** to exemplify Kingdom-shaping practice. Accordingly, methodological knowledge contributions were made with regard to conducting research and allowing the vibrant voices of the participants to emerge.

The Tripod of Shalom was used to afford guidance and synergy between the study’s research methods: the PLCs meetings; the AR cycles; and the CDA. Through aligning the three Tripod elements—**knowing**, **being** and **doing**—with Caine and Caine’s (2010) PLCs phases, the meetings were intentionally structured around spiritual **knowing** provided by **The Word** that influenced the way that the participants reflected; **incarnational being** that inspired the manner in which the participants shared; and **Proclamation** that guided the participants in the planning of action. As a result, **knowing**, **being** and **doing** infused every level of the research, from the way that the participants related with one another to the way that they reflected on their practice. This contributed an understanding of the way that a Kingdom-shaped community might interact in the midst of wrestling with difficult questions because the participants were intent on forging mutual understanding (J. Habermas, 1987) that was based on truth. Hence, where ordinarily they may have acquiesced with another point of view in order to maintain the peace, there was robust discussion and a deep desire for authentic comprehension that was undergirded by a spiritual **knowing** of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation**. Accordingly, throughout the PLCs meetings, as they sought to devise intervention and to clarify Kingdom-shaping, the

participants asked questions such as: “When should I speak and when should I remain silent?” (Mary); “How do we discuss ways in which we feel the school should be more Kingdom-shaping without being divisive?” (Andrea); and “How do I juggle all of these priorities?” (James), that were borne out of the longing as a community to imbue Kingdom-shaping principles in their knowing, being and doing.

Additionally, the elements in the Tripod of Shalom were applied as a lens through which the participants planned action, took action and evaluated that action in the AR cycles. Beyond contributing richly to the participants’ and my understandings of what it means to be authentically Kingdom-shaping in all aspects of life, applying the Tripod in this way to the research methods provided a powerfully cohesive structure among the various research elements. This enabled the methods to complement one another and to be intrinsically allied with the aims of the research.

Furthermore, the Tripod of Shalom was used as a lens in a transdisciplinary approach (Fairclough, 2003) to CDA. Using this lens in the third dimension—sociocultural practice—enabled a rich explication of the participants’ understandings of Kingdom-shaping practice to emerge from the data and, as a result, for their unique voices to be heard. The fact that I could use the Tripod to explore the balance between participants’ talk about knowing, being and doing, and to ascertain where they were decoupling the three elements, instead of seeing knowing, being and doing as separate entities, assisted me to draw deeper conclusions about the nature of Kingdom-shaping and allowed the participants to derive a more nuanced understanding of themselves and of their ensuing practice as Christian educators.

Finally, the Tripod of Shalom provided a framework for exploring the quality—or authenticity—of the research that had taken place in the study. Aligned with Tracy’s (2010) eight “big tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research, using the elements as criteria to ascertain the rigour of the research meant that Kingdom-shaping principles were again deeply embedded in the research practice. This ensured that Kingdom-shaping was not merely an abstract entity that was being studied but also a living, breathing way of life that could be applied to all facets of existence, including education and research.

### 8.4.3 Contributions to Practice-based Knowledge

My early research into the nature of Shalom and the concept of Kingdom-shaping saw the Tripod of Shalom emerge and take form. As I subsequently designed this research project, it was my intention, therefore, for the participants to utilise the Tripod to construct Kingdom-shaping practice, and then for the participants to undertake lesson observations of the Tripod being utilised in one another's classrooms. This intention was reflected in the original third research question that appeared in my confirmation of candidature proposal as: "What happens when the participating teachers use the Tripod of Shalom to guide their implementation of a Kingdom-shaped Christian education in their daily practice?" (Wong, 2017a, p. 21). My initial concept, however, was problematic because it was based on the premise that by using the Tripod of Shalom as a commodity—extracting it from its box and adding the right combination of knowing, being and doing to our teaching—we would construct observable Kingdom-shaping practice. Instead, when we tried to use this approach, we were overcome by the sense that something was missing, and the participants used metaphors such as "tangled" and "daunted" to describe their feelings about their efforts, and they asked questions such as "How do I go about this?" As we wrestled with the concept of Kingdom-shaping, we found that the elements could not in fact be taken off the shelf and, following the instructions, fashioned into quantifiable, Kingdom-shaping practice. Nor was the process easy or swift. Rather, we found that Kingdom-shaping takes patience and care, and is messy, challenging and uncertain. This was captured by James's summation at the end of Meeting 4: "...it's kind of realising that it's more organic—Kingdom-shaping Christian education. I don't think you can contrive it".

The difficult nature of Kingdom-shaping practice suggests that, if a Christian school is serious about imbuing God's Kingdom, that providing time for small groups of teachers to meet and work together regularly in community is essential. As the eighth PLCs meeting came to a close, the participating teachers discussed how important gathering together had been for mutual encouragement, accountability and prayer. Andrea expressed that "I need to have more of these kind of Kingdom-shaping conversations with my colleagues" and Philippa suggested that "there's something special about having a time specifically for Kingdom-shaping education...a time for debriefing and...to meditate and think...". Mutual help,

encouragement and hope are essential components of empowering teachers to be Kingdom-shaping in their daily practice.

Furthermore, in contrast to the transactional paradigm of education that has emerged from the commodification of schooling, Kingdom-shaping practice for Shalom holds relationships as central and reinterprets the ways that teachers view their students. The importance of relationships and community was a recurring theme throughout the interviews and PLCs meetings, demonstrated by the fact that there were 107 coded references to relationships and community in the transcribed audio recordings. In Meeting 6, Mary evocatively described Kingdom-shaping community as:

Eat together, celebrate together, enjoy each other's company, live the Kingdom values that exist in everything you do, even in the mundane...I think it's really good to remember that in the everyday is where the Kingdom is active. When we look around and we see those who are mourning and those who are broken and we look around and we see people who need God's breath on their life, that is actually the liveable faith that we've been called to live out of.

Accordingly, there needs to be a shift away from transaction-based relationships among teachers and students, and opportunities to foster community in a Kingdom-shaping Christian school need to be given. The AR intervention undertaken in Cycles 2 and 3 suggested that, in practice, this looks like—in the words of the participants—:

- Living in unity;
- Valuing people;
- Learning to get along with people who you don't get along with;
- Working together;
- Praying for one another;
- Seeing the value of children as part of God's Kingdom; and
- Being open and honest.

Exemplifying the characteristics of Kingdom-shaping education listed in subsection 8.4.1, each one of these practical elements demonstrates a balanced amalgamation of [The Word](#), [incarnation](#) and [Proclamation](#). Kevin summed up the way that students need to be viewed through the lens of the Tripod: “[Maybe our job isn’t to fix them; maybe our job is to journey alongside them](#)”, and Andrea concurred by adding: “[...to get to know \[the students\] and to get the idea that, because God has created this world, God has put them in this world, they do have a role to play.](#)” Consequently, the establishment of a reciprocating relational culture needs to be a priority in a Christian school that desires to be Kingdom-shaping.

#### 8.4.4 Contributions to Policy-based Knowledge

The analysis of data derived from individual interviews and PLCs meeting transcripts revealed that teachers at Yew Tree Christian College were experiencing hindrances that were frustrating their desire to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education in their daily teaching. Almost half of participant discourse about the hindrances that they were facing could be attributed to the effects of a market-driven context. These were an emphasis on academic achievements and metrics, overcrowded curriculum requirements, lack of time and archaic school structures. In the discourse about these hindrances, the participating teachers shared considerable personal angst, exemplified through a focus on preparing students for the workforce, and expressed through idioms such as “[banging my head against a brick wall](#)”; and questions such as: “[Why do we always feel the need to order and categorise students \[through\] assessments?](#)” The fact, however, that participants expressed relief from this sense of frustration as a result of reframing education through the lens of the Tripod of Shalom suggests that these hindrances can be mitigated by policy shapers through a change in focus.

Firstly, distinguishing between a Christian education and a Kingdom-shaping education for Shalom meant that the purpose of education was reframed for the participants. A Christian education—where students are educated in a Christian context, by Christian teachers—can see the primary motivation for learning as performance, albeit from a biblical perspective. By contrast, a Kingdom-shaping education—where all learning is founded on [The Word](#), [incarnation](#) and [Proclamation](#)—reinterprets the purpose of education to be the restoration of God’s image in students and equipping them to live as people of justice who imbue



Shalom. The participants found new hope as they realised that “Education should be more than just results or academic charts” and that “Kingdom-centred education points to a greater purpose.” Accordingly, the findings from this research project suggested that the hindrances faced by teachers in Christian schools as a result of a market-driven agenda may be mitigated by ensuring that the purpose of a Christian education is about shaping God’s Kingdom within the students so that they may go on to be Kingdom-shaping in their spheres of influence. This finding is supported by the research of MacDonald-Vemic and Portelli (2018), who found that, when a school focuses its energy on performance, it alters the satisfaction that teachers derive from their work when they sacrifice their commitments in order to make a positive impression on executive staff members.

Secondly, if Christian schools are going to focus on Kingdom-shaping, this will by necessity change the way that they view success and market their schools. A heavy advertising focus on a school’s outward appeal—by emphasising branding, high academic achievement and image—communicates to potential parents and students that the exterior façade is of greatest importance. This perpetuates the idea that education is a commodity. The by-product of this view is that prominence is placed on what the school does for the student, generating a sense of entitlement, rather than on the effort that the student must also take to engage in a partnership of learning that is about the shaping of character. The consequent apathy that is generated in students was indicated in the discourse of the participants at Yew Tree Christian College, who described the students as having a “feed me mindset” and as needing to shift from “seeing themselves as an empty cup waiting to be filled to a fellow learner with their teacher”. Instead, Kingdom-shaping Christian schools must reinterpret the definition of success, shifting the focus away from shallow, external interpretations of attainment towards how effectively graduates are imbuing Kingdom principles in their lives and undertaking Kingdom-shaping work for Shalom. Accordingly, the efforts of Christian educators such as Dr David Smith (2019) and others at the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning, who are currently focused on devising tools for Christian schools to assess their contribution to student formation, are extremely important for enabling schools to ascertain their effectiveness in imbuing Kingdom-shaping knowing, being and doing in their graduates.

## 8.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The Tripod's capacity to hold the spiritual knowing of **The Word**, **incarnation** and **Proclamation** in tension was an important contribution to theoretical knowledge about the nature of Kingdom-shaping practice. This was expressed by Philippa in the final PLCs meeting: "It's great because it does provide that balance...I think each one of us might naturally have an affinity with one of the Tripod....So each time we focus on one [element], the two others remind you they're still there". During 2018, in my capacity as Prefect Coordinator at Yew Tree Christian College, I used the Tripod of Shalom as a lens with the prefects to assist them to maintain a balance among their **knowing**, **being** and **doing**. It was received positively by the prefects who began to use it as a lens to view and shape their practice. In 2019, after I had left Yew Tree Christian College, the girls school captain, who had been a member of the prefect body in 2018, expressed to me: "Miss, we have gone back to the Tripod." In quizzing her about what she meant by this, she described that the prefects had begun to focus more on their **doing** rather than on their **being**. Remembering the Tripod, the captains realised that they needed to guide the prefects to ensure that their **knowing** and their **being** were also being developed to work in synergy with their **doing**. Future research possibilities exist to apply the Tripod of Shalom to other contexts—such as health, law and social services—to deepen understanding of how the lens may also operate to shape culture within other jurisdictions, whether they be Christian, of another religion or secular.

My work with the participants on Kingdom-shaping practice at Yew Tree Christian College took place for one year. While there were indications that the deepening insights into Kingdom-shaping principles continued to be transformational for the participants in their daily practice throughout 2019, by the end of that year there were some indications that these had begun to dissipate. For example, by the end of 2019, the joint student and staff prayer meeting that had begun as part of the second AR cycle had ceased to occur, partly because meetings were increasingly placed in that morning time slot by executive staff members. A longer research study about applying Kingdom-shaping principles to practice in Christian schools may therefore contribute understanding of the longevity of Kingdom-shaping culture within a school—whether it is reliant on a single person to foster it or whether it can be imbued within the cultural fabric of the school, regardless of individual

personalities. Furthermore, a long-term research project may assist in developing understanding of the capacity of Kingdom-shaping practice to mitigate reductionist elements of a market-driven context such as the emphasis placed on image and productivity.

## 8.6 Suggestions for Policy Development

My increased understanding of the nature of a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom that has emerged from this research project has highlighted possible changes that should be made to policy, both at system and at school levels and by the government. These changes are related to how the purpose of a Christian education is enacted, the way that curriculum is devised and the laws that are in place to assist Christian schools to authentically imbue their purpose authentically. Each of these suggestions for policy development is now discussed.

The first area to consider is the training of Christian teachers, particularly by the various sectors, such as CSA. One of the hindrances to Kingdom-shaping Christian education that emerged from participants' individual interviews and collective perspectives shared in the PLCs meetings was the lack of teacher training that would assist with Kingdom-shaping practice. Chapter 2 explored some of the difficulties faced by the participants as they attempted to put into practice CSA's God's Big Story framework. They found it too theoretical and lacking in a practical application that would be spiritually transformational for their teaching. These challenges demonstrated that, if CSA is serious about training teachers to develop students at Christian schools who will, empowered by the Spirit, commit to lives that contribute to the well-being of others—as espoused on their website—, teacher training must also include the tangible practice and profession of faith, rather than emphasising the acquisition of cognitive biblical knowledge. When **knowing**, **being** and **doing** are dynamically intertwined,—spiritual **knowing** based on **The Word** permeating **incarnational being**, and **Proclamational doing** infused in such a way that it inspires a person to **be** the person that she or he is becoming (Pietsch, 2018),—transformation of people and subsequently of their spheres of influence can take place—as was demonstrated by the experience of the participants in this project. However, this project also revealed that such

an outcome cannot be programmed by following a formula. Therefore, the training of teachers also needs to attend to their spiritual growth, and to provide an understanding of the unique narrative that undergirds a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom that is different from the dominant story of Babylon. In practice, this might look like “Train the Trainer” becoming an ongoing, mentoring relationship with school leaders—instead of a one-off symposium—to equip them to undertake ongoing Kingdom-shaping training with their staff members in their unique school contexts.

A second area for policy development is the need for government to consider a more humane purpose for education than generating human capital, and consequently to develop a curriculum that is appropriate to this purpose. In New South Wales, the government is currently undertaking the first curriculum review in 30 years. This curriculum review, however, still seems to place considerable emphasis on the role of education in generating human capital. The press release that announced the curriculum review quoted the State Premier, Gladys Berejiklian: “The NSW Government strongly supports a back to basics approach....Students need to have strong foundations in maths, English and science to be prepared for the jobs of the future and for attaining lifelong skills” (New South Wales Department of Education, 2019, n.p.). Apart from one mention of equipping young people to thrive in life after school, the press release suggested that the new curriculum will focus on student success for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, stimulating student academic growth, and meeting the needs of today’s society. This was supported by the Curriculum Review document itself (Masters, 2019, October), which, while hopeful in its title: *Nurturing wonder and igniting passion*, continued to elevate the importance of equipping a future workforce. This was evident in the first paragraph of the Executive Summary that emphasised equipping students for the occupations of the future because of increasing globalisation and advances in technologies that have changed future employment possibilities. Disappointingly, the nurturing of wonder and the ignition of passion were coupled with the need to “...provide every young person with knowledge, skills and attributes that will help prepare them for a lifetime of learning, meaningful adult employment and effective future citizenship” (p. x). A back to basics focus described in the curriculum review is reductionist, and the fact that the press release identified mathematics and science as focus areas for the new curriculum—the two areas of weakness in Australia’s 2019 PISA scores (Duffy & Wylie, 2019)—suggested

that elevating test results is still at the core of the new curriculum. Policy development needs to be made in the area of envisioning and devising a curriculum that is truly centred on the flourishing of people. A curriculum such as this will, similarly to CSA, require that **knowing**, **being** and **doing** are brought back into balance, with a greater emphasis on students' **being** required, rather than on what they will **do**.

Finally, policy development is needed to protect the capacity of Christian schools to secure staff members who are journeying towards Kingdom-shaping. The debate in Australia with regard to discrimination laws that allow Christian schools—and other religious organisations, such as churches—selectively to employ people who imbue the values of the organisation has been prominent in 2018 and 2019. During 2018 and 2019, there was significant pressure placed on the Australian federal government to close loopholes that allow for discrimination on the basis of religion. Sentiment to this effect was widely published in the media, such as in *The Guardian*, where it was reported that “State and territory anti-discrimination commissions have revolted against the Coalition [Government]’s religious discrimination bill, warning it privileges religion over other rights” (Karp, 2019, n.p.). However, this research project has demonstrated that, if a Christian school is going to be focused on Kingdom-shaping for Shalom—a vision that is potentially beneficial to all of Australian society as students journey in **being** Kingdom-shaping and undertake Kingdom-shaping **practice** that is about the renewal of a hurting world—it is essential that they continue to be able to employ staff members who are themselves on a journey of **knowing**, **being** and **doing** Kingdom-shaping. This indicates that bodies such as CSA that have lobbied the government to retain the current laws or to shape new equivalent ones must continue to assert valiantly the need for this, and that the government would find it in the best interests of a flourishing nation to provide this capacity.

### 8.7 Researcher Reflexivity and Positionality – The Planting of a Seed

The strong Kingdom-shaping culture at Yew Tree Christian College that had been described in 2012 by a visiting accreditation officer as “a lighthouse”, and that was indicative of Shalom, began to shift subtly over the duration of 2017 and 2018 at the same period that I

was completing my own data collection. Throughout this time, it became increasingly difficult for me as a senior member of staff there to question policy and to be heard. This gradual drift exemplified the findings of research carried out by Greer and Horst (2014). They argued that the natural trajectory for organisations is “mission drift” (p. 20) that generally occurs “quietly, gradually and slowly” (p. 21). As I began my PhD journey, I had heady (and dare I say naïve and romantic) ideas that I was setting out to make a momentous contribution to Christian school education. That might yet occur, but the greatest outcome—shockingly to me—was my own transformation. Accordingly, where previously I had been completely settled and content at the school, I began to feel restless. By the end of 2018, I found that the disparity between the vision and values of Yew Tree Christian College and my own convictions had become significant, and it became necessary to consider whether it was time, after 14 years, to move on. At the time, there was considerable grief in the realisation that my own journey with the school, a place that had nurtured and honed my own craft and where I had been mentored by experienced Christian educators, was over. However, I came to realise that my time at the school had been my own preparation, the embryonic growth and maturation of a seed in a pod that would burst forth and, carried by the wind, be taken elsewhere to be planted and bear fruit (see also Wong, (under contract), n.p., reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan).

## 8.8 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 8 has concluded this thesis and summarised the research methodology and methods, explored the findings from the three research questions, considered the knowledge contributions, and suggested further research and policy development. Over the past three-and-a-half years, as I have studied the nature of Kingdom-shaping and researched the effects of a market-driven context on Christian education, I have become increasingly convinced that Christian schools do indeed face a substantial challenge to imbue a Kingdom-shaping Christian education for Shalom in a market-driven context. The demarcation line between Babylon’s yawning hunger for productivity and God’s Kingdom that is represented by doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8) takes wisdom to discern and immense courage to act accordingly. Yet responding to the challenge is not fruitless, and nor should be it undertaken alone. The participants and I

found that journeying together as a thriving mini-Kingdom community allowed us to be vulnerable with one another and equipped us to probe carefully our practice to identify and redeem elements that had been insidiously moulded by Babylon. As we encouraged and supported one another to cultivate Kingdom-shaping practice individually and collectively, we saw that “a battle of righteousness is never fought by [a] few”, and that it was indeed possible to “shine through the dark” (Supan, 2019, n.p.). Hope therefore emerges from this study that Christian schools may halt the relentless appetite of the market and instead revision the purpose of education to be about Kingdom-shaping for Shalom.

## References

- Accola. (2009). Yew: Symbol of death and life. Retrieved from <https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/opinion/blogs/yew-symbol-of-death-and-life/10160067.blog?firstPass=false>
- Akaranga, S. I., & Makau, B. K. (2016). Ethical considerations and their applications to research: A case of the University of Nairobi. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 3(12), 1-9. Retrieved from [https://profiles.uonbi.ac.ke/kuria\\_paul/files/429-825-2-pb.pdf](https://profiles.uonbi.ac.ke/kuria_paul/files/429-825-2-pb.pdf)
- Alexander, T. D., Rosner, B. S., Carson, D. A., & Goldsworthy, G. (Eds.). (2000). *New dictionary of biblical theology*. Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (2005). *Teachers investigate their work*. London, UK: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Amrein, A. L., & Berliner, D. C. (2002). High-stakes testing, uncertainty, and student learning. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10(18), 1-74. Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/297/423>
- Anderson, H. (1983). Incarnation and pastoral care. *Pastoral Psychology*, 32(4), 239-250.
- Apple, M. (2006). *Educating the "right" way: Markets, standards, God and inequality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Aristotle. (350 B.C.E). *Nicomachean ethics*. Retrieved from <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.6.vi.html>
- Aroney-Sine, C. (2001). *Wholeness and the shalom of God*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Augustine. (1968). The teacher (R. P. Russell, Trans.). In *The fathers of the church*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Augustine. (1972). *City of God* (H. Bettenson, Trans.). London, UK: Penguin Books.
- Australian Curriculum And Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2019). *NAPLAN achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy: National report for 2019*. ACARA Retrieved from <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/naplan-2019-national-report.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2017). *NAPLAN achievement in reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy: National report for 2017*. Retrieved from [https://www.nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-national-report-2017\\_final\\_04dec2017.pdf?sfvrsn=0](https://www.nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/naplan-national-report-2017_final_04dec2017.pdf?sfvrsn=0)
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (n.d.). My School. Retrieved from <https://www.myschool.edu.au/>
- Badley, K. (1994). The faith-learning integration movement in Christian higher education: Slogan or substance? *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 13-33. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/soe\\_faculty/142](http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/soe_faculty/142)
- Badley, K. (2009). Clarifying "faith-learning integration": Essentially contested concepts and the concept-conception distinction. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*, 13(1), 7-17. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1177/205699710901300103>



- Barclay, W. (1956-1959). William Barclay's daily study Bible. Retrieved from <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/hebrews-8.html#1>
- Barnett, C. (2010). Publics and markets: What's wrong with neoliberalism? In S. Smith, S. Marston, R. Pain, & J. P. Jones (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of social geographies* (pp. 269-296). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Bartholomew, C., & Goheen, M. (2004). *The drama of Scripture: Finding our place in the biblical story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Bartholomew, C., & Goheen, M. (2008). *Living at the crossroads: An introduction to Christian worldview*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Bartlett, B., Bennett, D., Power, A., & Sunderland, N. (2014). Enhancing Indigenous content in arts curricula through service learning with Indigenous communities. doi:10.13140/2.1.5144.0003
- Bell, E. E., Fals Borda, O., Maguire, P., Park, P., Reason, P., & Rowan, J. (2011). Groundings. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of action research* (pp. 11-13). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. London, UK: Pearson.
- Bergold, J., & Thomas, S. (2012). Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 13(1). Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1801/3334>
- Berkovic, D., Ayton, D., Briggs, A. M., & Ackerman, I. N. (2020). The view from the inside: Positionality and insider research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-4. doi:10.1177/1609406919900828
- Bettache, K., & Chui, C. (2019). The invisible hand is an ideology: Toward a social psychology of neoliberalism. *Journal of Social Issues*, 75(1), 8-19. doi:10.1111/josi.12308
- Bible Study Tools. (2018a). The NAS New Testament Greek lexicon. Retrieved from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/zoe.html>
- Bible Study Tools. (2018b). Old Testament Hebrew lexicon - New American Standard. Retrieved from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/hebrew/nas/shalam.html>
- Billings, J. T. (2012). The problem with "Incarnational ministry" - Christianity today. Retrieved from <http://jtoddbillings.com/2012/12/the-problem-with-incarnational-ministry/>
- Black, J. (2016, April 30). State schools get top marks in appealing to parents. *Weekend Australian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/columnists/john-black/state-schools-get-top-marks-in-appealing-to-parents/news-story/e8f5a3eaaf05412bea3a5ee9e4b8bbbf>
- Blamires, H. (1978). *The Christian mind: How should a Christian think?* Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books.
- Board of Studies Teaching & Educational Standards (BOSTES). (2015). *Stronger HSC standards: Overview of the evidence*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation Retrieved from <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/fef1917e-63bc-4e27-a263-f7afdd5fde1b/stronger-hsc-standards-evidence.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=>
- Bonhoeffer, D. (1954). *Life together: The classic exploration of Christian community*. New York, NY: Harper One.

- Bonnor, C., & Shepherd, B. (2016). *Uneven playing field: The state of Australia's schools*. Retrieved from <https://cpd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-State-of-Australias-Schools.pdf>
- Bradbury-Huang, H. (2010). What is good action research?: Why the resurgent interest? *Action Research*, 8(1), 93-109. doi:10.1177/1476750310362435
- Bradbury-Huang, H. (n.d.). Quality criteria for action research. *Academia*. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/7020064/Quality\\_Criteria\\_for\\_Action\\_Research](https://www.academia.edu/7020064/Quality_Criteria_for_Action_Research)
- Brown, P. (2017). Narrative: An ontology, epistemology and methodology for pro-environmental psychology research. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 31, 215-222. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214629617301767>
- Brueggemann, W. (2001). *The prophetic imagination* (Kindle ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Brueggemann, W. (2015). *The creative word* (2nd Kindle ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Bullinger, E. W. (1921). *Number in Scripture: Its supernatural design and spiritual significance* (4th ed.). London, England: Eyre & Spottiswoode.
- Burggraaf, H. (Ed.) (2014). *Transformational education: A framework for Christian teaching*. Mount Evelyn, Vic, Australia: Mount Evelyn Christian School.
- Caine, G., & Caine, R. (2010). *Strengthening and enriching your professional learning community: The art of learning together*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Caldwell, B. J. (2010). The impact of high-stakes test-driven accountability. *Professional Voice*, 9(2), 49-53. Retrieved from <http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/10.1.1.627.3870.pdf>
- Cambridge Dictionary. (2019). Online. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>
- Carey, A. (2019). Jobs link proposal for year 9 NAPLAN. *The Age*. Retrieved from <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/jobs-link-proposal-for-year-9-naplan-20190827-p52lido.html>
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (2004). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research*. Retrieved from <https://enotez.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/becoming-critical.pdf>
- Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (2010). Critical discourse analysis in organizational studies: Towards an integrationist methodology. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47(6), 1213-1218. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00883.x
- Christian, B., & Beamish, P. (2018). Are Christian schools really Christian? Perceptions of final year pre-service teachers in Australia. *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, 12(2), 23-34.
- Christian Schools Australia. (2017). Module one "The big picture": What makes curriculum distinctively Christian? In. CSA Curriculum Symposium: Training the Trainer, South Australia: PowerPoint Presentation.
- Christian Schools Australia. (n.d.). Vision and purpose. Retrieved from <https://csa.edu.au/about/vision-and-purpose/>
- Clark, L. (2016). *Beautiful failures*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Ebury Press.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

- Cobigo, V., Martin, L., & Mcheimech, R. (2016). Understanding community. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 5(4), 181-203. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312186833\\_Understanding\\_Community](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312186833_Understanding_Community)
- Cockayne, J. (2017). Contemporaneity and communion: Kierkegaard on the personal presence of Christ. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 25(1), 41-62. doi:10.1080/09608788.2016.1219843
- Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2005). *Doing action research in your own organization* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Collier, J. (2018). How should parents act when their child has a problem at school? Retrieved from <http://standrewscathedralschool.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/r/46F30A245C78D6402540EF23F30FEDED/64E34400A62926236B5BE456C00C2519>
- Collins Dictionary. (n.d.). Online. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english>
- Color wheel pro: See color theory in action. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html>
- Colson, C. (1999). *How now shall we live?* Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- Connell, R. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: An essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education*, 54(2), 99-112. doi:10.1080/17508487.2013.776990
- Cook, T. (1998). The importance of mess in action research. *Educational Action Research*, 6(1), 93-109. doi:10.1080/09650799800200047
- Cook, T. (2004). Reflecting and learning together: Action research as a vital element of developing understanding and practice. *Educational Action Research*, 12(1), 77-98. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09650790400200240>
- Cooling, T. (2010). Doing God in education. Retrieved from <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/archive/files/Reports/DoingGodinEducation.pdf>
- Coulter, D. (2002). What counts as action in educational action research? *Educational Action Research*, 10(2), 189-206. doi:10.1080/09650790200200181
- Cranley, L. (2018). *An investigation into the impact of high-stakes testing, through the Naplan assessment, on the teaching and learning of mathematics in one primary school*. (Master of Philosophy). University of Notre Dame, Perth, WA, Australia. Retrieved from <https://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1210&context=theses>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Curriculum Corporation. (2008). *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*. Melbourne, Vic, Australia: Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs Retrieved from [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/National\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Educational\\_Goals\\_for\\_Young\\_Australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf)
- Dantley, M. E. (2003). Critical spirituality: Enhancing transformative leadership through critical theory and African American prophetic spirituality. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 6(1), 3-17. doi:10.1080/1360312022000069987

- Dantley, M. E. (2005). The power of critical spirituality to act and reform. *Journal of School Leadership, 15*, 500-518.
- Davies, B., & Bansel, P. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 20*(3), 247-259. doi:10.1080/09518390701281751
- Deffinbaugh, R. L. (2004). Personal implications of the incarnation (part 1) Philippians 2: 5-18. *The Coming of the Christ*. Retrieved from <https://bible.org/seriespage/4-personal-implications-incarnation-part-1-philippians-25-18>
- Deloitte Access Economics. (2016). *The economic impact of improving school quality*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education and Training Retrieved from <https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/ecoimpactschoolquality.pdf>
- Donnelly, K. (2014). The power of prayer isn't lost in the modern age. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-16/donnelly-the-power-of-prayer-isnt-lost-in-the-modern-age/5816138>
- Douglas, J. D., & Tenney, M. C. (Eds.). (1987). *New international Bible dictionary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Dow, P. E. (2013). *Virtuous minds: Intellectual character development* (Kindle ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Dowling, A. (2008). *Output measurement in education*. Retrieved from [https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=policy\\_analysis\\_misc](https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1001&context=policy_analysis_misc)
- Duffy, C., & Wylie, B. (2019). Australian students behind in maths, reading and science, PISA education study shows. *Australian Broadcasting Commission News*. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-03/australia-education-results-maths-reading-science-getting-worse/11760880>
- Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(1), 54-63. doi:10.1177/160940690900800105
- Education Council. (2019). *Draft declaration on education goals*. Retrieved from <https://www.reviewmelbournedeclaration.edu.au/>
- Education Services Australia. (2019). *Alice Springs (Mparntwe) education declaration*. Carlton South, VIC, AUstralia: Education Council Retrieved from [https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/melbdec/ED19-0230%20-%20SCH%20-%20Alice%20Springs%20\(Mparntwe\)%20Education%20Declaration\\_ACC.pdf](https://uploadstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public-assets/education-au/melbdec/ED19-0230%20-%20SCH%20-%20Alice%20Springs%20(Mparntwe)%20Education%20Declaration_ACC.pdf)
- Eliot, T. S. (n.d.). Preludes. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44214/preludes-56d22338dc954>
- Elliott, A. J. (2015). Color and psychological functioning: A review of theoretical and empirical work. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6*, 1-8. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00368
- Elliott, J. (2007). Assessing the quality of action research. *Research Papers in Education, 22*(2), 229-246. doi:1080/02671520701296205
- Ernst, P. (2009). Values journey: Our purpose. Retrieved from <http://valuesjourney.com/our-purpose.html>
- Etherington, M. (2008). Is Christian schooling really at loggerheads with the ideas of diversity and tolerance? *Education Research and Perspectives, 35*(2), 112-137. Retrieved from

[http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=edu\\_article](http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=edu_article)

- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1996). *Language and power*. Essex, UK: Longman Group UK.
- Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research* (e-Library ed.). London, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. (1993). *How to read the Bible for all its worth: A guide to understanding the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Fee, G. D., & Stuart, D. (2002). *How to read the Bible book by book: A guided tour* (Kindle ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Feller, I. (2008). Neoliberalism, performance measurement, and the governance of American academic science. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/content/qt8hp0p7vd/qt8hp0p7vd.pdf>
- Fernhout, H. (1997). Christian schooling: Telling a worldview story. In I. Lambert & S. Mitchell (Eds.), *The crumbling walls of certainty: Towards a Christian critique of postmodernity and education* (pp. 75-81). Sydney, NSW, Australia: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity.
- Fink, G., & Yolles, M. (2012). Narratives, paradigms and change: The issue of relevance. *Cross-Cultural Competence and Management*, 2(3/4), 191-208.
- Fludernik, M. (1994a). Introduction: Second-person narrative and related issues. *Style*, 28(3), 281-311. Retrieved from <https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/dnb/download/5098>
- Fludernik, M. (1994b). Second-person narrative as a test case for narratology. *Style*, 28(3), 445-479. Retrieved from <https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/fedora/objects/freidok:5099/datastreams/FILE1/content>
- Francis, B., & Mills, M. (2012). Schools as damaging organisations: Instigating a dialogue concerning alternative models of schooling. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 20(2), 251-271. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2012.688765>
- Frary, M. (2018). Businesses need to reinvent or fail. Retrieved from <https://www.raconteur.net/business-innovation/businesses-need-to-reinvent-or-fail>
- Freire, P. (1970a). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(2), 205-225.
- Freire, P. (1970b). Cultural action and conscientization. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(3), 452-477.
- Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of the heart*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Friskin, R. J. (2011). *It only takes a spark: The story of Christian community schools*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Morling Press.
- Frost, M. (2006). *Exiles: Living missionally in a post-Christian culture*. Massachusetts, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.
- Frost, M. (2014). *Incarinate: The body of Christ in an age of disengagement*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Fullan, M. (2011). *Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform*. Retrieved from <https://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/13396088160.pdf>

- Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). *Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems* (Kindle ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Fullan, M., & Scott, G. (2014). Education plus. Retrieved from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Education-Plus-A-Whitepaper-July-2014-1.pdf>
- Gaffney, M. (2011). *Flourishing: How to achieve a deeper sense of well-being, meaning and purpose - even when facing adversity*. London, UK: Penguin Books.
- Gee, J. P. (2005). *An introduction to discourse analysis* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- George, J. (2017). Community engagement in schools. In K. Goodlet, J. Collier, & T. George (Eds.), *Better learning: Trajectories for educators in Christian schools* (pp. 247-260). Canberra, ACT, Australia: St Mark's NTC Publishing.
- Giroux, H. A. (2014). *Neoliberalism's war on higher education*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- Gittins, R. (2017, November 11). Something's gone badly wrong with teaching. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/business/somethings-gone-badly-wrong-with-teaching-20171110-gzilhr.html>
- Glanzer, P. G. (2008). Why we should discard "the integration of faith and learning": Rearticulating the mission of the Christian scholar. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*, 12(1), 41-51. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/205699710801200105>
- Glossary of poetic terms. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms>
- Gluckman, A. (2002). Testing...testing...one, two, three: The commercial side of the standardised-testing boom. *Dollars & Sense*, 239, 32-37. Retrieved from <http://dollarsandsense.org/archives/2002/0102toc.html>
- Goethe, J. W. (1840). *Theory of colours* (digital ed.). London, UK: William Clowes and Sons.
- Goethe, J. W. (1970). *Theory of colours* (C. L. Eastlake, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press Ltd.
- Goheen, M. (2011). *A light to the nations: The missional church and the biblical story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Goldsworthy, G. (2001). *The Goldsworthy trilogy: Gospel and kingdom, Gospel and wisdom, the Gospel in revelation*. Carlisle, CA: Paternoster Publishing.
- Goodlet, K., Collier, J., & George, T. (Eds.). (2017). *Better learning: Trajectories for educators in Christian schools*. Canberra, ACT, Australia: St Mark's NTC Publishing.
- Green, E., & Cooling, T. (2009). *Mapping the field: A review of the current research evidence on the impact of schools with a Christian ethos*. Retrieved from <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/files/files/Reports/Mappingthefield.pdf>
- Greene, A. E. (1998). *Reclaiming the future of Christian education*. Colorado Springs, CO: Association of Christian Schools International.
- Greene, M. (2014). On the inside looking in: Methodological insights and challenges in conducting qualitative insider research. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(29), 1-13. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/7292274/On\\_the\\_Inside\\_Looking\\_In\\_Methodological\\_Insights\\_and\\_Challenges\\_in\\_Conducting\\_Qualitative\\_Insider\\_Research\\_The\\_Qualitative\\_Report\\_19\\_29\\_](https://www.academia.edu/7292274/On_the_Inside_Looking_In_Methodological_Insights_and_Challenges_in_Conducting_Qualitative_Insider_Research_The_Qualitative_Report_19_29_)
- Greer, P., & Horst, C. (2014). *Mission drift: The unspoken crisis facing leaders, charities, and churches* (Kindle ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers.

- Grenville, K. (2008). *The lieutenant*. New York, NY: Grove Press.
- Groome, T. (1980). *Sharing our story and our vision*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.
- Guide to grammar and writing. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/determiners/determiners.htm>
- Habermas, J. (1976). *Communication and the evolution of society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action (vol. 2. Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason)*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, R. T. (2008). *Introduction to Christian education and formation: A lifelong plan for Christ-centred restoration*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.
- Hanscamp, M. (2014). Foreword. In H. Burggraaf (Ed.), *Transformational education: A framework for Christian teaching* (pp. 7-13). Mount Evelyn, Vic, Australia: Mount Evelyn Christian School.
- Hattie, J. (2016). Shifting away from distractions to improve Australia's schools: Time for a reboot. Jack Keating Memorial Lecture. Retrieved from [http://education.unimelb.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/1993904/Deans-lecture-June-2016-Jack-Keating-lecture.pdf](http://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1993904/Deans-lecture-June-2016-Jack-Keating-lecture.pdf)
- Hawkes, T. (2008, September 8). The failure of schools to educate. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/09/08/1220725904072.html>
- Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Heschel, A. J. (1999). *The prophets*. Peabody, MA: Prince Press.
- Highbaugh, K. (2015). *The esoteric codex: Numerology*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com.
- Hill, J. (2016). Education is the key to prosperity. Retrieved from <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/comment-education-is-the-key-to-prosperity>
- Holden, R., & Zhang, J. (2018). *The economic impact of improving regional, rural and remote education in Australia: Closing the human capital gap*. Retrieved from <http://research.economics.unsw.edu.au/richardholden/assets/gonski-report-final.pdf>
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2014). Researcher positionality: A consideration of its influence and place in research. *Academia*. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/6084261/Researcher\\_Positionality\\_A\\_consideration\\_of\\_its\\_influence\\_and\\_place\\_in\\_research](https://www.academia.edu/6084261/Researcher_Positionality_A_consideration_of_its_influence_and_place_in_research)
- Hulme, K. (2001). *The bone people*. London, UK: Picador.
- Idleman, K. (2011). *Not a fan* (Kindle ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Irvine, J. (2018). Policymakers ignore link between human capital and growth "at their own peril". *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <https://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/policymakers-ignore-link-between-human-capital-and-growth-at-their-own-peril-20180925-p505y9.html>
- Iselin, D., & Meteyard, J. D. (2010). The "Beyond in the midst": An incarnational response to the dynamic dance of Christian worldview, faith and learning. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*, 14(1), 33-46. Retrieved from [http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/205699711001400105?journalCode=i](http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/205699711001400105?journalCode=iceb)  
ceb

- Janks, H. (1997). Critical discourse analysis as a research tool. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 18(3), 329-342. doi:10.1080/0159630970180302
- Jorgensen, M., & Phillips, L. J. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London, England: Sage Publications.
- Justins, C. F. R. (2002). *Christian parent controlled schools in Australia: A study of the relationship between founding values and prevailing practices*. Australian Catholic University, Unpublished Thesis. Fitzroy, Vic, Australia. Retrieved from <http://researchbank.acu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1055&context=theses>
- Karp, P. (2019). Coalition's religious discrimination bill condemned by state and territory commissions. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/15/coalitions-religious-discrimination-bill-condemned-by-state-and-territory-commissions>
- Kemmis, S. (2007). *Action research as a practice-changing practice*. Paper presented at the The Spanish Collaborative Action Research Network (CARN) conference, University of Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain. Retrieved from [https://www.infor.uva.es/~amartine/MASUP/Kemmis\\_2007.pdf](https://www.infor.uva.es/~amartine/MASUP/Kemmis_2007.pdf)
- Kemmis, S. (n.d.). Praxis and practice architectures in mathematics education. Retrieved from [https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/9663729/Kemmis%26%2320%3BMERGA%26%2320%3B2008%26%2320%3B080528\\_17sk.pdf](https://researchoutput.csu.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/9663729/Kemmis%26%2320%3BMERGA%26%2320%3B2008%26%2320%3B080528_17sk.pdf)
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2005). Participatory action research: Communicative action and the public sphere. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 559-603). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (Eds.). (1988). *The action research planner*. Geelong, Vic, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kemmis, S., & Smith, T. J. (Eds.). (2008). *Enabling praxis: Challenges for education*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Kerstetter, K. (2012). Insider, outsider, or somewhere in between: The impact of researchers' identities on the community-based research process. *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*, 27(2), 99-117. Retrieved from <http://journalofruralsocialsciences.org/pages/Articles/JRSS%202012%2027/2/JRSS%202012%2027%20%2099-117.pdf>
- Khalil, M. K. (2017, December 13). NAPLAN results "a wake up call": Education minister. *SBS.com.au*. Retrieved from <https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/kurdish/en/article/2017/12/13/naplan-results-wake-call-education-minister>
- Khan, S., & Tzortzopoulos, P. (2016). *A framework for evaluating an action research study on lean design management*. Paper presented at the 24th annual conference of the International Group for Lean Construction, Boston, MA. Retrieved from <https://iglcstorage.blob.core.windows.net/papers/attachment-5d4d891d-5eea-4330-9897-e44255d673b8.pdf>
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.
- King, P. (1998). Augustine on the impossibility of teaching. *Metaphilosophy*, 29, 179-195. Retrieved from [http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/articles/Augustine\\_on\\_Teaching.pdf](http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/articles/Augustine_on_Teaching.pdf)
- Kinsella, E. A., & Pitman, A. (Eds.). (2012). *Phronesis as professional knowledge: Practical wisdom in the professions*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.



- Kirylo, J. D. (2017). Hate won, but love will have the final word: Critical pedagogy, liberation theology, and the moral imperative of resistance. *Policy Futures in Education, 15*(5), 590-601.
- Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education, 6*(5), 26-41.
- Knight, G. R. (2006). *Philosophy & education* (4th ed.). Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- Kontominas, B. (2018). NAPLAN no longer linked to HSC after backlash from parents. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-22/naplan-no-longer-linked-to-hsc/9473238>
- Krycho, C. (2014). The uniqueness of the incarnation. Retrieved from <https://www.chriskycho.com/2014/the-uniqueness-of-the-incarnation.html>
- Lacan, J. (1969). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan book XVII: Psychoanalysis upside down/The reverse side of psychoanalysis*. Retrieved from <http://www.lacanireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-XVII.pdf>
- Ladd, K. L., & Spika, B. (2002). Inward, outward, and upward: Cognitive aspects of prayer. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 41*(3), 475-484.
- Lessing, D. (2007). Nobel lecture: On not winning the Nobel Prize. Retrieved from [https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2007/lessing-lecture\\_en.html](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2007/lessing-lecture_en.html)
- Levin, H. (2009). The economic payoff to investing in educational justice. *Educational Researcher, 38*(1), 5-20. doi:10.3102/0013189X08331192
- Lewis, C. S. (1971). *The four loves*. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Trade.
- Lewis, C. S. (1952/2001). *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1*(3), 275-289. Retrieved from [http://ideanetworking.com.au/docs/interpretiveresearchmethods/Interpretive\\_Criteria-1995-Lincoln-275-89.pdf](http://ideanetworking.com.au/docs/interpretiveresearchmethods/Interpretive_Criteria-1995-Lincoln-275-89.pdf)
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1989). Ethics: The failure of positivist science. *The Review of Higher Education, 12*(3), 221-240. doi:10.1353/rhe.1989.0017
- Lists: General rules. (2013). Retrieved from <https://awc.ashford.edu/grammar-style-lists.html>
- Lynn, M. L. (2003). *Ora et Labora: Paths toward prayerful teaching*. Paper presented at the Christian Business Faculty Association, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228952448\\_Ora\\_et\\_Labora\\_Paths\\_toward\\_Prayerful\\_Teaching](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228952448_Ora_et_Labora_Paths_toward_Prayerful_Teaching)
- Lynn, M. L. (2004). Prayerful teaching in higher education: A survey of themes. *Christian Higher Education, 3*(3), 261-276.
- MacDonald-Vemic, A., & Portelli, J. (2018). Performance power: The impact of neoliberalism on social justice educators' ways of speaking about their educational practice. *Critical Studies in Education*. doi:10.1080/17508487.2018.1428642
- Macnaught, T. (1995). An investigation of ethical and spiritual education in secular and plural societies. Retrieved from [https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Macnaught\\_Tim\\_1995.pdf](https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Macnaught_Tim_1995.pdf)

- Martí, J., & Villasante, T. R. (2009). Quality in action research: Reflections for second-order inquiry. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 22(5), 383-396. doi:10.1007/s11213-009-9136-x
- Masters, G. (2019, October). *Nurturing wonder and igniting passion: Designs for a future school curriculum*. Sydney, NSW, Australia: NSW Education Standards Authority. Retrieved from <https://nswcurriculumreview.nesa.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/interimreport/chapters/NSW-Curriculum-Review-Interim-Report.pdf>
- McAlpine, L. (2016). Why might you use narrative methodology? A story about narrative. *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri*, 4(1), 32-57.
- McAlpine, S. (2018). Christian student: For the love of God study literature. Retrieved from <https://stephenmcalpine.com/christian-student-for-the-love-of-god-study-literature/>
- McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2012). Alternative education sites and marginalised young people: "I wish there were more schools like this one". *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 16(8), 843-862. doi:10.1080/13603116.2010.529467
- McKay, J., & Marshall, P. (n.d.). Quality and rigour of action research in information systems. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/94e2/6809352655ec0428895674c0bae3ec93c2ed.pdf>
- McLaren, P. (2002). Critical pedagogy: A look at the major concepts. In A. Darder, M. Baltodana, & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *The critical pedagogy reader* (pp. 69-96). New York: NY: Routledge/Falmer Press.
- McLaren, P. (2007). *Life in schools: An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson/ Allyn and Bacon.
- McLaren, P. (2015). *Pedagogy of insurrection: From resurrection to revolution*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2010). *You and your action research project* (3rd ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- McTaggart, R., Nixon, R., & Kemmis, S. (2017). Critical participatory action research. In C. B. L. L. Rowell, J. M. Shosh, & M. Riel (Ed.), *The Palgrave international handbook of action research* (pp. 21-35). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Meier, B. P., D'Agostino, P. R., Elliott, A., Maier, M. A., & Wilkowski, B. M. (2012). Color in context: Psychological context moderates the influence of red on approach- and avoidance-motivated behaviour. *PLoS ONE*, 7(7), 1-5. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0040333
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2018). Online. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- Middleton, J. R. (2014). *A new heaven and a new earth: Reclaiming biblical eschatology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Milligan, L. (2016). Insider-outsider-inbetween? Researcher positioning, participative methods and cross-cultural educational research. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 46(2), 235-250. doi:10.1080/03057925.2014.928510

- Milton, J. (n.d.). Of education. Retrieved from [https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading\\_room/of\\_education/text.shtml](https://www.dartmouth.edu/~milton/reading_room/of_education/text.shtml)
- Mockler, N. (2017). Give teachers more freedom. Retrieved from <https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2017/01/24/give-teachers-more-freedom.html>
- Monchinski, T. (2011). *Engaged pedagogy, enraged pedagogy: Reconciling politics, emotion, religion, and science for critical pedagogy* (vol. 69). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Morris, C. (1956). *Varieties of human value*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Muhammad, A. (2009). *Transforming school culture: How to overcome staff division* (Kindle ed.). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
- Musolff, A. (2012). The study of metaphor as part of critical discourse analysis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9(3), 301-310.
- Neill, C. (2013). Breaking the text: An introduction to Lacanian discourse analysis. *Theory & Psychology*, 23(3), 334-350. doi:10.1177/0959354312473520
- Nessan, C. L. (2010). *Shalom church: The body of Christ as ministering community*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- New South Wales Department of Education. (2019). Back to basics: Students to focus on maths, English and science [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/media-releases/back-to-basics-students-to-focus-on-maths-english-and-science>
- Noffke, S., & Somekh, B. (2005). Action research. In B. Somekh & C. Lewin (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 89-96). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Noor, K. B. M. (2008). Case study: A strategic research methodology. *American Journal of Applied Sciences*, 5(11), 1602-1604. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Khairul\\_Baharein\\_Mohd\\_Noor/publication/26517241\\_Case\\_Study\\_A\\_Strategic\\_Research\\_Methodology/links/5462bd800cf2c0c6aec1b83e/Case-Study-A-Strategic-Research-Methodology.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Khairul_Baharein_Mohd_Noor/publication/26517241_Case_Study_A_Strategic_Research_Methodology/links/5462bd800cf2c0c6aec1b83e/Case-Study-A-Strategic-Research-Methodology.pdf)
- Northcote, M. T. (2012). *Selecting criteria to evaluate qualitative research*. Paper presented at the 10th Quality in Postgraduate Research conference, Stamford Grand, Adelaide, SA, Australia. Retrieved from [https://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com.au/&httpsredir=1&article=1038&context=edu\\_papers](https://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com.au/&httpsredir=1&article=1038&context=edu_papers)
- Nwobodo, A. (2018). Key difference between education and schooling: I bet you don't know. Retrieved from <https://www.myschoolsquare.com/difference-between-education-and-schooling/>
- O'Connell, D. C., & Kowal, S. (2004). The history of research on the filled pause as evidence of the written language bias in linguistics (Linell, 1982). *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 33(6), 459-474. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-004-2666-6>
- Ochieng, P. A. (2009). An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 13. Retrieved from [http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/pec/files/pdf/Atieno\\_Vol.13.pdf](http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/pec/files/pdf/Atieno_Vol.13.pdf)
- Oden, A. (Ed.) (2001). *And you welcomed me: A sourcebook on hospitality in early Christianity*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Okwuosa, L. N., Nwaoga, C. T., & Uroko, F. C. (2017). A critique of John Hick's multiple incarnation: Theology and Christian approach to religious dialogue. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(5), 159-167. doi:10.1515/mjss-2017-0034

- Ondaatje, M. (1988). *In the skin of a lion*. London, UK: Picador.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2017). *Education at a glance 2017: OECD indicators*. Retrieved from [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oeed/education/education-at-a-glance-2017\\_eag-2017-en#page1](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oeed/education/education-at-a-glance-2017_eag-2017-en#page1)
- Otto, G. (1997). Productivity growth and economic policy in Australia. Retrieved from [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697)
- Overman, C. (2016). *The lost purpose for learning: An essay on United States education with implications for all nations*. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/christianoverman/docs/the\\_lost\\_purpose\\_for\\_learning.docx](https://issuu.com/christianoverman/docs/the_lost_purpose_for_learning.docx)
- Oxford Dictionary. (2018). Online. Retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 533-544.
- Palmer, P. J. (1993). *The violence of our knowledge: Toward a spirituality of higher education*. Paper presented at the The Michael Keenan Memorial Lecture, Berea College, Berea, KY. Retrieved from [http://www.kairos2.com/palmer\\_1999.htm](http://www.kairos2.com/palmer_1999.htm)
- Palmer, P. J. (2010). *To know as we are known: A spirituality of education* (Kindle ed.). San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pearcy, N. (2004). *Total truth*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
- Pietsch, J. (2018). *Character reborn: A philosophy of Christian education* (Kindle ed.). Sydney, NSW, Australia: Acorn Press.
- Plantinga, C. (1995). *Not the way it's supposed to be: A breviary of sin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Plantinga, C. (2002). *Engaging God's world: A Christian vision of faith, learning and living*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Polesel, J., Rice, S., & Dulfer, N. (2013). The impact of high-stakes testing on curriculum and pedagogy: A teacher perspective from Australia. *Journal of Education Policy*, 29(5), 640-657. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02680939.2013.865082>
- Postman, N. (1996). *The end of education: Redefining the value of school*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Poythress, V. S. (2016). *The miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's mighty acts serve as signs of redemption*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- Purpel, D. E., & McLaurin, W. M. (2004). *Reflections on the moral & spiritual crisis in education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Queiros, A., Faria, D., & Almeida, F. (2017). Strengths and limitations of qualitative and quantitative research methods. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 3(9), 369-387. doi:10.5281/zenodo.887089
- Ramsay, H. G. H. (2017). *In defence of the realm: Evidence and symbolism in support of God*. Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com.
- Reason, P. (2006). Choice and quality in action research practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 15(2), 187-203.

- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.). (2006). *Handbook of action research* (concise paperback ed.). London, UK: Sage Publications.
- Reynolds, L., & Szerszynski. (2012). Neoliberalism and technology: Perpetual innovation or perpetual crisis. Retrieved from [http://www.countdownnet.net/Allegati/31%20Neoliberalism%20and%20technology\\_Perpetual%20innovation%20or%20perpetual%20crisis.pdf](http://www.countdownnet.net/Allegati/31%20Neoliberalism%20and%20technology_Perpetual%20innovation%20or%20perpetual%20crisis.pdf)
- Ritchhart, R., Church, M., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Making thinking visible: How to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners* (Kindle ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Robertson, S. L. (2007). Remaking the world: Neoliberalism and the transformation of education and teachers' labour. In L. W. M. Compton (Ed.), *The global assault on teaching, teachers and their unions* (pp. 11-27). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rohde, H. (2006). Rhetorical questions as redundant interrogatives. *Department of Linguistics: UCSD(2)*, 134-168. Retrieved from <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/~hrohde/papers/Rohde.sdlp.paper.2006.pdf>
- Roy, D. (2008). Christian schools: A world of difference. *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, 2(1), 38-44.
- Roy, D. (2013). Is Christian education really "ministry"? *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, 7(1), 14-19. Retrieved from <https://research.avondale.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1196&context=teach>
- Rushmore, L. (2006). Come meet Jesus as the incarnate God. *Gospel Gazette*, 8. Retrieved from <http://www.gospelgazette.com/gazette/2006/apr/page4.htm>
- Russell, L. (2009). *Just hospitality: God's welcome in a world of difference*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Saidin, K., & Yaacob, A. (2016). *Insider researchers: Challenges & opportunities*. Paper presented at the International Seminar on Generating Knowledge through Research, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia. Retrieved from <http://ojs.umsida.ac.id/index.php/icecrs>
- Sandelowski, M. (1991). Telling stories: Narrative approaches in qualitative research. *IMAGE: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 23(3), 161-166.
- Sartre, J. P. (1992). *Being and nothingness: The principal text of modern existentialism*. New York, NY: Washington Square Press.
- Saumure, K., & Given, L. G. (2008). Rigor in qualitative research. In L. G. Given (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (vol. 2). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Savage, G. (2017). Neoliberalism, education and curriculum. In B. Gobby & R. Walker (Eds.), *Powers of curriculum: Sociological perspectives on education* (pp. 143-165). South Melbourne, Vic, Australia: Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand.
- Schleicher, A. (2016). Poor educational performance: The challenge for teachers and nations. *Teacher Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/columnists/andreas-schleicher/poor-educational-performance-the-challenge-for-teachers-and-nations>
- Schultz, G. (2002). *Kingdom education: God's plan for educating future generations* (2nd ed.). Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press.
- Scollon, R. (2001). Action and text: Towards an integrated understanding of the place of text in social (inter) action, mediated discourse analysis and the problem of social action.

- In R. W. M. Meyer (Ed.), *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 139-183). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Sire, J. (2004). *Naming the elephant*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Smith, A., D'eSanto-Madeya, S., Perez, J., Tracey, E., DeCristofaro, S., Norris, R., & Mukkamala, S. (2012). How women with advanced cancer pray: A report from two focus groups. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, *39*(3), 1-7. doi:10.1188/12.ONF.E310-E316
- Smith, D. I. (2018). *On Christian teaching: Practicing faith in the classroom*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Smith, D. I. (2019). *Re-imagining vocation, practices, and school assessment*. Paper presented at the ITEC: Reimagining Practice conference, Adelaide, SA, Australia.
- Smith, J. K. (2009). *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, worldview and cultural formation: Volume 1 of cultural liturgies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Smith, J. K. (2016). *You are what you love: The spiritual power of habit*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.
- Smith, V. L., & Clark, H. H. (1993). On the course of answering questions. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *32*(1), 25-38.
- Somekh, B. (2006). *Action research: A methodology for change and development*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.
- Spears, P. D., & Loomis, S. R. (2009). *Education for human flourishing: A Christian perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2016). Retrieved from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/>
- Starling, S. (2013). *Silent rivals in Christian education: A Shalom perspective*. (Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy). Flinders University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA, Australia. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/187320250?q&versionId=203886098>
- Starling, S., Cook, R., Scott, S., & Pendlebury, C. (2017). *Connecting learning to God's big story: Illuminating curriculum in Australian Christian schools*. Macquarie Park, Sydney, NSW, Australia: Christian Schools Australia.
- Starman, A. B. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*, *1*, 28-43. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265682891\\_The\\_case\\_study\\_as\\_a\\_type\\_of\\_qualitative\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265682891_The_case_study_as_a_type_of_qualitative_research)
- Stephens, M. (2016). Teaching for humanity. *Royale Ormsby Martin Lecture*. Anglican edcomm. Retrieved from <https://www.edcomm.org.au/assets/ROM-Lectures/Teaching-for-Humanity/Teaching-for-Humanity-Dr-Mark-Stephens.pdf>
- Stewart, M. (n.d.). *The miraculous significance of numbers and colors as they appear in the holy scriptures*. Livonia, MI: Detroit Christadelphian Book Supply.
- Strauss, S., & Feiz, P. (2014). *Discourse analysis: Putting our worlds into words*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Strauss, S., Feiz, P., & Xiang, X. (2018). *Grammar, meaning and concepts: A discourse-based approach to English grammar* (Kindle ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stronks, G. G., & Blomberg, D. (1993). *A vision with a task: Christian schooling for a responsive discipleship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Stronks, J. (2008). Teaching to justice: Christian faculty seek "shalom" in different disciplines. Retrieved from <https://www.redeemer.ca/wp-content/uploads/teaching-to-justice.pdf>

- Stroud, G. (2018). Gonski 2.0 would overburden already stretched teachers. *ABC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-03/gonski-2.0-teachers-students-australian-schools-reform/9718440>
- Sumara, D. J., & Luce-Kapler, R. (1993). Action research as a writerly text: Locating co-labouring in collaboration. *Educational Action Research*, 1(3), 387-395. doi:10.1080/0965079930010305
- Supan, P. (2019). *Kindergarten*. Unpublished Spoken Word Poetry.
- Tolkien, J. R. R. (1993). *The Hobbit*. London, UK: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Tomar, B. (2014). Axiology in teacher education: Implementation and challenges. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 4(2), 51-54.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. doi:10.1177/1077800410383121
- Tripp, D. (1990). Socially critical action research. *Theory into Practice*, 29(3), 158-166. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00405849009543449>
- Turner, S. (2001). *Imagine: A vision for Christians in the arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Tutty, J. (2017, June 8). Australia's millennials struggling on every level. *The Courier-Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/australias-millennials-struggling-on-every-level/news-story/b57c5505f766099bf89f2e5552fc51c3>
- Twelftree, G. H. (1999). *Jesus the miracle worker*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- United Nations General Assembly. (1948). *The universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>
- Van Brummelen, H. (1998). *Walking with God in the classroom: Christian approaches to learning and teaching* (2nd ed.). Seattle, Washington: Alta Vista College Press.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), 249-283. Retrieved from <https://is.cuni.cz/studium/predmety/index.php?do=download&did=100284&kod=JMM654>
- Van Dyk, J. (1985). *The beginning of wisdom: The nature and task of the Christian school*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Schools International.
- Van Engen, C. (n.d.). *The process of theologizing in mission*. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/LauraSun/processof-theologizinginmissionppt>
- Vanclay, F., Baines, J. T., & Taylor, C. N. (2013). Principles for ethical research involving humans: Ethical professional practice in impact assessment: Part 1. *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 31(4), 243-253. doi:10.1080/14615517.2013.850307
- Vander Stichele, C. (2000). Just a whore. The annihilation of Babylon according to Revelation 17:16. *Lectio difficilior: European Electronic Journal for Feminist Exegesis*, 1(1). doi:http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.171318
- Vincent, M. (1889). *Word studies in the New Testament* (vol. 2). New York, NY: Scribners.
- Volini, E., Schwartz, J., Roy, I., Hauptmann, M., Van Durme, Y., Denny, B., & Bersin, J. (2019). Leading the social enterprise: Reinvent with a human focus. *Deloitte Insights*. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/human-capital/deloitte-au-hc-human-capital-trends-2019->

[150419.pdf?utm\\_source=eloqua&utm\\_medium=lp&utm\\_campaign=20190415-hcp-inbound-human-capital-trends-2019&utm\\_content=cta](#)

- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Westly, D. (1988). *A theology of presence: The search for meaning in the American Catholic experience*. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications.
- Wiersma, W. (2008). *Research methods in education: An introduction*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Wilber, K. (2001). *Eye to eye: The quest for the new paradigm* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications.
- Wilson, P. (2017). Integrating academic knowledge and life experience: The twin classrooms of deep learning. In K. Goodlet, J. Collier, & J. George (Eds.), *Better learning: Trajectories for educators in Christian schools* (pp. 143-152). Canberra, ACT, Australia: St Mark's NTC Publishing.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2001). *Methods of critical discourse analysis*. London, England: Sage Publications.
- Wolterstorff, N. (2004). *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian higher education* (C. W. Joldersma & G. G. Stronks Eds.). Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Wong, B. (2008). *The effectiveness of a Christian school in developing students whose biblical Christian worldview informs the way they relate to others*. University of Southern Queensland. Unpublished Masters Thesis.
- Wong, B. (2017a). *Confirmation of candidature proposal*. University of Southern Queensland. Unpublished.
- Wong, B. (2017b). The distraction of winking lights: Sailing for Shalom in Christian education. *Christian Teachers Journal*, 25(2), 4-7. Retrieved from <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=819383354839280;res=IELHSS>
- Wong, B. (under contract). Cultivating a vision for change: Applying action research to empower teachers in an independent Christian school in New South Wales, Australia in a market-driven schooling system. In D. L. Mulligan & P. A. Danaher (Eds.), *Researching within the educational margins: Strategies for communicating and articulating voices*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Woods, K. (2017). *The issue with our school system*. Unpublished paper.
- Wright, N. T. (1996). *The Lord and his prayer*. London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Wright, N. T. (2011a). *How God became king: The forgotten story of the Gospels* (Kindle ed.). London, UK: HarperCollins.
- Wright, N. T. (2011b). *Simply Jesus*. London, UK: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Yew Tree Christian College. (n.d.).
- Young, J. C., Rose, D. C., Mumby, H. S., Benitez-Capistros, F., Derrick, C. J., Finch, T., & Mukherjee, N. (2018). Qualitative methods for eliciting judgements for decision making: A methodological guide to using and reporting on interviews in conservation science research. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*, 9(1). doi:10.1111/2041-210X.12828
- Zajonc, A. (2006). *Love and knowledge: Recovering the heart of learning through contemplation*. Paper presented at the "Scholarship of teaching and learning: The

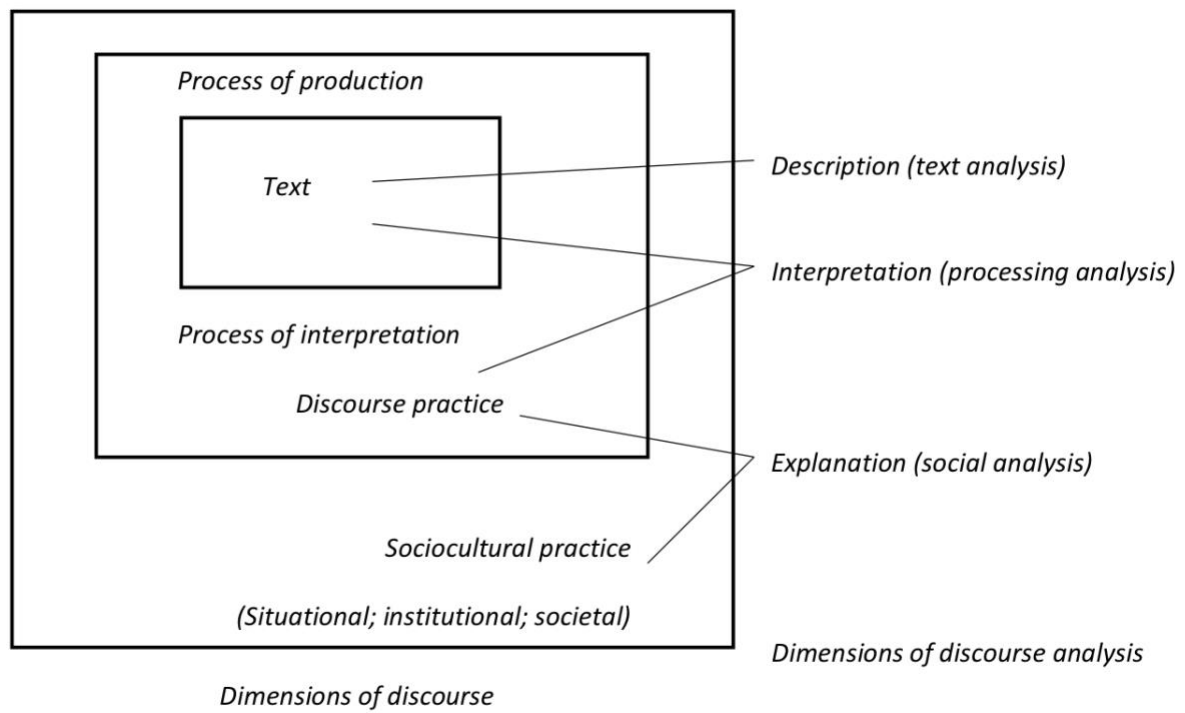


cognitive-affective connection" conference, Oxford College, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

Zizek, S. (Ed.) (1998). *Sic cogito and the unconscious*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Fairclough's (1996) Discourse as Text, Interaction and Context (p. 25)



## Appendix B: The Research Study Letter of Invitation to Participants

### Invitation to Participate in Research

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As you might be aware, I am currently undertaking my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The focus of my research is on how teachers at a Christian school understand Christian education and the hindrances that teachers face in engendering a Christian education in their daily practice.

For my research, I am planning to individually interview up to eight individual teachers from the primary and secondary departments at the school. After the interviews are completed, together the eight teachers will form a Process Learning Circle, a focus group that will meet together approximately once a month over the space of a year. The Process Learning Circle will journey through a cycle of identifying challenges that teachers face in engendering a Christian education, planning intervention and observing the effects of the implementation through lesson observation. This is called Action Research. Lastly, participating teachers will also engage in lesson observations of one another, seeking to understand what Christian education looks like in practice.

I would like to invite you to be one of the teachers who will be interviewed and then participate in the Process Learning Circle. For the research, data will be generated through recordings of the interview, the Process Learning Circle meetings and the lesson observations. All data will be transcribed under pseudonyms and therefore the involvement of all teachers will be completely anonymous.

If you could please consider my invitation and respond by sending me an email, I will greatly appreciate it. If you choose to accept the invitation, I will send to you an information sheet that will have more details and also a consent form.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bronwyn

## Appendix C: The Interview Questions

### Interview Style: Semi-structured

Some of the bullet points delineate possible follow up questions depending on the participants and the information that they offer and the subsequent path of each interview.

1. Background:
  - a) How long have you been teaching?
  - b) What subjects do you teach?
  - c) How long have you been teaching here at this school?
  - d) What took you into teaching as a profession?
  
2. Understanding of Christian education:
  - a) Can you tell me about what brought you to teach at this school?
    - How does teaching at a Christian school compare with teaching at a school in a different sector?
  - b) What stands out to you as the defining characteristics of this school?
  - c) What would you describe as the purposes of Christian schooling?
  - d) What are some of the ways that you attempt to achieve the purposes of Christian schooling in your:
    - Teaching
    - Relationships with students, staff members and parents
    - Administration
    - Discipline of students
  - e) Can you explain what you understand by the term the “Kingdom” when used in a Christian context?
    - What would be the characteristics of the “Kingdom”?
    - Given this, what do you think that it would mean to be “Kingdom-shaped”?
    - How could Kingdom-shaping be applied to the purposes of Christian education?

- Have you ever thought about your practice here in terms of Kingdom-shaping?
  - Can you tell me more about that?
- Have you seen examples of Kingdom-shaped teaching practice here?
  - Can you tell me more about that?

3. Hindrances in engendering Christian education:

a) What are the greatest challenges in providing a Christian education that is Kingdom-shaping?

- Have these factors affected you personally in your time teaching here and, if so, how?
  - What are some of the ways that you have responded to these challenges?

Appendix D: Extracts from Phase 3—Commitment to Action and Action Research—  
from Meeting 1

Bronwyn      We need to pin something down. We need to think about what we're going to do to implement some sort of change.

Shane        It's very broad at the moment.

Kevin        Yeah, it can't be too broad.

Bronwyn      We need to narrow it down to something manageable.

Mary        ...I'm wondering if there's something in an experimental kind of space of going...how can we get a spark in our kids?....If we're asking the question, "What is the-?", if we're talking about apathy, we're talking about a lack of hope, or a lack of, I don't know. Anyone else want to grab at that? I don't know...

Shane        But it seems like often those sparks and those moments are one to one.

Philippa     Occasionally they can be larger than that. Yeah.

Shane        But even less are they always to do with the Kingdom focus. Or is it just relating with the student, having that shared birthday, or—

Philippa     In one sense, when a truth is illuminated about the world that God has made it's a Kingdom moment...

Shane        But how um ah is me finding out that I have the same favourite movie as a student, how is that pointing to the Kingdom?



- Collective Mmmmmmm...
- Mary But I think that it's a moment of break in apathy. It's a moment of breaking into something which then might open up doors for something else. And that's probably the key to it.
- Bronwyn So maybe our intervention might look like creating a moment in whatever our area of work is at the moment, creating a moment where there can be shared humanity—
- Mary Yeah.
- Bronwyn —in order to break into that disengagement and apathy to force a spark...
- Mary It might be then...can we walk into something else that allows us to just break in for five minutes into that little space and then jump back out again? Or hopefully not.
- Bronwyn And we've got to remember, this is an ongoing process over the year. We're not going to be able to get to everything in the first kind of cycle. So maybe in the first cycle it's creating that shared story where there can be a spark that we break into and perhaps illuminate something new, that we can go, "Okay, we can do that, now let's see how that can then forge deeper into getting kids to question about God, who He is and His place in a larger, decompartmentalised life"...
- Mary There's going to be a moment, but it's probably analysing that moment just a little bit more for us and coming back and going..."I just had that moment" and then thinking about what shaped it, why it shaped it, why we got an opening into that space.

Bronwyn      In future meetings, we could be thinking about how that spark or understanding of it could be used in Kingdom-shaping. How could we use that to get kids to think more in a way that is *being* and inhabiting their world as people who *know* the truth, that they actually *act* that way? The fact is that apathy is not Kingdom-shaping.

## Appendix E: The Ethics Consent Form—Parts A and B

### Consent Form

**Research Topic:**

This research seeks to explore how teachers at a Christian school understand the nature of a Kingdom-shaped Christian education and the hindrances that they face in engendering a Kingdom-shaped education in their practice. Secondly, this research aims to develop the “Tripod of Shalom” to frame Kingdom-shaped teaching practice.

**Organisation:**

University of Southern Queensland (USQ)

**Researcher:**

Bronwyn Wong

PhD candidate

Faculty of Business, Education, Law and Arts

West St, Toowoomba 4350

Queensland, Australia

Email: [bronwong@gmail.com](mailto:bronwong@gmail.com)

**Supervisor:**

Prof. Patrick Danaher

Email: [Patrick.Danaher@usq.edu.au](mailto:Patrick.Danaher@usq.edu.au)

Telephone: 07 4631 1190

The Consent Form has two parts:

- A. Participant Information Sheet
- B. Statement of Consent

## Part A: Participant Information Sheet

### Introduction:

My name is Bronwyn Wong and I am currently completing my PhD through the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, Queensland. This research project seeks to explore how teachers at a Christian school understand the nature of Christian education and the hindrances that they face in engendering a Christian education in their practice. Eight primary and secondary teachers from Toongabbie Christian School (TCS) will be invited to participate in the research. I would like to ask whether you would consider being one of those eight participating teachers. The following document will give you details about the research. Please email me or ask in person if you have any further questions that are not answered in the information sheet.

### Purpose of the Research:

This research seeks to explore how a group of teachers may develop and implement teaching methods that will engender a Kingdom-shaped Christian education for Shalom.

### Your Role in the Research:

Each of the participating teachers will be asked to:

- Complete a one to one, face to face interview with myself. This interview will take up to one hour.
- Engage in a Process Learning Circle with the other participating teachers once a month for up to a year. A Process Learning Circle is a type of focus group. The group will progress through the Action Research cycles of defining an issue, planning action/intervention, taking action, and reflecting on the action. Each monthly meeting will take up to two hours in length and will occur after school.
- Engage in mutual, reciprocating classroom observation that will be focused on our implementation of action and reflecting on our practice.

### Why You Were Selected:

You have been invited to participate in this research because you have demonstrated an interest in Christian education and you have engaged critically in conversations about students and their learning and teachers and their pedagogy.

### Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to choose whether you will agree to be a part of the study or decline. If you do agree to participate in the research, you are free to withdraw your involvement at any time, including any information that has been gathered from you as part of your involvement. Withdrawal from the project will not adversely impact your relationship with me as the researcher and a colleague in any way.

**Procedure:**

Interview: The interview with me will take place in a quiet location at school. The audio of the interview will be recorded and later transcribed. It is estimated that the interview will last for up to one hour in length. All data that is gathered will use a pseudonym and therefore your participation will be completely anonymous.

Process Learning Circle: A Process Learning Circle is a type of focus group that meets regularly. It is a meeting that is focused on discussion where together the participants engage in working through an issue. The Process Learning Circle will take place in a quiet location at school and will last for up to two hours, though the length of each meeting will vary. Audio of meetings will be recorded and transcribed. Transcription will use a pseudonym for each participant and therefore the participation of participants will be completely anonymous.

Lesson Observation: Focusing on the action developed within the Process Learning Circles, participants will visit one another's classrooms and observe the implementation of these strategies. Some of the audio in these lessons will be recorded and transcribed. Transcription will use a pseudonym for each participant and will therefore be completely anonymous.

Data generated from the transcriptions of audio for each of the above will be kept digitally on a password protected computer.

**Risks:**

- Time imposition – the regularity of the meetings (monthly) over the space of a year will incur a cost on the part of participants. Participants will have input as to the overall length and structure of the Process Learning Circle meetings. If you find that you cannot complete the research owing to time commitments, you may withdraw at any time.
- Social risk – there is potential for a feeling of coercion on the part of the participant regarding the researcher. The structure of the Process Learning Circle allows other members of the group, apart from the researcher, to facilitate meetings, thereby reducing the

influence of the researcher. If at any time you feel coerced by the researcher, you may speak with the Deputy Principal (Primary or Secondary) or contact the Supervisor of the Research, Prof. Patrick Danaher.

**Benefits:**

Collegial support, discussion of issues faced in day to day teaching and shared strategies may be benefits that you gain through engaging in this research. It is envisaged that participants may develop new ways of thinking about their own practice, together with practical strategies to input in their own classrooms. Recent research through the Grattan Institute (Goss, Sonnemann, & Griffiths, 2017) also states that practical support for teachers and collegial collaboration helps teachers to improve their classroom climate for learning.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:**

All transcription of audio recordings will use a pseudonym for each participant. Real names will not at any time be used in the research or the writing up of the final thesis. Your participation will therefore be completely anonymous. Discussions in the Process Learning Circle will be kept confidential by all members of the group.

For the interviews, there is the intention to use the services of a professional transcriber to transfer audio recordings into written data. While the transcriber will not be given any identifying information regarding participants, it may be possible for him or her to identify names that are used in the recording.

Goss, P., Sonnemann, J. & Griffiths, K. (2017). *Engaging students: Creating classrooms that improve learning*. Carlton, Vic: Grattan Institute. Retrieved from <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Engaging-students-creating-classrooms-that-improve-learning.pdf>

### Part B: Statement of Consent

I acknowledge that I \_\_\_\_\_ have been invited to participate in research that is focused on teachers' understandings of Christian education.

I have read Part A. Information Sheet and I have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research and have subsequently had these questions answered. I am completely aware of the time commitments regarding the research but I also understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time if I choose to do so. I hereby voluntarily consent to participating in this research. I understand that:

- One on one interviews will be conducted and that audio from those interviews will be recorded and transcribed.
- I will be participating in a monthly Process Learning Circle, audio of which will be recorded and transcribed.
- Some of my lessons will be observed and audio recorded and transcribed.
- I may have access to the transcripts of my interview, of my involvement in the Process Learning Circle and of my observed lessons for proofing to ascertain accuracy.
- At the close of the research, a summary of the research will be made available to me.

.....  
Signature of Participant

.....  
Signature of Researcher

.....  
Date (day/month/year)

.....  
Date (day/month/year)

If you have any other concern about the conduct of this research project, please contact the USQ Ethics Officer, Office of Research, University of Southern Queensland, West Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350. Telephone +61 7 4631 2690, email [ethics@usq.edu.au](mailto:ethics@usq.edu.au)



## Appendix F: The Readings in Phase 2 and their Corresponding PLCs Meetings

Meeting	The Reading that was Used as a Basis for Discussion in Phase 2 of Meetings	Date
1	Introduction to the Tripod of Shalom. Please refer to Appendix G.	27 February 2018
2	<i>Desiring the kingdom</i> (J. K. Smith, 2009, Chapter 5)	10 April 2018
3	<i>The Goldsworthy trilogy</i> (Goldsworthy, 2001, pp. 58-63, 104-122)	22 May 2018
4	<i>To know as we are known: A spirituality of education</i> (Palmer, 2010, Chapter 3)	20 June 2018
5	<i>Philosophy and education</i> (Knight, 2006, pp. 203-221)	15 August 2018
6	<i>Prophetic imagination</i> (Brueggemann, 2001, Chapter 7)	12 September 2018
7	<i>Teaching for humanity</i> (Stephens, 2016)	30 October 2018
8	The participants' individual interview transcripts	27 November 2018

## Appendix G: A Kingdom-shaped Christian Education for Shalom – Phase 2, Meeting 1

### **Key terms:**

#### Kingdom-shaped Christian education-

An education that is conducted under God’s rule, directed by the example of the life of Jesus Christ, individually and together as the community of God, to usher God’s rule through actively setting about restoring and transforming the world.

#### Shalom-

Shalom is a vision for creation as it was meant to be, a life of flourishing and prospering (Bartholomew & Goheen, 2008, p. 45) where people live in thriving, harmonious and life-giving relationships (Nessan, 2010, p. 10) “with God, themselves, each other, and nature – and ... tak[e] delight in such relationships” (Wolterstorff, 2004, Introduction, para.7). Shalom reflects the nature of the Kingdom of God because it is “the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfilment and delight...” (Plantinga, 1995, p. 10). Establishing the Kingdom of God, a state where God’s rule is evident through Shalom, is central to the mission of Jesus Christ. This was demonstrated in the Lord’s Prayer: “Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, The New International Version).

#### Neoliberalism and Market driven concerns in relation to Kingdom-shaped Christian education-

The pressure to maintain enrolments tempts Christian schools to shift priorities from being Kingdom-shaped to focusing instead on elevating results in tests such as NAPLAN. There is a concern that, as Christian schools attempt to balance curriculum needs with a goal to educate for Kingdom shaping, they face the risk of reducing their focus on Kingdom principles, instead placing greater focus on the juggernaut of the market. Such an outcome has been noted in research by Macnaught (1995) who found in that church based schools in Britain and Europe had succumbed to the paradigm of the market where “the spiritual is reduced to the conventional sentiments of civic religion...promoting...values that might domesticate the feral young and persuade them to submit to the invisible hand of the rational economic order” (p.9). In Australia, Justins’ (2002) research based on the Christian Parent Controlled School sector (CPC), challenged that

“If the marketplace assesses the commodity, which is education, on the basis of academic performance and on the physical appearance of students ..., and CPC schools make a decision to compete in that marketplace, then they are in real danger of displacing their foundational values” (p. 248).

#### Epistemology-

The theory of knowledge in regards to its methods, validity, scope and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.

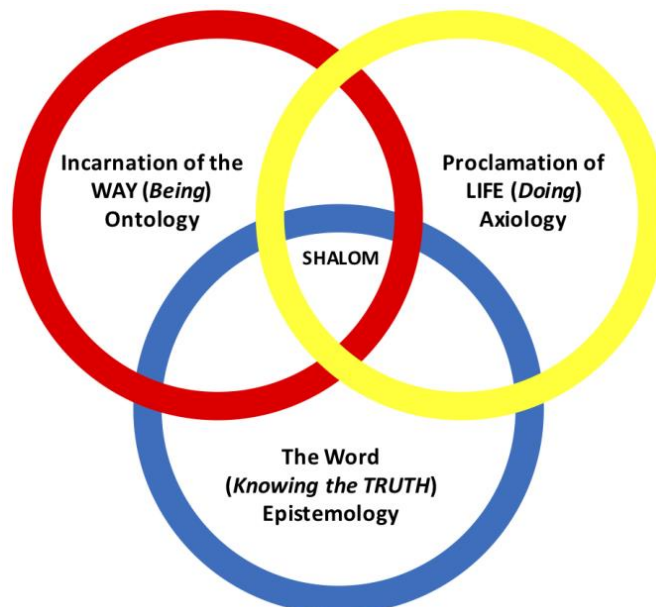
#### Ontology-

The philosophical study of being, or of what applies neutrally to everything that is real.

#### Axiology-

The study of the nature of value and the kinds of things that are valuable.

#### Shalom Tripod-



Shalom’s placement at the centre of the tripod and its appearance in each of the three components of the framework reflect that Shalom is not only the goal of a Kingdom-shaped

Christian education but also the means of attaining that goal. Unlike the market driven view of education that is narrowing and that funnels students into a predetermined vision of success, placing emphasis on an epistemology that is designed to train a person for a career, the tripod framework of interlocking rings sees a broader, holistic view of life that is focused on imbuing a life of flourishing under the rule of God.

The Tripod of Shalom utilises the Borromean Rings that are an arrangement of three interlinking circles; the nature of the rings is such that, if one is to be excluded, the two remaining rings will disengage. The symbol of the three rings has been used by Christians to represent the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Highbaugh, 2015, p. 109). Reflecting this unified structure, all three tripod elements are dynamic and, working in tandem, are deemed to be essential elements of a Kingdom-shaped Christian education that echoes Shalom.

The use of the Tripod of Shalom to represent Kingdom-shaped Christian education demonstrates that a Christian education is education for all of life. Overman (2016) termed this a “wholistic” view of education: “Wholism speaks of the whole of God’s Word to the whole man in the whole world” (p. 8). This is crucial in an environment where high-stakes testing threatens to reduce learning to a set quota of knowledge that is then tested, measured and publicised, limiting students’ access to a wide and varied curriculum (Polesel et al., 2013). Kingdom-shaped Christian schooling challenges the reductionist view of education and sees Shalom at the centre, envisioning schooling that equips young people to use their education to enact justice and mercy in the world and to set about “unfold[ing] creation’s cultural possibilities” (J. K. Smith, 2009, Ch. 6, para. 10).

### **The Components of the Tripod Framework**

The identity and mission of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, are central to Shalom. In His time on earth, Jesus Christ identified himself using the words, “I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6, The New International Version). These three elements of Jesus’ identity could be reflected through Knowing the Truth, Incarnating the Life and Proclaiming the Way.

### **The Word: Knowing - Epistemology**

The apostle, John, in his Gospel account personified the term *Word* by stating that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1, The New International Version), John’s personification of the term, *Word*, suggested that Jesus was a living message sent by God. This was ratified by Jesus Himself, who stated, “Don’t ever think that I came to set aside Moses’ Teachings or the Prophets’. I didn’t come to set them aside but to make them come true” (Matthew 5:17 GODs Word Translation). The outward expression of inner biblical knowledge (Vincent, 1889, p. 25) was seen as Jesus, the Word, exemplified the teachings of Moses and the Prophets through his daily life in community. Practically, this element gives a crucial basis for a biblical view of epistemology in a Kingdom-shaped education, allowing students to interpret creation “in light of its relationship to God” and to discover “the laws or creation ordinances by which God structured the world” (Pearcy, 2004, p. 35). Additionally, the apostle’s personification of the term “Word”, submitting that Jesus was a living message sent by God, suggests that in knowing and relating to the Word one can know and relate to God. This element of the Tripod reflects Shalom through humans living in right relationship with God (Wolterstorff, 2004).

### **Incarnation: *Being - Ontology***

The word “incarnation” is defined as “a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit or quality” (Oxford University Press, 2017, n.p.). In the statement, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us...” (John 1:14, The New International Version), the apostle, John, was identifying that Jesus Christ was God in flesh, or the incarnation of the triune God. In turn, followers of Christ should incarnate, or imbue Christ in their own lives (Colossians 1:27, The New International Version) through embodying His way of life. The incarnation element of the Tripod then exhibits Shalom through “the webbing together of God [and] humans” (Plantinga, 1995, p. 10). Incarnation is an important element of being Kingdom-shaped because it reflects biblical knowledge moving from head to heart, shaping character and seeing students in their response to the Gospel developing “habits of righteousness and holiness” (Burggraaf, 2014, p. 60). If students are to be more than a generation of believers “who know more than they choose, who understand things they never act upon, who discern ideas they never use...” (Frost, 2014, p. 14), it is essential that a

Kingdom-shaped education reaches beyond biblical and intellectual analysis (Van Brummelen, 1998). This element imbues a biblical view of ontology and relationships.

### **Proclamation: *Doing - Axiology***

To proclaim literally means, as it is derived from the Latin, “to shout out” (Oxford University Press, 2017) and may be realised both through words and through physical actions. Jesus Christ publically declared His earthly mission as being “to proclaim good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19, The New International Version). In focusing on Christ and His mission to the poor, the prisoners, the sick, the blind and the oppressed, the researcher argues that a Kingdom-shaped Christian education must inspire students to envision their lives as being active participants in a wounded world and therefore as responding to bring about (proclaim) justice and mercy physically and tangibly. This final element of the Tripod reflects Shalom through living in right relationships with others and with nature (Wolterstorff, 2004). The goal of a Christian education must be “that our students be agents and celebrators of shalom....[W]hat I mean is not just that we must teach about justice – though we must; I mean that we must teach for justice” (Wolterstorff, 2004, “Curricular implications of Shalom”, para. 7). Maintaining the importance of proclamation is essential in a context where political pressures, such as the measurement of academic achievement, limit the much broader social potential of education. “To trivialise education by obsessing on technical or superficial, symptomatic concerns...detracts us from the responsibility to engage in serious dialogue on how the educational process can facilitate a world of love, justice and joy” (Purpel & McLaurin, 2004, p. 26).

### **A Note on the Colour of the Tripod Rings**

Each ring in the Tripod is deliberately represented by a different colour to demonstrate that, although each element is distinctive, each is bounded by the edge of another. Consequently, one can say that each element of Shalom relies on the other elements. The interlocking colours serve to reinforce that the framework is one unit that works in tandem rather than as a cycle or a continuum. Shalom is placed at the centre to reflect that all three elements

working together result in a community that exemplifies right relationships with God, self, others and nature.

### **I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life:**

#### Blue - Knowing the Word (Truth)

Blue is representative of loyalty and stability

#### Red - Incarnating the Way

Red is representative of the colour of blood – that Jesus’s flesh and blood were indicative of His life among us and His sacrifice.

Note – the etymology of “way” is German and is said to mean to move or carry.

#### Yellow - Proclaiming the Life

Yellow symbolises brightness and thereby the idea that followers of Christ are called to be a light to others.

I would argue that a pharisaic outworking focuses on Knowing the truth and proclaiming the way, rather than knowing truth, incarnating the way and proclaiming life. Therefore, there is no life.

### **For consideration: how might the Shalom Tripod:**

- Inform the way that we as a group relate to one another through knowing, being and doing so that we as a group become a living, breathing, practical example of Shalom in community?
- Provide a framework for implementing Kingdom-shaped Christian education for Shalom in our practice?